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‘An African Childhood’: Representing the self in Alexandra Fuller’s *Don’t Let’s Go to the Dogs Tonight*, Lauren Liebenberg’s *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam*, and Dominique Botha’s *False River*

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not previously been submitted for a degree or examination at any other university.

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Carla Eloise Chait

14 February 2017

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[T]he 'self' can only exist conceptually as a representation.

(Jay, "Being in the Text" 1046)

Introduction

In *Reading Autobiography*: *A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2010), Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson trace the literary representation of the self from medieval religious autobiographical narratives of self-effacement through to the rational Enlightenment self and the individuation of nineteenth-century selfhood. The sovereign, Cartesian self of the nineteenth century is characterized by Smith in "Self, Subject, and Resistance: Marginalities and Twentieth-Century Autobiographical Practice" (1990). Disconnected from bodily desire, this essential self is knowable and definable, and its agency expressed through language. The life of the self becomes "an instantly accessible world," Smith writes. "Life can be narrated, represented, and that representation, like the self controlling it, is coherent, unified" (11). This is the self of patriarchy and imperialism: a white male hegemonic discourse. The traditional autobiographical 'I' is a masculine construct of unequivocal consciousness and self-referentiality, and the essential self of woman is conceived and represented as the negative of man.

Smith and Watson limit their focus to the development of life narratives in Western culture, but recognise a history of self-representation beyond this, citing both oral traditions of self-narration in indigenous American, African, and Australian cultures, and histories of self-inscription in China, Japan, India, North Africa, and Islamic-Arabic literature. Even within the limits of the Western literary history that the critics outline are indications of anti-hegemonic discourses, such as the nineteenth-century slave narratives, and a history of women's self-representation – although Smith and Watson classify these as marginal voices.

With social, psychoanalytical, and philosophical developments, however, "the architecture of [white male hegemonic] selfhood" – what might be referred to as the centre – "collapsed into a pile of twentieth-century rubble" (Smith 12). The Subject of Postmodernism lacks a stable, all-knowing centre. Here, the self is always becoming, in a dialogue between the individual and his/her inner and outer worlds. This notion of selfhood is understood within multiple subjectivities, where the person reads what Paul Smith refers to as "ideological scripts […] in order to insert him/herself into them – or not" (xxxv). The self engages with various discourses in various ways, continually constructing and re-embodying an essence. In *The Limits of*

Autobiography: *Trauma and Testimony* (2001), Leigh Gilmore refers to the "knowing self" (148). Claiming an absolute identity, the sovereign self writes off all other kinds of emerging knowledge. The knowing self doesn't ask 'Who am I?' or tell 'Who I am,' but explores how 'My life can be represented through me.'

If the coherent and unified self is a fiction, then so too is its gendered identity "[d]iscursively constructed rather than biologically given," although the deconstruction of a patriarchal centre was not accompanied by a challenge to the representation of female selfhood until late in the twentieth century, Smith notes (15). The texts that I will examine in this study are Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*: *An African Childhood* (2002), Lauren Liebenberg's *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* (2008) and Dominique Botha's *False River* (2013). These texts can be positioned theoretically between the centre – white writing – and the margin – women's writing. In my analysis I will consider how race and gender inform identity and the authors' representation of the self; how Fuller, Liebenberg, and Botha employ and/or undermine essentialisms of the self in their representation.

The self to be examined is the narrating 'I' in each text. *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* has been marketed as a memoir, although in "Writing home: inscriptions of whiteness/descriptions of belonging in white Zimbabwean memoir-autobiography" (2005), Ashleigh Harris argues that Fuller's text tends towards autobiography. Harris refers to The *Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992) to distinguish between the genres, quoting that memoir is "a form of autobiography that gives particular attention to matters of contemporary interest not closely affecting the author's inner life," whereas the generically autobiographical self is written "to explain and justify as well as to inform [and is] often confessional" (108). Harris contends that Fuller represents a personal story of the self with the historical moment as background, an argument that I will explore in my analysis of the text.

When Lauren Liebenberg was asked by Janet van Eeden in an interview for *Litnet* if *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* is autobiographical, she responded, "No, it's definitely not autobiographical! It did, however, begin with my own memories, which gradually drifted into borrowed memories, interwoven with a little wistfulness on my part" ("Lauren Liebenberg"). On the book's inner cover, all characters and events are qualified as fictitious, but in her Acknowledgments section, Liebenberg recognises her "own extraordinary and wonderful family, who are, it must be said, such fertile ground!" (n.p.) "[I]t's as though," Liebenberg tells van Eeden, "I sought to evoke a rather sepia-tinted portrait of the past"

("Lauren Liebenberg"). Because Liebenberg's writing of the fictitious eight-year old narrator, Nyree O'Callohan, is drawn from her own nostalgic memory and experience of growing up in 1970s Rhodesia, I would classify *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* as a semi-autobiographical novel.

Baldick defines the autobiographical/semi-autobiographical novel as a fiction whose setting and characters are based on the author's own life. *False River*, after the Dictionary's definition, is "a kind of autobiography in the form of a novel": classified as a novel on the front cover; described as a "novel […] based on true events" in the blurb; narrated by Dominique Botha; and dedicated by the author to her parents, siblings, and husband who appear as characters in the text (Baldick 30). Lisa Visser notes that *False River* has been described variously as 'fictional memoir' and 'non-fiction novel' ("An intimate relationship"). In conversation with Michiel Heyns at the Cape Town launch of her debut, Botha responded to these attempts to classify her text, referring to the fallibility of memory and the impossibility of relating 'the whole truth' of the past. Botha suggests that "these discrete entities," of genre, are "far more of a continuum," and also that *False River* "becomes fiction anyway for people that stand outside the immediate circle of intimates who understand the story" (qtd. in Visser "An intimate relationship").

A similar argument is made by Paul Jay, who suggests that the attempt to differentiate between autobiography and autobiographical fiction is "pointless. For if by 'fictional' we mean 'made-up,' 'created,' or 'imagined' – something, that is, which is literary and not 'real' – then we have merely defined the ontological status of any text, autobiographical or not" (*Being in the Text* 16). With the collapse of the ideological truth of essential selfhood, the basis of self-representation – the master discourse of autobiography – was threatened. In *The Forms of Autobiography*: *Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre* (1980), William C. Spengemann recognises the now-tenuous association between autobiography and autobiographical representation. "The connections between autobiography and what it appears to describe have become increasingly problematical," Spengemann notes, "and the differences between autobiography and other written forms correspondingly indistinct, until there no longer seems to be anything that either is or is not autobiography" (188). Gilmore defines the autobiographical 'I' as the "rhetorical surrogate" of the self (88). The autobiographical 'I' is the author's literary construct of the self, as are the other selves who are voiced in the author's fiction, so that the self who writes the text is the only self that is reflected in the text.

I will approach my analysis of the self in each of the texts of this study as representational, rather than as defined by generic truth or fact. That is, I emphasize what G. Thomas Couser refers to as "function over form," reading the autobiographical narrative for what the text does, rather than what it is (139). Although I recognise the autobiographical thread running through each of the texts, my analysis is not concerned so much with the subjective truth connecting the represented self with the author, but rather with what that represented self signifies and suggests in its construction in a particular context.

All three texts are narrated by a white female child growing up on a farm in Southern Africa during what might broadly be defined as periods of transition to democracy. The Rhodesian/Zimbabwe transitional history spans the First and Second Chimurenga, leading up to the democratic election of 1980, which was won by Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union. The South African history in question relates to the political system of apartheid, which persisted for the reign of the National Party from 1948 until its dismantling in the 1990s, and the subsequent democratic election in 1994 of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress to government. *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* is narrated a-chronologically from 1968, just before Bobo's birth, to 2000, when she is married and living in America. *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* is set in 1978 and concentrated in the period of historical shift between then and 1980. *False River* opens in 1980, when Paul is ten and Dominique is eight, and concludes in 1997 at Paul's death. Dominique's childhood and adolescence thus span the final decades of apartheid, and her late adolescence and early adulthood, the early transition to democracy. Within the given context, I will consider how each author interacts with history in her construction of self.

'An African Childhood' is the subtitle of *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*. I use the reference in the title of the study to frame my analysis as it relates to the literal historical context that each author's represented self occupies. But I am, moreover, concerned with the imagined and constructed world of 'African Childhood' that Fuller, Liebenberg, and Botha fashion for the self. To explore this construction, I contextualise the represented 'I' within the literary paradigm of African pastoral, and the fictional convention of representing childhood. I will interpret the representation of the landscape in the three texts in relation to a tradition of white writing about Africa: the settler myths that characterize the Rhodesian colonial narratives of the mid-twentieth century and that are re-inscribed in white farm narratives written in the wake of Zimbabwe's land reforms; and a tradition of pastoralism in South African literature that characterises the Afrikaans farm novel/plaasroman of the 1920-40s, and which is then later

subverted. In the second part of my analysis I will consider the authors' representation of the child as it relates to a traditional Western literary construction of childhood, as well as to contemporary constructions of childhood-belonging in white Zimbabwean writing, and to the confessional mode of representing childhood that characterized white South African writing in the late twentieth century.

Within this framework, the texts will be both linearly and comparatively analysed: within the national literary history and across histories. The concerns that I will address include: how each text compares in its representation of the self to that represented in Zimbabwean and South African literary traditions of pastoral writing and the writing of childhood; how selfhood (maturity) is resolved in each text, and how the imaginative ir/resolution of childhood contributes to the authors' self-representation; how representations of the self in the texts support or diverge from the category of whiteness as it has been traditionally understood.

There is little critical material on the texts under consideration. *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* has been included in discussions of the representation of home and belonging in contemporary white writing in Zimbabwe, including analyses by Harris, Kate Law, and Tony Simoes da Silva. Harris's analysis provides the most comprehensive criticism of Fuller's text, with reference to how white identity is constructed in an imaginative project of belonging. *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* is included in Law's critique, but cursorily. Scholarship on *False River* is in its inception.

Considering the scarcity of criticism directly addressing the texts, I position my analysis within an existing critical discourse of representing the land, and the child. I draw on a two-fold discourse to support my analysis of self-representation as each trope reflects the myths used in constructing white selfhood. Points of similarity with the mother discourse reinforce mythic selfhood; divergence from the traditional discourse suggests alternate constructions of the self. The authorial self is represented through the convention that she writes into or against.

Bearing in mind that the three texts do not comprise a representative sample of white post-colonial writing in Southern Africa, including texts from both South Africa and Zimbabwe in the study provides grounds for understanding the literary representation of white selfhood through the transition to democracy. Examining how contemporary texts represent traditional writings of the land and childhood, I examine how the self is reconstructed and re-presented through historical transition. Inter-national divergence, between daughter discourses, suggests located constructions of white selfhood. In a comparative analysis between post-Independence

white Zimbabwean writing and post-apartheid white South African writing, the construction and representation of the white self can be specified in its social and political reality. That is, self-representation can be located and its locatedness used to understand that self-representation.

Reading selfhood, I examine how the author represents herself through the child, or how the child comes to represent her self. The narrative resolution here, the resolution of childhood, is the resolution of the self. Framing the analysis in a tradition of myth, I can interpret whether the self is written to an imaginative (mythic) resolution, or otherwise written beyond the myth into a reality of adulthood. The framework supports my question of whether the author is able to grow out of convention, or only perpetuate that literary childhood into selfhood. The resolution of selfhood can then be interpreted contextually: how the child is resolved in what reality, or, why the located self grows or doesn't grow out of a re-imagined childhood. I locate the self in a tradition of representation to interpret the resolution, or not, of that tradition. Further, reading contemporary, post-colonial texts alongside traditional interpretations of the white self, I am also able to evaluate the validity and relevance of these definitions of whiteness in the present context. Thus, I locate the self in a tradition of representation to interpret the resolution, or not, of that tradition for each author individually, but further, the resolution of that tradition in and of itself.

I have structured the dissertation into two sections: Representing the land and Representing the child. Each section will comprise three chapters, the first chapter relating to *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, the second to *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam*, and the third to *False River*. I refer to J.M. Coetzee's seminal *White Writing* (1988) to form a theoretical basis for representing the African landscape, as well as to Anthony Chennells's delineation of Rhodesian settler narratives. The contemporary criticism of landscape writing that I consult includes Cuthbeth Tagwirei's examination of white Zimbabwean writing after 1980, Rory Pilossof's study of white land-reform narratives, and Nicole Devarenne's review of over a century of representation in the South African farm novel. I use Kate Douglas's theoretical paradigm of the Western literary construct of childhood as the foundation for a tradition of writing the child, and refer to Harris and Law for contemporary constructions of childhood in white Zimbabwean writing, and to Michiel Heyns and David Medalie for a convention of representing the child in post-apartheid white South African writing. I use Achille Mbembe's discussion of 'the other' in narratives of Africa to address who the represented self in each of the texts might be constructed against, and to assess the limits of white writing, I include

narratives by black writers such as Tsitsi Dangarembga and Yvonne Vera, amongst others, in my comparative analysis.

Section 1

Representing the land

In this section I will explore the representation of the African landscape, as it relates to the representation of the self. In my discussion I will consider how the authors' representation of the land compares to the pastoral tradition of writing Africa, and to the re-presentation or re-inscription of this tradition in contemporary texts. I will begin with Fuller's text, and build a comparative analysis as I move through to Liebenberg and Botha's representations.

Chapter 1

'No home': Representing the land in *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*

In his satirical essay, "How to Write About Africa," Binyavanga Wainaina lampoons, "Always use the word 'Africa' or 'Darkness' or 'Safari' in your title"; "In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands […] keep your descriptions romantic and evocative" ("How to Write About Africa"). Subtitling *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* with 'An African Childhood,' Fuller is guilty of what Simoes da Silva, referring to Wainaina, calls "view[ing] the continent [Africa] as an amorphous locus for the staging of white European anxieties" ("Longing, Belonging, and Self-Making"). With her subtitle, Fuller's voice can be critically classified within the traditional discourse of white selfhood, where 'Africa' is a construct of the European imaginary, in which the continent is semantically reduced to "one country" in an attempt to classify and control it. Fuller's title positions the text in two ways: as written to a European audience who read Africa from a particular perspective; and with the subtitle, Fuller inserts her story and her self into the African landscape.

The text is preceded by a map, where a detail of Africa is enlarged to show the three countries in which the Fuller family lived during Alexandra, or Bobo's, childhood: Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Zambia, and Malawi. Here, as with her subtitle, Fuller locates herself from and of the continent. She maps or inscribes herself onto Africa. In *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*: *Farmers' Voices from Zimbabwe* (2012), a study of white farmers' voices in the context of Zimbabwe's land reforms and post-2000 land invasions, Pilossof refers to Homi Bhabha's notion of 'writing the nation.' Pilossof suggests that the literary response by white Zimbabwean

writers to the country's land reforms is an attempt to memorialize Rhodesia in the imagination (151). Similarly, the map of Africa that precedes Fuller's story serves to immortalize the place of her genesis. Locating herself within this Africa, Fuller remaps the nation in her imagination, so that Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Zambia, and Malawi continue to exist as the loci of her history, independent of Africa's history.

Fuller describes herself embedded in this Africa. Bobo's justification of herself is directly connected to her living on the land. She defines herself as "African" because she has "lived in Rhodesia (which is now Zimbabwe) and in Malawi (which is now Nyasaland) and in Zambia (which used to be Northern Rhodesia)" (Fuller 8)[1]. Here, Fuller expresses the identity she suggests visually with the map detail. In response to the question "what are you?" Fuller locates herself in the geography of Africa, in which she is rooted (8). Fuller's justification of belonging in Africa follows Coetzee's delineation in *White Writing* in that it is in Bobo's connection to the land that defines her self.

However, the self that Bobo identifies within the African landscape differs from the definitive self of the pastoral farm novel, where the union is between the farmer's lineage and the land. Bobo is of Scottish and English ancestry, and although conceived, and for the most part raised in Africa, she was born in Derbyshire. Her connection to the land is not through birth-right or bloodline, but through having herself "lived" on the land. Fuller presents a more complex construction of white African selfhood than suggested by Coetzee's "transcendental justification for ownership of the land," because Bobo's relationship with Africa, and the ownership of the land through which she herself becomes African, is through occupation rather than inheritance (*White Writing* 106).

'Occupation' of the African landscape relates to the garden myth of colonial ideology outlined by Coetzee, where the settler is credited with returning the land to its Edenic perfection through toil, as working the land inscribes it as the property of its toilers. Chennells identifies a similar mythology at the heart of the literary history of colonial Zimbabwe, which he explores in *Settler Myths and the Southern Rhodesian Novel* (1982). In line with Coetzee, Chennells suggests that "Arcadia will be run by people who know how to keep it Arcadian": the Rhodesian settler is tasked with asserting his authority over the land, in the work of empire-building, through controlling and containing the natural world (198).

[1] All quotations from *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* are taken from the 2002 Pan Macmillan publication.

The Fullers don't imaginatively occupy Africa in the manner that either Coetzee or Chennells suggest, as descriptions of their land are largely absent from Fuller's story of the self. Fuller's father's farming endeavours are referred to tangentially: "Dad […] balances his bush hat on his head, and strides out into the yard"; "Dad was gone at dawn, coming back when the light was dusky-grey and the night animals were starting to call" (Fuller 6, 41). Fuller describes herself as "the daughter of a farmer" in knowing about cows "making babies," but the suggestion of a fertile connection between herself and farming is undermined as this anecdote concludes with the infertile cows "put on a lorry and sent to Umtali where they become ground meat, sausages, glue" (32). The end point of Fuller's description of her own relation to farming – "They become Colcom's Steak Pie" – suggests a sterile relationship with the land (32). When Fuller describes Rhodesia's historical First Chimurenga between the natives and settlers, it is from a third-person perspective, as "[t]hey [the settler-farmers] are fighting for their land in which they have put their seed, their sweat, their hopes" (27). The land is only abstractly engaged with by Fuller: through Dad, and his own obscure farming practices; through the products of farming, removed, like her, from the land; and through a reference to the Rhodesian settlers claiming the land for *them*selves through toil.

The ostensibly definitive 'African Childhood' of Fuller's memoir is an ambiguous marker, as Fuller suggests that she is both connected to, and disconnected from, Africa. Fuller writes the romantic and evocative descriptions of Africa that Wainaina satirizes. Even when describing disturbing scenes, such as her mother's drinking, Fuller frames the setting in "the syrup-yellow four o'clock light just as the sun was starting to hang above the top of the msasa trees," or under "stars [that] are silver tubes of light going back endlessly" (10, 20). Fuller's evocation of the "huge African sky" recalls Coetzee's reference to the transcendental union between the land and the landowner in the pastoral tradition (21). Following this tradition, Fuller evokes Africa through the natural world: the "spicy, woody scent of Africa" that hits her as Mum and her daughters dock in Cape Town from England is an "earthy air" (38). Harris notes that Fuller describes the site of her conception, "in the hotel […] next to the thundering roar of the place where the Zambezi River plunges," as the landscape through which she comes to understand herself – "a soul I found in the spray thrown up by the surge of that distant African river" (Fuller 33, 35; Harris 114). Fuller represents the African landscape in the tradition of white writing through her evocative imagery, which is used to support her own connection to Africa, despite her actually being born in Derbyshire.

Fuller depicts the African landscape as both supportive of, and antagonistic to, her self. Describing the African land shifting hands through history, Fuller asserts that the "land is still unblinking under the African sky. It will absorb white man's blood and the blood of African men […] It doesn't care" (25). This African landscape, that is described as historically neutral and indifferent to the men who occupy it, is represented as harsh and hostile towards Fuller and her family. "African dawn," described elsewhere as "pink-yellow," is also "noisy with animals and the servants and Dad waking up and a tractor coughing into life somewhere down at the workshop" (Fuller 5, 23). Fuller describes Karoi, the area to which the family move after their return to Rhodesia from England when Vanessa and Bobo are still young, as "the long flat place where the dust blew all day and night and the air was raw with so much blowing" (39). The farm which the family then move to in the Burma Valley is equally relentless: "The Valley represented the insanity of the tropics" (Fuller 47).

Despite asserting the land's impartiality to its occupants, and particularly to its occupants' race, Fuller suggests that the experience of the land as antagonistic to the self is a white man's malady: "The [Burma] Valley could send you into a spiral of madness overnight if you were white and highly strung. Which we were" (47). The Fullers' scouting of and settling in the Valley reflects the colonial story of occupation/displacement. At the outset, Mum and Dad are beset with idealised ambitions. Looking out over the land, "it seemed to them like this farm could hold their dreams in its secret valleys and gushing rivers and rocky hills" (Fuller 46). The basis of the settler myth described by Chennells is the image of the empty land: an unpopulated wilderness that the settler is destined to cultivate (160). Fuller describes the Valley thus: "It was humid and thick with jungle and creepers, and cut through with rivers whose banks spilled prolific ferns and mossy rocks and lichen-dripping trees teetering on the edge of falling in, and it was fertile-foul smelling" (47).

Examining white writing in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2011, Tagwirei reformulates the garden myth outlined by Coetzee and Chennells using the metonymy of 'bush' and 'Africa' to explain the white farmer's appropriation of the land. Tagwirei writes that "the bush is depicted as mostly [un]inhabitable and acutely dangerous, so much so that when whites eventually inhabit it, against the odds, it becomes a place of belonging" (82). Fuller recognises the prospect of the Valley – its potential to become farm from bush and so reinforce the family's place in Africa – as an illusion: the land "held a green-leafy lie of prosperity in its jewelled fist" (47) The secret valley of the Fullers' dreams is in reality "the middle, the very birth place and epicentre, of the civil war in Rhodesia and a freshly stoked civil war in Mozambique" (Fuller 53). Fuller shows

the garden myth of the European imaginary to be self-defeating because the end point of the fantasy is entrapment – a "jewelled fist." "There is no way out of the valley for us now," Fuller laments. "And who is going to buy the farm off us now? Who is going to buy our farm and take our place in the middle of a civil war? We are stuck" (53).

The persecutory environment of Fuller's Africa mirrors the intolerable heat bearing down on Mary Turner in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950). Stewart Crehan refers to the "binary opposition between white people, civilisation and the farm on the one hand, and black people, nature and 'the bush' on the other" in Lessing's novel, which is characteristic of the white farm-novel tradition, although Lessing uses it as the basis from which to write the collapse of white civilisation (6). Mary Turner's "suffering because of the heat" reflects Lessing's criticism of the stifling patriarchal tradition of white writing (*The Grass is Singing* 70). In *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, the environmental adversity experienced by the Fullers exposes them as an alien in Africa ("white and highly strung") and ultimately outside of the tradition explicated by Coetzee and Chennells. Fuller writes into the garden myth in her aesthetic representation of Africa, but descriptions of the cultivation of bush to farm, reflecting the apogee of white civilisation, are absent from her narrative, and the collapse of white civilisation is attributed to the land's "lie" – seduction and deception – because the land is physically antagonistic to herself. Where Lessing writes against the white tradition of writing the land, siding with the oppressive environment, Fuller shows a conflicted position, where she at once identifies herself with the land, and then blames the land for her estrangement.

Fuller's conflicted position can be related to the gendering and classification of the African landscape as mother. In the pastoral tradition, the earth is mythical wife-mother to the husband-planter (Coetzee, *White Writing* 7). The farm bears the fruit of the farmer's cultivation. But the land doesn't yield to the Fullers; they are constantly in debt. During the civil war, in the period in which the family are based in the Burma Valley, both Mum and Dad join the police reservists. Mum works in the duty room, alerting the army of attacks, and Dad goes out into the bush to fight terrorists. Fuller's description of her father's camouflage is telling: "But he doesn't blend in. He stands out. He is a white human figure, hunched with the weight of a pack and his gun" (61). The Fullers try to protect the land, as mother, but the land doesn't embrace them. Fuller's 'African Childhood' *is* the locus for the staging of white European anxieties, as I suggested in relation to the text's subtitle. Defending her African selfhood, Fuller blames the illusive fickle mother, who takes the white man into her bosom and then reveals herself to be the mother of the black man too. "This constant fear" of the volatile parent, which Simoes da

Silva identifies as "the hallmark of much white writing, Mother Africa […] unpredictable, loving, treacherous," is that if and when the mother embraces her true child, the native, the white man will be left without a land and self ("Longing, Belonging, and Self-Making"). Perceiving herself to be betrayed by the land, Fuller rejects the land in turn, blaming Africa for herself standing out.

Fuller's position towards the land relates to her literal mother. Following the passage in which Fuller identifies herself as African through having lived on the land is a dialogue in which her mother identifies her true self as Scottish, although she has lived in Africa since she was a toddler. "Mum doesn't know who she is either," Fuller explains (8). Mum's disloyalty to her Africanness reflects Mother Africa's disloyalty to Fuller's Africanness. It is Africa and Mum, the self-same treacherous attachment-figure, that has left Fuller confused and ungrounded. "My soul has no home," Fuller pronounces shortly after claiming Africanness through her conception next to the Zambezi River (35). "Maybe I found a soul hovering over the sea as my parents made the passage back to England from Africa," Fuller speculates after speculating over an African soul "found in the spray thrown up by the surge of that distant African river" (35). "Or, [maybe] it was a soul I found floating about in working-class, damp-to-the-bone Derbyshire" (Fuller 35). But finally: "I am neither African nor English nor am I of the sea" (Fuller 35). Like Mum, Fuller "doesn't know who she is." She lives in Africa, but she doesn't feel at home in Africa.

But neither does Fuller ever absolutely renounce Africa, always maintaining her primary attachment to the mother. Threatened with the loss of Robandi, Fuller reclaims her African identity. She opens the chapter in which she describes the re-appropriation of the family's farm, and their fight to retain it, with a dedication to "this land," Rhodesia, including herself in the "we [who] are born and then the umbilical cord of each child is sewn straight from the mother onto the ground, where it takes root and grows" (Fuller 153-54). Fuller expresses an ambivalent identity and claim on her African home until she is "pull[ed] away from the ground" – displaced from home – whereupon she overlooks the actual place of her birth, England, and sews and roots herself in Africa again (154).

Fuller's defensive reclamation of Africa, as she grapples with the story of the self, reflects the genesis of the plaasroman. At its inception, the Afrikaans farm novel was a pastoral defence against the transition of farmer to townsman – the threat of modernity and the city, and so, of a dying culture. "[T]he plaasroman during the 1920s and until late in the 1940s was written out

of a sense of loss," Ampie Coetzee explains. "The search for the meaning of the farm emerged from a disintegration" (qtd. in Devarenne 628-29). In the pastoral tradition, the plaasroman idealises the farm as a cradle of traditional values, and the return to the farm as offering a reconstitution of the self. A similar ideal underlies the trajectory of Fuller's story, where the personal narrative of belonging is inscribed into the historical and political story of the nation when Fuller is displaced from home. "Our farm is designated as one of those that, under the new government, may be taken away (for nothing) or bought (at whatever nominal price) by the government for the purpose of 'land redistribution,'" Fuller explains in the chapter on losing Robandi (155). Fuller concurs with the pastoral tradition in that the self is articulated in relation to ownership of the land and the potential loss of this ownership.

Discussing André Letoit's *Somer II* (1985), a subversion of *Somer* (1938) by C.M. van den Heever, who Coetzee considers to be the most accomplished of the Afrikaans farm novelists of the period, Devarenne connects the narrator's rootlessness and his mental instability. Considering the story of Afrikanerdom's rural origins, in which the farm is the home of an Afrikaner nationhood and the farmer an embodiment of Afrikaner identity, Devarenne reads Letoit's revision to suggest "schizophrenia and fragmentation as an appropriate response to living in South Africa" (637). From this perspective, Mum's mental instability, the psychological collapse of Mary Turner, and the scattered soul of Fuller, daughter and second-generation writer, represent the truth of the story of the white self in the African context. Fuller's itinerant upbringing, as she moves with her family from farm to farm, leaves her with a confused identity and ambivalent relationship to the land, which she claims, rejects, reclaims, and so on.

The Fullers' itinerancy also undermines the truth of the farm as the stable home of white selfhood. The Fullers' loss of land suggests that the white man cannot secure Mother Africa for himself. Tagwirei interprets the family's movement from farm to farm to suggest that white identity cannot not be fixed geographically; it is unbounded (169). Tagwirei's argument against the fixity of whiteness in Fuller's narrative can be paralleled to the destabilization of the traditional male-centred discourse of essential selfhood. Within the paradigm of the sovereign self, woman is to man: "[d]ependent to his independent, encumbered to his autonomous, passive to his agentive, emotional to his rational, practical to his theoretical, silent and invisible to his articulate and visible, unenlightened to his enlightened, embodied to his unembodied" (Smith 13). This tradition corresponds to the pastoral mythology of white writing, in which a woman's true self is a land that yields: "her natural place, within artistic process, [is] as subject

rather than author, as nature and artistic impulse rather than creator" (Devarenne 631). The fragmented self of Fuller's story, shifting and undefined, defies both the tradition of essential selfhood and the pastoral tradition. But Fuller's is not an absolute subversion of either tradition, because her unbounded identity is associated with displacement. Fuller inadvertently, rather than deliberately, subverts tradition in guarding her self and place.

The parallel that I draw between pastoralism and essentialism has a further implication, as the disruption of what Tagwirei calls "white boundedness" in Fuller's narrative might signal the disruption of whiteness as an essentialized category of the self (169). "What is true of gender is true of race, ethnicity, and sexuality," Smith asserts, referring to the destabilization of essential categories of selfhood (15). "[T]he comfortable hierarchization of binary pairs such as masculine and feminine, white and black, are displaced as essentializing categories" in the overturning of sovereign subjectivity (Smith 15). Exploring the reconfiguration of the white male (traditional) self, Smith cites "multiple sites of marginalities – geographical, psychological, racial, ethnic, sexual, and cultural" (20). This suggests that the self is not only or definitively, or is more than, a racialized one.

The traditional critical classification of white selfhood might be challenged, then, in a text that disrupts the representation of essential selfhood. But Fuller constantly gestures towards the inextricability of race from the story of the self. For Fuller, being "African" comes with a disclaimer: "But not black" (8). Because Fuller associates African identity with blackness, she feels she must justify herself for her whiteness. Whiteness – "a [then] ruling colour in Rhodesia" – is the basis of the master narrative of Mum and Dad, but it is "the wrong colour" in Fuller's story, in which the settler myth begins to fragment (Fuller 29, 8). But "colour" continues to structure the discourse.

Fuller's whiteness becomes increasingly significant as the family's homelessness progresses. Harris recognises that as the family's occupation of the land becomes more tenuous, the land is depicted as increasingly harsh and unwelcoming (115). Devuli Ranch, to which the Fullers move from Robandi, is "an uncomfortably hot place bordering on oppressive" (Fuller 166). Fuller refers to a map of the 1920s, in which the area is marked 'Not Fit for White Man's Habitation' (166). In cross-reference to the map that precedes the text, Fuller now directly marks her whiteness onto Africa, but negatively, because writing Rhodesia, which no longer exists, neither as a place nor nation, has been exposed as an act of mythmaking.

The destabilization of the myth of "white boundedness" – the fixity of the self of the farm – is not a triumphant reality for the Fullers, where whiteness transcends boundaries, because as the family move across the landscape, Fuller is further displaced from an African identity and sense of self. Fuller expresses a fissured whiteness, but to counter her displacement, she continues to position her white self in Africa. While whiteness might be geographically fluid in Fuller's story, according to Tagwirei, it is a constant that she employs to uphold and defend herself against shifting borders. "[W]hiteness is always deferred," Tagwirei argues, "its meaning never fully manifesting itself in any coherent manner," although, I would argue, it is always being reached at (169).

The loss of the family's authority as the ruling colour in the country corresponds, then, to their losses of land, which Fuller buffers in reinforcing her identity and belonging in Africa. The death of the three Fuller children can be connected to the family's losses of land, as it is Africa that claims them (Harris 115). Mum and Dad "leave the small anonymous hump of their son-child," Adrian, in the cemetery in Salisbury, and leave Africa for England; the Fullers "drive away from […] the baby [Olivia] who lay under the soft, silent pile of red-fertile soil cut into a barely contained cemetery" in the Burma Valley; and Mum's complicated pregnancy with Richard is attributed to "[l]osing the farm," Robandi (Fuller 32, 94, 173). Each child is subsumed into the land, and his/her death related to the Fullers' landlessness. The death of the children, particularly both boys who are lost, can be interpreted as a metaphorical abortion of the lineal transference that characterizes the farm-novel tradition. Olivia is buried "in the cemetery where the old white settlers are lying in their big, proud graves," but she is out of place, like Dad is in the bush, in "a little baby-sized coffin" (Fuller 93). The loss of Adrian, Olivia, and Richard to Africa reflects the Fullers' displaced identity, but it also roots them in the land, the birthplace and burial ground of their children (Harris 115).

Where Fuller shows an oscillating representation of the self in relation to the landscape, which she is attached to and displaced from, her depiction of 'Africans' is more systematic. "[T]he most important function of the myth," Chennells writes, "was to deny that Africans were capable […] of being creative without the authority and example of some higher race" (6). In *On the Postcolony* (2001), Mbembe describes the "concocted identity" of 'the African' within the colonial ideology of Africa: "an identity that allowed her/him to move in the spaces where she/he was always being ordered around, and where she/he had unconditionally to show submissiveness – in forced labour, public works […]" (113).

On the family's holiday drive through war-torn Rhodesia, Fuller sees that the "war has turned the place back on itself, giving the land back to the vegetation": "plants […] spill and knot and twist victoriously around" (101). As white civilisation begins to collapse, there is a regression of farmland to bush, or a return of the garden to wilderness. The regressed wilderness follows colonial lines. The European settlements have "flowering shrubs and trees" – "a soothing oasis" – where the Tribal Trust Lands are "blown clear of vegetation," revealing "barren, worn soil" (Fuller 104, 105). Interpreting Fuller's image in Mbembe and Chennells's terms, the European settlers, a higher race of creative authority, have "clipped," "planted," and "mown," where the Africans, without being ordered around in forced labour, "are not practising good soil conservation, farming practices, water management" – have, as Coetzee writes of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, "declin[ed] into the idle and brutish state of the Hottentots" (Fuller 104, 105; *White Writing* 3). Fuller suggests that the natural state of Africans is idle and brutish, but also that the land doesn't naturally yield to them, the "red, raw soil" reflecting "their open eroding lives" (105).

Fuller further concurs with the pastoral mythology's designation of Africans in her representation of the family servants. As the mythology is founded on the preservation of a rural Dutch order, where the farm is governed by a patriarch of a productive family of children and grandchildren, the black man is largely occluded from the narrative. "Blindness to the colour black is built into the South African pastoral," Coetzee explains (*White Writing* 5). "[T]he black man becomes a shadowy presence flitting across the stage now and then to hold a horse or serve a meal" (Coetzee, *White Writing* 5). Tagwirei suggests that, while black labour on the land continues to be absent from land-reform narratives, black people are "re-place[d]" "as objects of the white man's social benevolence, albeit bordering on paternalism, [the white man] claiming an affinity towards them, and not forgetting to note how much blacks accept whites in turn" (104). Fuller's representation of Africans follows the tradition more closely than Tagwirei's reading of more recent texts.

The example I give here is of Kelvin, one of the Fullers' servants in Zambia, who appears in the text in a scene in which Mum is complaining about the loss of white-run Africa to an English guest over dinner. Kelvin is introduced in having "cooked the dinner," and Mum is said to have "*organized* Kelvin," which can be related to Chennells and Mbembe's argument for the African being ordered around in forced labour, and identified only in this role (Fuller 18). This is supported by Mum's nostalgia for "an oasis, a refuge" of a white-ruled country – an idyll in which the black man can be maintained in his place (Fuller 18). Following this scene,

Fuller relates an anecdote of Kelvin having intoxicated himself with insect repellent while trying to kill the flies in the kitchen. This story of Kelvin, appearing alongside the earlier one suggesting his shadowy presence beneath the Fullers, supports Kelvin's position as disconnected from the natural world and the proper order of things. Again it is Mum who puts Kelvin in his place – "[b]loody idiot" – which echoes her disillusionment at the unseating of the colonial order by a new African government – "[b]loody, bloody cock-up" (Fuller 19).

The young Bobo echoes Mum and Dad's sentiments in her disregard for the family servants. "I'll fire you, hey," Bobo tells Violet, her nanny in Karoi, when the latter tries to discipline her (Fuller 42). "You are too cheeky," July, the family's servant at Robandi, reprimands Bobo when she bosses him in his own language (Fuller 81). I will discuss the child's appropriation of her parents' moral perspective in the next section. What I want to emphasize here is the ideology on which the text is constructed. Bobo reinforces the prejudices of Mum and Dad, and what is being reinforced is the duality between the self and other.

Mbembe discusses the Western philosophical and political tradition of denying any other self but its self. Africa is conceptualized in terms of "absolute otherness," against which the West constructs its own identity (Mbembe 2). Narrative about Africa thus provides ground for the West to imaginatively construct itself. The silence and blindness to black Africans in Fuller's text reinforces the representation of the white self. This self is not reinforced through compassionate affinity with the other, as Tagwirei suggests of contemporary land-reform narratives, but through patronizing antagonism.

Representing the white self through writing the other, Fuller writes into "a meta-text about the *animal* – to be exact, about the *beast*," which Mbembe identifies as a hallmark of discourse on Africa (1). Fuller likens "[t]he boys […] Dad's most loyal labourers" to a pack of hunting dogs in her description of them "going to catch" July, who robs the farmhouse (125). Cephas, who "can smell where terrorists have been," "takes off at a run, watching the ground steadily, not hesitating, reading soft signs in the dew-crushed earth which tell him secrets" (Fuller 125, 129). Pilossof recognises the contradiction in connoting 'African' with black in white farm narratives, where the author herself is claiming to be African (174). Similarly, dehumanising "the boys" under Dad's domesticating authority, Fuller shows these Africans to be closer to the land than their owner, who only domesticates. "Dad can't see how Cephas can tell which way July and his companion have gone," where Cephas can "touch the earth and know if an animal has passed that way" (Fuller 130, 126). Cephas's intuitive bond with the land, in which

she reveals to him her secrets, is an inherited gift: "Cephas has learned secrets from his father," a witch doctor (Fuller 125). It is Cephas, rather than Bobo, who exhibits the transcendental and lineal connection to the land underpinning the ideology of the plaasroman. Bobo is further removed from the physicality of this connection as she, the daughter of a farmer, hears "the story of that night," in which Dad and his boys went to hunt down July, "in bits and pieces" (Fuller 129).

Writing into a discourse in which the African other is represented with primal and unknowable inner depths, Fuller places herself at a distance from this inborn Africanness. Her romantic and evocative descriptions of Africa are a means through which she can nostalgically know the land, and so claim an innateness. "What I can't know about Africa as a child (because I have no memory of any other place) is her smell," Fuller writes, and then further on, "The other thing I can't know about Africa until I have left […] is her noise" (133). The senses are then evoked through redolent descriptions, where Fuller places herself in the environment. Tracing the stream of nature's sounds from dawn through midnight, Fuller describes herself in resonance. "I begin to understand its language," she writes (Fuller 134). So in tune is Fuller with this language of the natural world that she "automatically, almost subconsciously" responds to it (134). This expression echoes Mbembe's argument for narrative about Africa, where "Africa is the mediation that enables the West to accede to its own subconscious and give a public account of its subjectivity" (3). Fuller's narrative about Africa provides a landscape through which her identity is brought to consciousness, so that she can know herself. Fuller's claim to know herself, through knowing Africa, is characteristic of the discourse of essential selfhood in which the self is knowable. Fuller reverts to essentialism when her selfhood is threatened.

Harris suggests that Fuller fashions her white Zimbabwean identity through claiming victimhood in her mother-land (117). 'Losing Robandi,' the chapter in which Fuller defends this land, Rhodesia, against the newcomers, can be used to verify Harris's contention. Mum's pregnancy with Richard is foregrounded to suggest the family's vulnerable and compromised position: "Mum's belly makes it hard for her to get on her horse"; "Mum has come back from the ride pale […] sliding down the saddle […she] grimaces, holding her belly" (Fuller 157, 160). In the "fierce fight for land" that Fuller describes, the squatters are depicted as savagely defiant (165). At the confrontation in the village erected on the family's farm, to which Bobo and Mum have ridden out, a woman in the community "suddenly, in a rage of bravado, runs at Mum, shouting in a high tremulous, singing voice, and strikes Caesar [Mum's horse] on the

nose" with a gourd (Fuller 159). The men "start to run after Caesar, shouting and waving their badzas and machetes," and "heaving whatever comes to hand at Mum and her horse" (Fuller 159).

The Zimbabwean army soldiers that then break into the Fullers' house and hold the family at gunpoint are represented similarly. "You jumped into my bedroom window," Dad tells the soldiers. "That is not a civilised thing to do, that is a baboon thing to do" (Fuller 163). Representing the opposition as aggressive and uncivilised, Fuller plays up the defeat of white civilisation, as the family suffer the loss of their home. Mum, with the promise of fertility – "a baby […] swelling in her belly" – is described as "beaten, broken" (Fuller 156, 160). The defeat of pregnant Mum reflects the termination of the Fullers' claim to the mother-land. "This is Zimbabwe now," a soldier tells Dad. "You can't just do as you please from now. From now it is we who are in charge" (Fuller 164).

Fuller's description of Devuli, where the family move to following the loss of Robandi, with its "flat acres of scrubby, bitter grass, mopane woodland, acacia thorn trees [and] thorny scrub," reflects the landscape of the barren, worn Tribal Trust Lands (168). Cattle farming rather than crop farming on the ranch, the family break with the land. This lapse might be interpreted within the framework of the garden myth. Coetzee explains that the myth arose out of a fear of colonial degeneration. The colonists "were apprehensive that Africa might turn out to be not a Garden but an anti-Garden" (Coetzee, *White Writing* 3). The Fullers' African landscape is an anti-Garden in "[t]his […] Zimbabwe now." Mirroring the landscape of the Tribal Trust Lands rather than that of the European settlements described in counterpoint on the family's road trip through the country, the regressed landscape of Devuli suggests that the Fullers are incapable of cultivating the bush. This interpretation is supported by the elsewhere absent descriptions of Fuller-produced Edenic beauty, and by the family's poor farming fortune and land tenancy. The Fullers are not the colonial settlers, landowners, and cultivators of the garden myth, who nurture the bush into farm, and civilise the land.

Fuller's complex, dual relationship of convergence with and deviation from the colonial story of the self can be explored in addressing the family's physical shifts across the African landscape. In *Nomadic Subjects* (1994), Rosi Braidotti uses the notion of nomadism to figure the Subject. Braidotti employs the term to suggest the movement away from and against tradition and convention (5). Read within this frame, the Fuller family's nomadism represents Fuller's own divergence from the traditional story of representing the land. Fuller constructs a

different sort of white subject than previously imagined by Coetzee and Chennells because her represented self lacks the fixed centre or definitive essence characterising the landowner in the African pastoral myth.

Braidotti contrasts the farmer's established attachment to the land with the nomad's transitory connection, denying that this transitory condition is homelessness, and suggesting, rather, that passing through homes, the nomad takes home with her (25). This is where Fuller's representation breaks with Braidotti's figuration because, for Fuller, landlessness is homelessness. The Fuller family's continued relocation exacerbates Bobo's sense of dislocation from home, as she is unable to take home with her. For Braidotti's nomad, physical relocation becomes an opportunity for a cognitive remapping of old ways of thinking (29). But although Fuller diverges from the old ways of representing the self, she doesn't remap the traditional discourse of writing the land in its entirety, but, rather, uses the pastoral mythology to suit her (new) construction of self. When her nomadism becomes rootlessness or displacement, Fuller recalls the settler myths of occupation and selfhood to re-establish herself on the land.

Where Fuller travels in and out of the traditional critical landscape of white writing, meeting and veering from Braidotti's nomad, her subject differs fundamentally from Braidotti's because the latter is "in transit and yet sufficiently anchored to a historical position to accept responsibility and therefore make [her]self accountable for it" (10). Within a discourse of victimhood, Fuller doesn't acknowledge her family's responsibility in their nomadism, claiming, rather, displacement in their homeland. Fuller excuses the family for their poor farming fortune and suggests that their nomadism is forced upon them, rather than accepting and acknowledging the family's poor farming practices, and their position in history through which they owe a land debt. Fuller shows an unsettled rather than a transitory relationship to the land. She is not sufficiently anchored in the colonial position to accept responsibility for it, but neither is she entirely free from this position as she draws on it in the story of her self.

Fuller's projection of responsibility relates to the nervous condition of the white self. I make a case for this condition with reference to Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988). In the epigraph to her novel, a semi-autobiographical account of the developing consciousness of Tambudzai, a young Shona woman in 1960s/70s Zimbabwe, Dangarembga quotes Jean-Paul Sartre in his preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961): "The status of 'native' is a nervous condition" (17). Discussing the marginalisation of the white subject in post-

Independence Zimbabwe, Tagwirei appropriates and modifies Sartre: "the status of the white man in the post-colonial state is a 'nervous condition'" (156). Tagwirei's argument supports my reference to Fuller's own instability, reflecting the disturbance of Mum, Lessing's Mary Turner, and Letoit's Wynand. The second part of Sartre's assertion is that the nervous condition of the native is introduced and maintained by the settler (17). Continuing Tagwirei's inversion: in the post-colonial state, the nervous condition of the white man is introduced and maintained by the native. Fuller's text can be used to support this claim as she attributes Mum's nervous breakdown to the loss of Richard, which she in turn attributes to the stress of Independence and the family's loss of land.

The time "before Richard died," "[w]hen [the family] first moved to the ranch," is evoked then as prelapsarian: "a period of delicious hubris," in which Bobo "explored the ranch as if [she] were capable of owning its secrets, as if its heat and isolation and hostility were embraceable friends" (Fuller 204). This description is unlike the introductory explanation of Devuli Fuller gives, where the "uncomfortably hot place, bordering on oppressive" is 'Not Fit for White Man's Habitation' (166). When 'White Man's Habitation' is threatened with disintegration, Fuller replaces Cephas with herself and her intuitive (secret) bond with the land.

But with Mum's nervous collapse, the rootedness that the lost Fuller children confer on the remaining family is disrupted. "Richard and Adrian are in unmarked graves," Fuller writes. "They float and hover, un-pressed down" (217). The ephemerality of the "ghosts of [Mum's] dead children" reflects how far the Fullers have been displaced from their landedness (Fuller 217). Because Fuller is unable to fully construct a self outside of the myth, or in Braidotti's terms, to take home along with her, it is the new Zimbabwean land that is implicated in having lost its sense and mooring. "[T]hen the outside world starts to join in and has a nervous breakdown all its own," Fuller writes, "so that it starts to get hard for me to know where Mum's madness ends and the world's madness begins" (203).

Sue Thomas affirms Tambudzai's investment in her education, in Dangarembga's text, as a wilful break from the fate of her mother (33). In the traditional community represented in *Nervous Conditions,* women occupy a marginalised and subjugated position that is similar to women's designated status in the farm-novel tradition. Thomas refers to the "myths of femininity" upheld and perpetuated in the Shona patriarchy, and to Tambudzai's "matrophobia, that is, fear of becoming like her mother" (30, 33). I suggest that Fuller shares a similar anxiety – here, of becoming mad like Mum – because then she would have to admit to her own nervous

condition. Fuller's anxiety is not so much about becoming trapped in a patriarchy, but about becoming trapped in her own psychology. Fuller ends the passage in which she refers to the blur between Mum's madness and the world's madness with a reference to herself: "I cannot determine whether it is me, or the world, that has come off its axis" (204). Fuller alludes to her own mental instability, but then represses this potential pathology. Fuller's own vulnerability isn't explored beyond this brief reference, but rather couched in "Mum gone crazy" (207).

Fuller hides behind Mum's nervous condition, which she further displaces onto Africa. Describing the terrain the family must cross on their journey from Zimbabwe to Malawi, Fuller writes, "But this is Africa, so hardly anything is normal" (228). It is Africa that is implicated in becoming unhinged. Fuller describes her conflation between Mum's madness and the world's madness "like being on a roundabout, spinning too fast. If I look inward, at my feet, or at my hands clutching the red-painted bar, I can see clearly, if narrowly, where I am in spite of the sick feeling in my stomach and a fear of looking up. But when I pluck up the courage to look up, the world is a terrifying, unhinged blur" (203). If Fuller looks inward (into herself), she is grounded, but if she looks outwards (onto Africa), she loses her footing. This inward-looking is not self-reflection and awareness, however, but a defensiveness and denial, where Fuller casts her condition off onto the mother-land.

Despite Fuller's denial and projection of the nervous condition, a shift in her representation is nonetheless reflected in her description of the changing landscape and its native population here. Where the farms on which the family previously resided are represented primarily in relation to environmental or atmospheric conditions – the wind of Karoi; the humidity of Robandi; the heat of Devuli – Mgodi Estate in Malawi "is set up on gently sloping, sandy soil, seeping into the horizon" (Fuller 236). Here the land is concretized in Fuller's repeated reference to "the red soil" (236). Here also is the closest that Bobo is described in relation to the land: "Mum and I both work on the farm"; "I am supposed to make sure that the tobacco has been planted with appropriate spaces, that the crop is weeded, that the plants are topped and reaped correctly" (Fuller 238, 240). But as Fuller's description of the farm and herself become more grounded in the land, she is simultaneously further alienated from belonging in this land. "There was a constant, unspoken tension in the air, expressing the Malawian's superiority over all other races in the country," Fuller explains. "Even Europeans who had been in Malawi for generations, and who held Malawian passports, were on permanent notice" (238).

The intimacy that Bobo experiences with the Malawian land and the Malawian other reflects her descend deeper into the anti-Garden. Coetzee evokes Joseph Conrad in describing the colonist's fear of uncovering "a garden ruled over by the serpent, where the wilderness takes root once again in men's hearts" (*White Writing* 3). The family's estate in Malawi is described as "overrun with weeds"; "[t]he large garden is thick with mango trees and is a sanctuary for birds, snakes, and the massive black and yellow four-to-six-foot-long monitor lizards" (Fuller 230, 237).

Out farming one day on her motorbike, Bobo has an accident with the child of a Malawian family, and in an inversion of belonging, is "invited into the home of a black African to share food" (Fuller 243). The man whose home Bobo is invited to eat in is described at first sight "under the cool, damp leaves, on a reed mat […] lying almost naked, with a young boy of twelve or thirteen, also hardly clothed by his side" (Fuller 241). Although the boy is later revealed to be the man's invalid son, Fuller's introductory description of the boy's "member […] exposed, flaccid and long against his thigh," and the man "softly caress[ing] the boy's arm, almost absentmindedly, as if the arm draped around his neck were a pet snake," are evocative of the "peculiar feature[s]" of an imagined Africa as isolated by Mbembe: "absolute brutality, sexual licence, and death" (Fuller 241; 2).

In a garden ruled over by the serpent, the Fullers are impotent. "We feel more dangerously, teeteringly close to disease and death (in a slow, rotting, swamp-induced fashion)," Fuller writes of the family (249). The Fullers' displacement here is embodied: Dad erupts in boils, Mum's hair goes grey, Bobo is diagnosed with anaemia, and Vanessa is hospitalized with malaria. Mbembe refers to "the strange and the monstrous" in discourse on Africa (1). The monstrous other that Fuller represents is her own shadow. I will discuss the notion of the shadow as the otherness of self in more detail in the next chapter on Liebenberg's text. Here I use the reference to illustrate how Fuller is exposed within her own corrupt mythology.

Reflecting on the fate of literature following the transition to democracy in South Africa in "Walking through the door and inhabiting the house: South African literary culture and criticism after the transition" (2009), Meg Samuelson wonders "who gets to inhabit the house of a new national culture" (130). Samuelson evokes Ingrid de Kok's image of the transitional point as a doorway, and questions the national home beyond this liminality. Implicit in Samuelson's question is a reflection on the place of the white self in the post-colonial state. Describing "our house" in Malawi, Fuller notes that "[t]ermites and lizards ha[d] set up house

on the walls" (237). This reference echoes the allusion to the family's garden as bush, and suggests that the wilderness is encroaching. The Fullers' can't maintain their place in the garden, as their continually regressive landscape suggests, and they are now more directly displaced from their house. Fuller's repeated reference to the family's derelict and encroached-upon house is particularly significant as she recognises that the "black African," who invites her for a meal, has a "home." As Fuller moves further beyond the transitional moment, the relationship that she maintains between the land and home begins to unravel. In the new national culture, the Fullers might have land and a house, but they have no home.

The distance between the transitional moment at the birth of Zimbabwe and the land reform movement after 2000 is reflected in Robert Mugabe's changing rhetoric, from his inaugural speech at Independence in 1980, in which he called for a reconciliation of the country's past and its racialism, to the statements he made after the turn of the century in which he directly undermined the white man's place in Africa. In 2002, the year that Fuller's memoir was published, Mugabe was quoted in *The Herald* stating that white farmers "belong to Britain and let them go there. If they want to live here we will say 'stay,' but your place is in prison and nowhere else. Otherwise your home is outside the country" (qtd. in Harris 105).

Fuller's text can be grouped with the numerous other land-reform narratives that are written in response to the antagonistic political sentiments of Mugabe's government. Fuller resists inhabiting the house – her place in the post-colonial reality – as she, amongst the oppositional voice of the white farmer, attaches herself to an imagined home. In an essay for *New Statesman* in 1958, Lessing wrote that, "All white-African literature is the literature of exile: not from Europe, but from Africa" (qtd. in Fletcher 15). Fuller refuses this recognition even after a displacement from home post-colonially.

En route to the family's new farm in Zambia, where they move on to from Malawi, Fuller notices "some reminders of our European predecessors," or moreover, the ruins of an "imagined glory" and failed "dream" "as their comrades fall" (270). The Fullers' occupation of Serioes Farm is described as an attempted resurrection of this dream: "Dad will rework – regenerate – this exhausted, lovely farm"; "[w]e whitewash the walls"; "[t]he vegetable garden is […] replanted (Fuller 274, 277). Further displaced from home, Fuller re-places the family in "land more beautiful and fertile and comforting" (272). The fertility of the Zambian land suggests the promise of the family's future in Africa, but this is not the potential for a new (post-colonial) house, but a promise that is contained within the mythic frame of white

selfhood, as Fuller describes the "air clear[ing] and the sky appear[ing] wider and deeper" as the family drive towards Serioes (272).

Where Devuli was 'Not Fit for White Man's Habitation,' this "land could not have settled itself more comfortably for human habitation" (Fuller 272). The reference to the land having "settled itself" suggests that this African farm is the natural place for the white-African – against Mugabe's contentions. This description of Zambia is also in contrast to Fuller's description of the family's alienation in Mgodi, where they "are white and alone, an isolated island" in a sea of Malawians (250). Fuller continues to represent an exclusively white position, but in Zambia the family are restored to their mythic authority on the land. "[H]uman habitation" is against the insects and plants encroaching on the family's space in Malawi, and it is also implicitly against the uncivilised natives who have forced the Fullers off their own land.

"[H]uman habitation" also has a particular significance in Fuller's construction of white selfhood. The benevolence Tagwirei suggests white farm owners typically bestow on their black workers in land-reform narratives, to defend and excuse themselves, is reserved in Fuller's text for the family pets. Redefining the field of ecocriticism to explain the relationship between man and animal, Patrick Murphy replaces "self" and "other" with "we" and "another," where "another" is "neither self nor other in any absolute dichotomy but [is] familiar and connected with us" (88). Applying Murphy's definition to Fuller's representation, I suggest that Fuller draws on the connectedness between "we" (human) and "another" (animal) to further distance the (black) "other" from the "self."

When Mum finds an injured spotted eagle owl at the workshop at Serioes, she brings it home to nurse. The owl is rescued by Mum from Zambians, who, superstitious of owls, bind the bird's legs, suspend and spin it, cheering. Mum gets an enclosure built for the injured owl in the garden and proceeds to feed it as it convalesces, of which the family servants disapprove. The kinder Mum is to the animal, the more monstrous the Zambians appear. Reworking Mbembe's argument for discourse on Africa, a meta-text about the animal (here, the owl) shows up the beast (the native) and its bestial nature.

The abuse of Violet, one of the Fullers' domestic workers on Robandi, by July and his companion during the robbery is described similarly to the abuse of a family dog on Devuli: "Violet has been sliced, like rashers of bacon, all the way up her thighs, across her belly, her arms, her face"; "Oscar, our Rhodesian ridgeback, is found […] sliced up and down with a panga" (Fuller 124, 208). These descriptions link Violet and Oscar in bestiality, but moreover,

they expose the absolute brutality of July, and implicate the black other in the abuse of the dog. When Cephas and Dad's 'boys' catch July, their bestial nature – "they kick him again and again" – must be circumscribed by Dad, who, domesticating them, says, "That's enough, hey" (Fuller 131). Discussing the interconnectedness between the Benade family and their dogs in Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf* (1994), Wendy Woodward writes that, within this representation, "racialized humans, rather than animals [are constructed] as others" (99). In the case of Fuller's text, the family's domesticated animals include Violet, Cephas, and Dad's 'boys.'

This last argument can be linked to the notion of the noble savage, which Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow distinguish from the beastly savage in *The Africa That Never Was*: *Four Centuries of British Writing About Africa* (1970), where the former "epitomized the ideal of British character" (26). Reading Fuller thus, Cephas's connection to the land reflects the family's own. Hammond and Jablow also note the representational evolution of the noble savage to the loyal savage, "the very best of subject peoples" (111). The loyalty the Fullers' domestic servants are made to show them, those that do, reflects the family's own natural goodness: benevolence, and selfhood. The disloyal servants are beasts. The representation of domestic animals in Fuller's text reflects the family's potential for feeling, and it also defends them against the beast in themselves, which they displace onto the other. The human habitat that Fuller constructs on Serioes is specially delineated; Bobo's "luxurious life": "I am sitting on the veranda […] Adamson [the new houseboy] shuffles through from the kitchen with a tray of tea for me […] There is a singing chorus of insects and birds; yellow-feathered weavers crash out from the bougainvillea where their nests hang like tiny, intricate baskets. The dogs lie belly flat on the veranda […]" (278, 279).

Despite her claims that her soul has no home, Fuller holds onto Africa to the last. Returning to Zambia after studying overseas, she recalls the same "sweet, raw-onion, wood-smoke, acrid smell of Africa" that she associates with her arrival on the continent (Fuller 295). Fuller imaginatively reconciles her position as white-African in denying the identity of an exile. "It's good to be home," she tells the immigration officer at the airport, echoing her mother's words as she brings Bobo home to Africa from England as a child: "Smell that […] that's home" (Fuller 297, 38). At home, Fuller is again able to read the landscape – to know it, and so to know herself in relation to it. "These are the signs I know," she writes, describing the "hot, blond grass on the edge of the runway," and the "sky […] open and wide, great with sun and

dust and smoke (Fuller 296). The imagery that Fuller uses to invoke Africa, and by extension her home within it, are patterned from the opening to the close of the text.

The narrative of Bobo's return home is also bound up with her meeting Charlie, her husband-to-be, who is associated with the Africa of her imagination. In Wainaina's satire, he writes that to demonstrate "how much you love Africa […] and can't live without her," "[i]f you are a woman, treat Africa as a man who wears a bush jacket and disappears off into the sunset" ("How to Write About Africa"). Charlie is "an American […] running a safari company in Zambia" (Fuller 298). Fuller describes him as "a passionate man. A man of lust" (300). Uniting with Charlie, Fuller merges with her fantasy of home – that she can't live without.

But as the anti-Garden, as a reflection of the family's corrupt selfhood, rears its head in every location into which they settle, so too does its insidious presence undermine her union with Charlie. "My wedding bouquet is made from wild African weeds not flowers," Fuller writes. "The stagnant green pool is hidden with brightly coloured balloons. White building sand covers the cow and horse shit in the paddock where Charlie and I exchange vows. The trees (bare-limbed in mid-winter) are festooned with crepe-paper-covered hula hoops" (304). In Fuller's fairy-tale of Africa, she cannot write over the landscape and its decaying mythology. The final image of Fuller's presence in the African landscape, at her wedding, and before she moves with Charlie to America and becomes an undeniable exile, reflects her ultimately perverted union with the mother-land.

To conclude the discussion of Fuller's identity as it relates to the represented landscape, I refer to the exiled position of Coetzee, who is commonly viewed as the critical authority on African pastoral and the associated construction of the white-African self. In an email interview Adeeb Kamal conducted with Coetzee for an Arabic publication, which appears transcribed in J.C. Kannemeyer's biography of the writer, Coetzee is cited as saying of his immigration to Australia in 2002 that, "Living in Adelaide is not a form of exile. Adelaide is my home" (582). Where Fuller continues to identify Africa as her home and birthplace, Coetzee is able to re-place himself elsewhere. In another passage Kannemeyer writes that, "Having for much of his life written books in which South Africa featured centrally, [Coetzee] realised that he had never really succeeded in escaping the country. This was why he repeatedly told people that he had not left South Africa, but come to Australia" (541). For Coetzee, unlike for Fuller, Africa is not home, and yet, as Simoes da Silva writes of white African authors, "Africa […] retains its powerful hold on [his and] their imagination" ("Longing, Belonging, and Self-Making").

Simoes da Silva refers to the imaginative project of writing Africa in relation to the exiled position; Fuller is of the "generation […] now adrift" ("Longing, Belonging, and Self-Making"). It is because of and from this exiled position that Fuller represents Africa as home. If Coetzee no longer considers Africa to be his home, and by extension, no longer considers himself to be African, then perhaps, in the post-colonial context, he should be re-placed as the critical authority on white writing from Southern Africa. Comparing Fuller's representation of the landscape to the traditional representations outlined by Chennells and Coetzee suggests that the historical perspective is relevant in so far as it illuminates present representations of the land and self. Coetzee and Chennells are appropriately placed in a historical rather than an authorial position.

Fuller's is not the voice of the father, but that of the mother, and then, not the traditional version of the mother, but a mother that is "beaten, broken." "[D]iagnos[ing Mum] with manic depression" at the very close of the text, Fuller expresses her own disjointed connection to the land (306). In Mum's fragmented letter to Fuller in America, she describes their present house as derelict and their future house as half-built, which is the abyss in which Fuller floats: between places, never inhabiting any fully.

Chapter 2

'A shadowy otherworld': Representing the land in *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam*

The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam can be read within the traditional discourse of white selfhood from the text's opening. Liebenberg frames her narrative with an introductory 'Historical Note' and a separate one-page preamble, and a glossary at the back. In the 'Historical Note,' Liebenberg contextualizes "[t]he story you are about to read" with a brief history of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, from Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 to the democratic elections of 1980 (n.p.)[2]. This note, together with the glossary that follows the text, positions Liebenberg's narrative, in the way that Fuller's subtitle 'An African Childhood' does, within the European imaginary of Africa. Liebenberg's account of the country's political history is more objective and less sardonic than Fuller's description of the First Chimurenga, but the mere presence of a 'Historical Note,' which explains Africa in the European imagination, situates Liebenberg's perspective of the continent within a paradigm of white selfhood.

In *African Laughter*: *Four Visits to Zimbabwe* (1992), Lessing's account of revisiting her homeland, Lessing introduces her text with 'A Little History' (3). Lessing's 'History' can be likened more to Fuller's historical insertion of the Chimurenga than to Liebenberg's 'Historical Note' because it is written in the spirit and tone of the text, rather than constructed artificially and dissociated from "[t]he story you are about to read." In the distance between the impersonal voice and perspective of the 'Historical Note' and that of the text, Liebenberg's "story […] takes place in a dying country" (n.p.). It is framed by an ostensibly objective history, but subsumed ultimately in a subjective one in which the self "takes place." Because Lessing is the most self-conscious of the tradition of white writing of the three authors, Liebenberg, in the historical framing of her story, is the least. Liebenberg's 'Historical Note' is a pretence of objectivity and neutrality, which only exposes her self in a tradition of representation.

Liebenberg's glossing of particular words, which appear in italics throughout the text and are then translated in a glossary at the back, furthers the cultural divide set up between Africa and the West through the 'Historical Note.' Fuller also italicizes certain words in her text, such as *muntus*, but she doesn't translate these words in a glossary in the way that Liebenberg does.

[2] All quotations from *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* are taken from the 2011 Virago publication.

Discussing the use of glossing against the inclusion of untranslated words in post-colonial texts in *The Empire Writes Back*: *Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures* (1989), Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that the insertion of untranslated words is a more deliberate expression of cultural difference, where the divide is of language. Following this argument, Fuller, with her un-glossed references, represents a more exclusive and authorial position for the white self in Rhodesia than Liebenberg does. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin also recognise, however, that in the gap created between the annotated word and its translation is the presence of an asserted self. I argue for this interpretation of Liebenberg's text, where glossing "presents the difference through which an identity (created or recovered) can be expressed" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 62). Translating the glossed words for the reader, the self asserts and expresses its authority more overtly than the implicit assertion of self that Fuller's representation suggests.

In addition to the various italicized terms in Fuller and Liebenberg's texts, there are other contextual references that the authors make, such as to Terrs and the Tribal Trust Lands. Pilossof recognises the common inscription of references like these in land-reform narratives to be evidence of the authors' attachment to traditional ways of representing the white self (170-71). Although Fuller and Liebenberg use these terms in the representation of a particular historical moment rather than re-inscribing them in the present, their appearance in the text, alongside the other italicized references, suggests that the authors represent the self through a specific imagined history.

In the fictional fragment that precedes the first chapter, and which frames the text together with the 'Historical Note' and the glossary at the back, is the narrator's first reference to "my forest" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 1). I will discuss the forest as it is represented within the mythology of childhood in the second section on representing the child. Here, I explore how the reference relates to the garden myth delineated by Coetzee through a comparison with Richard F. Wiles's *Foredoomed is my Forest: The Diary of a Zimbabwe Farmer* (2005), which is one of the land-reform narratives reviewed by Pilossof. In a re-inscription of the traditional mythology, Wiles writes of his farm, "I always called it 'my' forest because it was my personal and passionate concern" (qtd. in Pilossof 166). Where both Wiles and Liebenberg allude to an Eden, Wiles imagines his forest to justify his ownership of the land through active (passionate) toil, where Liebenberg evokes the forest to frame it as a mythical place. Where Wiles inscribes himself onto the land in the manner that Coetzee and Chennells describe, Liebenberg evokes the myth as a "garden of innocence" (*Voluptuous Delights* 1).

Nyree's forest is Edenic in so far as it is the home of the serpent. In a forest wetted by "the lush rain of Africa," there is the accord between heaven and earth that is characteristic of the traditional pastoral representation of the African landscape, but the yields of this rain are insidious: "spiderlings supping from their yolk sacs […] the strictured breathing of the vines as they strangle one another […] the praying mantis that delicately, greedily feasts upon her lover" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 1). Where the absence of Edenic yields in Fuller's representation reflects her own complex relationship to the land, Liebenberg represents an Eden to suggest the naiveté from which the self falls. For Liebenberg, Africa isn't a land that gives and takes away, because an idyll of productive yields is mythical. Within the myth of Eden is the potential for the fall, or, within the myth of a land that gives is the potential for a land that takes away. The garden's serpent – the portentous "he" of the preamble, who is later revealed to be the girls' cousin, Ronin – arrives when "[i]t was raining," which suggests that the potential for the fall is inscribed into the mythic orientation between heaven and earth (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 1).

Setting up a framework for the narrative in metaphors of the land, Liebenberg goes on to delimit the borders of the garden. As the narrative framework is defined in relation to the land, so too is the existence of the narrator, Nyree, and her younger sister, Cia, contained within its bounds. "[T]here's nowhere but the farm," the narrator writes (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 4). The forest is reinforced as a garden of innocence because the land and reality beyond it is unknown. What Nyree describes as the sameness of the girls' days on the farm, "a metronome of ritual metering out the well-worn path of the sun across the faded blue sky," can be related to a tradition of writing the land (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 4).

The family's farmhouse is described as a ruin, which is in line with the Myth of Great Zimbabwe, whose ruins attested to the existence of an empire with its roots in European civilisation, as described by Chennells (7). In the imagination of the Pioneer, the land would be re-established as Europe's property and the settlers would reinstate Europe's civilisation. Nyree's description of the family ancestry reflects this mythic delineation, as the girls' "Great-grandfather had to toil for years to hew the farm from the savage African land" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 7). The story of the family's legacy is related to the girls by Oupa, who tells them that it was Great-grandfather's "blood, sweat and tears that watered the earth" to establish the family's place in Africa (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 7). This reference echoes Fuller's reference to the white farm settlers of the First Chimurenga "fighting for land in which they have put their seed, their sweat, their hopes" (27). Both Liebenberg and Fuller

suspend the child's voice – through Oupa and a mature Bobo respectively – in deferring to the authoritative perspective of tradition, through which the narrators identify themselves.

But where Fuller refers to the first colonial settlers in Rhodesia in defence of herself, Liebenberg distances her narrator from the tale of Great-grandfather, which "Oupa tells over and over" (*Voluptuous Delights* 7). The conclusion to Oupa's family tale is that Great-grandfather's legacy falls onto Cia and Nyree to bear, "although it is a crying shame [that they] aren't sons" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 8). The girls don't fit into the traditional tale of the garden myth. The story that Liebenberg tells through her narrator is of the degeneration of the farm. The pillars of the family's farmhouse, Modjadji, built by Great-grandfather in 1912, "are being slowly strangled by Zimbabwe creeper, and a frilly grey lichen is feeding off the gangrenous roof slate. Inside […] the 'art deco' tiles, imported from Europe for the entrance hall, are fractured now, crisscrossed with dark veins, and the Zambezi teak beams in the rest of the house are rotten in places" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 7). Where Fuller hides behind the decay of the tradition, never quite admitting to or taking responsibility for it, Liebenberg foregrounds a rottenness.

Liebenberg re-inscribes the myth to expose its dark heart. The soil on which Cia and Nyree belong, or "love to root is rich and loamy and slithers with dark, slimy creatures of the underworld" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 8). Rather than the idyllic Eden of the mythic imagination, the girls are at home in a forest that Oupa calls Paradise Lost. With the constructed home of whiteness rank and fetid, the farm is no longer the apogee of white civilisation, but is itself nowhere: without grounds for its existence, or on grounds that no longer support its existence. When Oupa and the girls visit the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, the narrator describes them as "stone ghosts that rise from somewhere beneath the earth called antiquity" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 55). Emerging from the underworld, this version of history now hovers above the land, as Fuller's lost siblings do, because this tradition of representation is 'past' or ruin-ed.

Liebenberg delineates the existence of the forest and the farm in relation to one another. "Cia and I possess the uncommon power to live in two worlds at once," the narrator claims, "the world you can see, and the other, the one you can feel" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 18). The ruin of the farm represents the devastation of the myth (the world you can see); the forest is its otherworld (the one you can feel). The girls leave the farm, the crumbling establishment of white selfhood, "climb through a secret hole in the Terr fence and flee into the forest"

(Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 18). This "shadowy otherworld of whispering and secrets" is the same home of Cephas, whose inherent bond with the land I refer to in the previous chapter on Fuller's text (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 18). But where Fuller attempts to appropriate this relationship with the land, Liebenberg describes this otherworld to expose the garden myth. Liebenberg's narrator recognises that "always it is the forest that opens my eyes" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 18). The unearthly and ethereal nature Liebenberg ascribes to the forest provides a perspective through which the girls can be "lifted above the grubbiness" of the farm in order to see it as a tale of the self (*Voluptuous Delights* 19).

Oupa is the oracle for this mythic narrative, but because the girls can sense the otherworld – the one you can feel – they are able to see through the world you can see and the tale that is related to them. Explaining that on most days Oupa lectures the girls on Great-grandfather's toiling, the narrator writes in parenthesis afterwards, "although Cia and I, having discussed this in private afterwards, suspect that it was probably more like Great-grandfather supervising the Afs toiling" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 13). Suggesting the Afs toiling over Great-grandfather, Liebenberg unsettles imagined identities, so that the Afs are inscribed onto the land and the white farm owner occupies a myth. At home in the otherworld of the forest, the girls are able to perceive the constructedness of Eden.

Nyree refers to Oupa's recitations of the tale of Great-grandfather and the land as his sermons, "which sound like words from the Holy Bible" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 13). Oupa understands the world you can see in the binaries of a religious discourse, where duty and damnation reflect the essentializing categories of Great-grandfather and the Afs. Oupa is represented through the language of this mythic reality, condemning his brother, Seamus, "a Prodigal Son," who went astray from his duty to the pastoral lineage in "tast[ing the] forbidden fruit" of the city (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 14, 15). "[E]nthroned on the *stoep* in his old cane armchair, which fans out regally behind him" and from which he can deliver his sermons, Oupa represents the patriarch of this dualistic tradition and master narrative (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 13). His vision encompasses the farmstead and its settler history, and an otherworld that it bound between heaven and hell. Fleeing into the forest, a more nuanced world that you can feel, the girls reflect Braidotti's nomadic subject, who transcends the stories of the past. Following the girls tiptoeing around to the back of the *stoep* and fleeing across the lawn away from the farmhouse and Oupa, Liebenberg represents a more calculated departure from the myth than Fuller's complicated relationship with the land suggests.

However, the otherworld of Liebenberg's imagination is not without its own convolutions. Where, in her union with Charlie, Fuller follows Wainaina's satirical classification of the female writer who professes her love for Africa through her love for a passionate man who wears a bush jacket, Liebenberg's narrator appears, in her engagement with the forest, to adopt the opposite gendered classification or writerly position. "Africa is the only continent you can love," Wainaina counsels the author, "take advantage of this. If you are a man, thrust yourself into her warm virgin forests" ("How to Write About Africa"). Describing her and Cia's journey into the forest, Nyree explains that "[a]s we enter the forest, fear caresses me […] out here alone in the darkness, I have to summon every ounce of courage I possess to plunge into the depths of the forest" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 21). As Nyree goes deeper inside, "the night and the forest begin to cast a different spell. The hour is nigh and [her] excitement mounts" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 21).

The girls' excursions into the forest can also be related to the tradition of colonial adventure that goes back to H. Rider Haggard, writing at the end of the 19th century. Hammond and Jablow identify Haggard, with his *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) – the first African adventure published in English – as a significant figure in this tradition, which was characterized by "stirring tales of adventure in exotic locales" (101). The critics describe the fiction of empire as "a manly literature, relating to the deeds of brave men in sport and war, travel and empire-building" (Hammond and Jablow 101). They also recognise that many of these novels contain suggestions of a repressed sexuality – they are superficially asexual, but sexual in overtone – which can be related to the sexually-naive position of Nyree and yet the sexual intimations of her engagement with the forest. If Nyree is interpreted to reflect Wainaina's parody of the male author of Africa, as well as a colonial tradition of adventure in her physical and sexual exploration of the forest, then Liebenberg's nomadic subject is not entirely free from a master narrative. Fleeing from the farm, Nyree diverges from the tradition of writing the land in one respect, but exploring the unknown terrain of the forest, she converges in another.

In addition to the farm and forest, Liebenberg delineates the space of the garden, which might also be interpreted as a gendered representation. I have up to now referred to the African pastoral mythology, specified by Coetzee, that delineates between wilderness and farm, a cultivated garden. But Liebenberg marks out the garden as a separate space on the farm, and it is Mom's garden: flowerbeds and vegetable patch. Considering the pastoral tradition in which the land is mythic wife-mother to the farmer, assigning the garden to Mom, Liebenberg allows woman a more active role in cultivating the land. The garden, then, is a woman's place, where

her connection to the land is more authorial. This interpretation is supported by Oupa's adversarial position to Mom. Symbol of the pastoral tradition, Oupa undermines Mom's place in the garden, telling the girls that Mom, "nostalgic for something she's never known [Eden], [will n]ever see past her quaint, too-garish flowerbeds to the stink of corruption underneath" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 8-9). Following my reading of the garden/farm, it is the old, patriarchal pastoral tradition that is corrupt, as Mom plants her garden to make space for herself. "She may have given up on Modjadji," Nyree says of Mom, "but to her garden she is devoted" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 9).

The forest might then be interpreted as the female child's equivalent of Mom's garden. As Mom nurtures her garden to assert her place on the land, Nyree imaginatively creates an identity for herself away from the farm: in the forest that she conjures and where she belongs. The girls appropriate Mom's re-placement of herself, but on land that is more imagined. Nyree's creation of the forest reflects Ellen Moers's delineation of a distinctly female landscape mirroring a woman's body in *Literary Women* (1976). Examining a tradition of English, American, and French female writing from the eighteenth century onwards, Moers argues that a woman-author's representation of "open lands, harsh and upswelling, high-lying and undulating, vegetated with crimped heather or wind-swept grasses, cut with ravines and declivities and twisting lanes" is a means through which she places herself in the landscape (262). As a female landscape, Nyree's forest is fertile ground for self-discovery.

Where both Bobo and Nyree create a landscape for themselves, Fuller's narrator responds to a threatened displacement from home in moving back and forth between farms, or between location and dislocation, where Liebenberg removes the self absolutely from the threat into an otherworldly fantasy in which the self's imagined identity is supported. Nyree refers to the girls' hideout in the forest: "[c]ossetted inside our den, my fear begins to fade" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 21). Nyree may recognise that the pastoral tradition is groundless and corrupt, but, no longer supported by that myth, she imagines and hides in another, which is equally illusive in its support of the self.

In her essay in Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* (1990), Gillian Beer discusses the fictionalisation of England as an island: "[d]efensive, secure, compacted, even paradisal – a safe place" in the English imaginary (269). Fuller's representation of the land concurs with Beer's description, where the island of the self is contextualized within the obsolete nation of Rhodesia and the mythic tradition of white writing. The superlative "isolated island," which is

how Fuller describes the family's position in Malawi, is apposite to Liebenberg's representation of "our garden," as a-contextual or extra-contextual: beyond borders (geographical, historical, political).

When Nyree comes back down to earth, to the farm, and to a country in the midst of a civil war, she realises that "now we are alone. No one will help us" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 30). Nyree claims isolation in the context of attack by the Terrs and abandonment by England and South Africa. The sentiment echoes Fuller's when she writes that "mostly we are white and alone [in Malawi]" (250). Law uses Fuller's lament in the title of an article in which she discusses white female writing: "'Mostly we are White and Alone': Identity, Anxiety and the Past in Some White Zimbabwean Memoirs" (2014). Law includes both Fuller and Liebenberg's texts in her critique of what she refers to as "limited constructions of self that are insufficiently mindful of history" (2).

Law argues that these authors counter their post-colonial anxiety over displacement by re-placing themselves in an imagined landscape of whiteness, where the 'aloneness' of the self reflects an isolation from the current political and historical context. Law cites Ruth Frankenberg, who, in her introduction to *White Women, Race Matters*: *The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993), argues that "whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege […] it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which people look at ourselves, at others" (1). Fuller ("white and alone") does this more directly than Liebenberg ("alone"), but the "we" in each instance is the same because the black other is placed in Liebenberg's landscape in the way that he is in Fuller's.

Jobe, the family's servant in Liebenberg's text, occupies the same position as Kelvin does in Fuller's text, and although Liebenberg's representation is characterized more by the white man's social benevolence towards the black other than Fuller's is, this only further shows up the construction of the self. Toni Morrison identifies the construction of the white-American self through "a master narrative that spoke for Africans and their descendants, or of them" (50). Morrison's argument, which relates to Coetzee and Mbembe's reference to the colonial author's blindness to the black other, has particular significance for Liebenberg's representation of Jobe. Liebenberg writes Jobe to harbour the same scepticism towards the garden myth as the girls do, with his "pretence at respect for the *baas*" of the farm, but when Jobe speaks (is spoken for), it is only to reinforce the girls' story of the self (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 27). "Jobe often panders to us in a way that no one else will," the narrator

explains, "[…] indulging our fatuous fairy fantasies and other rot and drivel, [as] Oupa says" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 88).

Pandering to Jobe, with pages dedicated to his life story, the narrator appears to sympathize with his perspective. Jobe is re-placed in Liebenberg's narrative as an object of compassion, but his life story is included in, and subsumed by, Nyree's. "Jobe doesn't only have one life story, though," Nyree continues, "he has lived many, many lives. Me and Cia squat on the floor and listen to them and clap in the good bits. The best bit is when Jobe was Jobe the Gold Miner (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 88). In this story, Jobe is buried "below the surface of the earth" – the story of the land – in "Oupa's Hell," which Nyree equates to the mine underground (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 92). Jobe describes the place where he worked as "cold! It was enough to turn the *ubudoda* – the manhood – into a small boy's" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 91). Jobe is emasculated by Liebenberg in his voicelessness, and, with cross-reference to the flaccid member of the young Malawian boy in Fuller's text, he is infantilised, and invalidated in barbarism.

In the foreword to Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967), Bhabha notes the author's reference to the dualism between self, as coloniser, and other, the colonised, as a "Manichean delirium," where the racial split into white and black follows the lines of value of a good-evil duality (xiv). This designation of self, a "neurotic orientation" that is mythically-based, can be related to the nineteenth-century legend of West Africa as 'The White Man's Grave' (Fanon 60). P.D. Curtin describes the "black legend about the climate of tropical countries," which is "elaborated with such elements as 'primitive tribes,' burning heat, fever-laden swamps, swarming insects, and miles of trackless jungle. Above all," Curtin continues, "West Africa is thought of as a place where white men cannot work" (94). The idea of 'The White Man's Grave' is powerfully explored in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1901), although Kurtz's journey is through Central Africa. The legend had its starting point in West Africa, but the image of Africa that emerged from West Africa was often superimposed onto other African countries and Southern Africa, and so I use its premise in my analysis of the authors' representation of the self and other.

If Africa is thought of as a place where white men cannot work, the Manichean delirium is a conceptual displacement of the self as good, or successful, farmer. Both Fuller and Liebenberg represent this vision of Africa. Fuller's description of the Burma Valley and Mgodi Estate in Malawi is reflected in Nyree's Oupa's reference to the "steaming tropics of Africa" and "the

ever-encroaching African wild" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 48, 47). Oupa imagines Africa in this way in relation to "the legions of invading invertebrates, from white ants who secretly eat the wood in the farmhouse […] to swarms of technicoloured locusts, who simply devour everything, to the disease-carrying flesh-eaters" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 48). This image of an insidious host preying on the flesh of the white-African is related by Oupa to "a special kind of horror – a primeval horror," which is the white man's psychosis on rupture from imagined selfhood – Kurtz's "The horror! The horror!" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 48; Conrad 90).

The Manichean delirium, as argued by Bhabha in his foreword to *Black Skin, White Masks*, exposes "not Self and Other, but the 'Otherness' of Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity" – a shadow lurking in both Fuller and Liebenberg's texts (xiv-xv). In *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam*, the mysterious other of the anti-Garden is the girls' cousin, Ronin. The grandchild of Seamus, who defected from the story of the father and the farm, the boy is pronounced by Oupa to be a "little bastard" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 43). "'Everything's the wrong way round,' Oupa laments on the *stoep*," the vantage point of the farm settler. "'There's 'er [Ronin's mother] with 'er bastard, and your own mam barren when it comes to a son and heir," he tells the girls (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 43). It is the *n'anga*, or witchdoctor, who Nyree and Cia visit on their way home from the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, who is able to see beyond Oupa's limited vision to "the coming of the darkness" – Cia's death – and to "the one who will come among you who will bring suffering" – "your enemy," Ronin (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 61). "[T]he darkness" suggests the termination of the "unending twilight" of the girls' fantasy and a confrontation with the self's shadow (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 19).

Liebenberg represents a complex subversion of the pastoral tradition in implicating Ronin in the plundering of Eden because, offspring of the Prodigal Son, Ronin represents a bastardized version of the myth. Liebenberg undermines a tradition whose representation is already compromised by the status of the enemy, which then obscures the identity of the actual enemy. If Oupa, an embodiment of colonial ideology, and Ronin, outcast from this ideology, are adversaries, who and what is being implicated? I suggest that, positioning Ronin as the intruder of Eden, Liebenberg implicitly implicates the narrator, her represented self. Ronin and Nyree are akin in that neither are the son and heir of the pastoral imaginary. Othering Ronin as "the stranger," which is how Nyree refers to her cousin on first seeing him, she concurs with Oupa's

version of reality, without realising that in this version she is equally estranged (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 65).

Ronin, the stranger, is characterized in relation to the pastoral imaginary of the other. "[T]ear[ing] branches from trees and thrash[ing] their trunks," Ronin reflects the animal, or the beast (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 67). Ronin's characterisation further aligns with Mbembe's delineation of discourse on Africa, where "the continent is the very figure of 'the strange'" (3). An embodiment of inscrutable Africa, Ronin, "aloof," is the absolute otherness against which Nyree imagines herself (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 67). Nyree compares Ronin's eyes to "Great-grandfather's colourless […] eyes": "[t]heir blue is so pale as to be grey, almost see-through, and when he looks right at me, through me […] they make me feel somehow apprehensive" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 71). The appearance of Ronin, "like a blond boy […] faintly girlish," exposes Nyree's own subconscious as it reveals her post-colonial anxiety that the mother (the land) will be snatched away from her, with "Mom's being especially nice to [Ronin]," and that the other will replace the father, with "Ronin reckon[ing] he's the man about the place […] like Dad" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 71, 66, 73).

Where, in Fuller's text, the narrator's instability, or neurotic orientation, is projected onto the mother and the land, I argue that Liebenberg re-places her self through Ronin, who acts as the medium for Nyree's dislocation. In the preamble to the text, Nyree suggests that "once he [Ronin] came a kind of madness bloomed in our garden" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 1). The madness of the girls' Eden, the mythic home of selfhood, is associated by Nyree with Ronin, whose projected identity further aligns with Mbembe's account of othering, where "Africa [is] a headless figure threatened with madness" (3). Ronin's strangeness in the garden can be attributed to his estrangement from the mythic lineage, but where Oupa dismisses Ronin as a little bastard, Nyree includes him in "our garden" as the serpent. Ronin is the other in the narrator's imagination.

In *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson argues that the nation is an imagined community, through which selfhood is narrated. Anderson draws on Gertrude Stein, who, on returning to her childhood farmland in Oakland, which had subsequently been destroyed, pronounced that "there is no there there" (qtd. in Anderson 5). Stein's "no there there" reflects Fuller's "no home" and Liebenberg's "nowhere." What is "there," then, is a narrative of "we," or a writing of the nation. Anderson quotes Ernest Gellner, who writes that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-

consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" (6). Although 'Africa' is one construct and 'the nation' another, I discuss the two together because, implicit in the Western construction of Africa, is a justification of white nationhood.

Fuller's claim to know herself as African is not self-awareness, but a defence of self. Liebenberg's narrator's eyes are open to an otherworld. As Fuller is conscious of Rhodesia, Nyree's senses are alive to her own invented world, whose whisperings, or signals, are make-believe. Ronin is described as "watching [the girls] furtively" and "closely" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 94, 99). His eyes are "see-through" because they mirror the otherness of self, but moreover, because they expose the mask or pretence of self-construction. Tom Nairn relates nationalism and neurosis as a disorder of history and the individual (Anderson 5). This suggests that the flipside of sovereignty is a neurotic orientation, and it is here where Ronin and Nyree's eyes meet. There is no "there there" to Ronin in and of himself. Ronin is Nyree's reflection and deflection.

Nyree exists, with Bobo, in an imagined community that justifies itself through victimhood. Representing Ronin "gloating" over Jobe, as the boy taunts the servant for being a "stupid old kaffir" and doing women's work, Liebenberg reinforces Ronin's position as the enemy to her self, or to her representation of a self that sympathizes with Jobe (*Voluptuous Delights* 95). Shifting the aesthetic from Ronin's "girlish[ness]" to his "ugliness" – from an aloofness to an arrogance as he is further implicated in otherness to the self – Liebenberg distances him from the narrator, who is then affirmed to "avenge injustice" against Jobe (*Voluptuous Delights* 97, 96). The less kindly Ronin is represented towards Jobe, the more benevolent the narrator appears, as she defends Jobe and gives space again to his story. Aligning with Jobe in principle, Nyree assumes the identity of the victim (at the hands of Ronin), as Fuller does when she imagines the new Zimbabwe to turn on her.

But lamenting victimisation is a subliminal assertion of power. Nyree is sovereign or author over Ronin's representation, and according to the neurotic orientation or Manichean delirium between self and other in Nyree's story of power, Ronin is evil and Nyree is right. Nyree, "creates," in Mbembe's understanding of the post-colonial reality, her "own world of meanings" (103). Before Ronin appears in Nyree's narrative, the girls are subject to Oupa's story of the self, which, although they might resist, they still receive. Because Ronin is the declared enemy of the girls, in "the escalating hostility between Ronin and Oupa," it might be expected that they side with their grandfather, and inadvertently, with his story (Liebenberg,

Voluptuous Delights 107). But Nyree's primary concern regarding Oupa's righteous war on behalf of the tradition is that "it doesn't bode well" for her (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 111). Nyree is represented as descendent of a mythic tradition that forms the framework for her construction of self, but, like Fuller, she writes into the myth without taking responsibility for it. Mbembe refers to the constructed world of meanings at the heart of state power as "a master code," which can be said, in Fuller and Liebenberg's texts, to replace the master narrative of white selfhood outlined by Coetzee and Chennells with a discourse of victimhood in which the self is at home in an imagined community: Rhodesia, the forest (103).

Liebenberg, like Fuller, shows a complex relationship to and representation of the garden myth, but the tradition continues to inform the way in which she places the self in the landscape. With the threat of Ronin, Nyree recurrently returns the narrative to the forest – this imagined world of the self. In the girls' first flight from the farm, they are almost caught on their way out by Oupa; in a later fleeing, it is Ronin who almost catches them. If Nyree's escape from Oupa reflects an attempted break with the tradition of landedness, her flight from Ronin suggests a denial of her own liminality as white selfhood is threatened in a historically-transitioning landscape, between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. "[B]eing caught by [Ronin] in the darkness seem[s] terrifying" to Nyree, and so rather than confront the dislocation that he reflects in her, she blames him for ruining Eden (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 116).

The girls flee into the forest away from Ronin to beg the fairies not to "let him steal [their] mom," or land, but because the land that they know, our garden, is imagined, Ronin only threatens to taint their idea or fantasy of themselves (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 116). Ronin's return to boarding school, the girls' freedom from the reality he poses, is narrated by Nyree "on the *stoep*" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 117). When the girls take Oupa's place on the *stoep*, it is not a regression to mythical belief, or a displacement of Oupa with the historical reality, but a surmounting of what both Ronin and Oupa represent. Nyree refuses the white self that Oupa embodies, as she refuses the threat to the white self that Ronin embodies, by creating her own mythology of selfhood. In Ronin's absence, Nyree fashions a return to the idyll, as the girls "slip into the languor of high summer" and "sun-steeped drunkenness," echoing the "luxurious life" that Fuller constructs on Serioes in an attempt to resurrect absolute selfhood (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 118).

On the way back to the farm from their holiday at Victoria Falls, it appears as if the family are on the border of a renewed reality, in confrontation with the other, as they encounter "a

disturbance in the bush" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 125). This turns out to be a puppy, however, which they then adopt, affirming themselves in the way that I've suggested the Fullers do with their domestic animals. Moosejaw, the girls' new dog, is described in "devotion" to them (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 129). "Flushing out fairies in the forest while sporting a tiara," the dog is represented on behalf of girls' fancies as Jobe is, both domesticated animals 'anothered' to affirm the girls' natural place in the garden (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 129). Oupa calls Moosejaw "a gluttonous vulture," which suggests that the dog is related to the narrator in self-indulgence (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 131).

Rewriting a myth that has forsaken Oupa, Liebenberg evokes the self through the female line of the lineage: Nyree's grandmother, Oupa's wife, Angélique. Nyree is tied to Angélique, "named after her, or at least second-named after her" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 22). But connecting the self to the maternal ancestry, Liebenberg is not motivated to redress the gender bias in the tradition any more than Fuller is when she describes her mother's vulnerability. It is the post-colonial anxiety of being lost, the fear of where the old myth has left her, that impels Nyree to relocate herself. "I'm afraid to call upon Great-grandfather, toiling and toiling with his soulless eyes," the narrator explains, because this story leads nowhere (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 22). Angélique is the "best ancestor to pray to" because associating with "[h]er secrets" might link the self to the land (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 22). The characters are then written to support the new designation: Moosejaw provides "the way into the attic where Angélique's belongings are stored" and Jobe tells the grandmother's story (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 132).

Angélique's having died from a snake bite positions her in mythic Africa, but on behalf of the self, against Ronin, and as the spirit that lives on in Nyree. As Moosejaw saves the girls by killing a mamba in the graveyard where Angélique is buried, Africa cannot be imaginatively taken away from Nyree (by the serpent). Nyree's perspective is strengthened against what is suggested to be Oupa's parochialism as he recounts an anecdote from "the old Transvaal a long time ago" about a snake-charmer (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 133). Oupa associates "the *munt* and the black mamba" as the other in traditional Eden (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 133). Ronin, the black mamba in Nyree's story, is not a *munt*. But because Ronin is othered by Nyree and Oupa, he is not simply or only the white woman's enemy either.

Liebenberg doesn't revision Nyree's story in place of Oupa's, because the source of her self is part of the patriarchy. Nyree's ancestor is Oupa's other half, and Angélique is imagined in

mythic terms. Oupa's voice narrates the formation of his wife in "the ungodly wilderness of Africa," but it is the narrator who rediscovers her in the present (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 139). The wooden tea chest of Angélique's in the attic "opens [the girls] to another world – a romantic, lavender-potpourried world lost for ever to time" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 140). The girls' discovery in the attic reflects Chennells's description of the romantic quest for "the lost city" in the Great Zimbabwe novels of the early twentieth century (25). Angélique is evoked in the tradition defined by Chennells, and her memory provides a satisfying outlet for Nyree, as the forest does: another world in which Nyree "hanker[s] for [Angélique's] possessions in those chests […] to stroke them […] to be near to her" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 140, 139).

As the idyllic summer wanes, Nyree notices that "[i]t's […] dry, drier even than usual for the season" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 143). "Oupa says drought is Africa's nemesis," but if Africa exists in Nyree's imagination, then the enemy and fall is of herself (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 143). Without Ronin, who is associated with the rains as the object of mythic displacement, "[o]ur forest floor" and "our lush undergrowth […] dies slowly of thirst" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 144). Nyree cannot maintain an absolute self without projecting onto her shadow, so that "the skin of the earth […] split[ting]" in deprivation reflects the fragmentation of the narrator's internal landscape (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 143). The forest, through which Nyree splits herself off from Ronin as the other, "looks nothing like ours as it is" in the dry season, where Ronin is actually an excrescence of the narrator's self (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 146).

The duality that Fuller suggests between the oasis of the European settlements and the eroding soil of the Tribal Trust Lands doesn't hold in Liebenberg's equalizing drought. Although the narrator acknowledges that "the TTL look way worse" than the farm district, the colonial line between the two collapses as both suffer under the designation of "the Earth" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 147, 149). The earth is barren to the old myth of the self and other without an otherness of self. "Old Modjadji feels more lonely and isolated" in this season as Nyree is unhinged from the original designation and missing her other half (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 143). The fire that then sweeps the drought-stricken landscape illuminates Nyree's construction in that the threat to Cia's life here, as she is for a time lost in the night, is not connected with Ronin (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 150). The "serpent of flame […] snaking its way across the face of [the mountain], consuming the forest like a searing, crackling fiend," exposes, not Ronin, but Nyree (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 149).

Confronted with "the naked mountain," "her secret groves and crevices exposed," and "the loss of our forest" and the illusion of the self, Nyree, like Bobo, displaces her dislocation in narrative flight: the family go to Lake Kariba (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 153, 155). The journey is associated with Dad's homecoming, as are all the family trips. Dad's visits are described by the narrator as "kind of like going on holiday," which suggests a legacy of displacement, where "com[ing] home" is a flight of the imagination (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 31, 155). Nyree's dad's defence of white civilisation against the Terrs, who are implicated in starting the fire, echoes Fuller's dad's rebuke of the Zimbabwean soldiers at Robandi, whose behaviour is not civilised but baboon. "[L]et's all get the hell out of here and go fishing," Nyree's Dad says when he comes home, "which is the only civilized thing to do under the circumstances" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 155). Nyree denies the Manichean delirium even as she inscribes the dualities of the master narrative. The realm of fire is compared to "Satan's dominion," in which the good farmer is ruined by "god-damned savages" – as named by Dad – and the devastation of the land described as "the worst kind of bad there is" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 149, 153).

Nyree's displacement of the Manichean delirium also takes on particular significance on the family's trip to Lake Kariba as she describes Oupa going "mad in such a fantastical place" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 159). Nyree relates the "boil[ing of] Oupa's brain" to his being so far from the *stoep*, the farm environment supporting Oupa's limited perspective (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 159). Oupa's decline into madness is related by Nyree to the end of his – the traditional – story: "Oupa is there but somehow isn't" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 160). "[I]n truth," Nyree speculates, "for old folks, it's like their story has ended before they have, and all that's left is the retelling – except they're not heard or even seen by the ones whose time it is, instead they're seen only by us, the ones whose time has not yet come – until the book finally closes on yesterday's story" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 160-61). Nyree's reference to the expiration of Oupa's (the colonial) narrative can be interpreted through Mbembe's argument for the post-colonial present as "precisely that moment when different forms of absence become mixed together: absence of those presences that are no longer so and that one remembers (the past), and absence of those others that are yet to come and are anticipated (the future)" (16). The past is represented by Oupa. Oupa is the presence that is no longer so, although Nyree remembers the myth as yesterday's story. Ronin represents the present reality and emerging future – the coming darkness.

The emergence of the shadow-self was classified by Freud as the 'return of the repressed.' This notion, described by Mark Featherstone as "the repressed […] emerging from the unconscious to trouble the conscious mind," is pertinent in Liebenberg's text as the girls discover the Shangani graves in the forest (50). The girls' discovery of the graves resonates with the exhumation of the black corpse in Nadine Gordimer's subversive farm novel, *The Conservationist* (1974). Devarenne argues that the washing up of the corpse in Gordimer's text is symbolic of "a supressed blackness asserting it presence" on the land (635). In Liebenberg's text, the unearthing of the skeletons is said to anger the ancestors, so that when Ronin is found to have destroyed the skulls, he is placed as the enemy of this ancestry.

Defending her self, Liebenberg paints a simplistic racial portrait, where the enemy within our people (Ronin) desecrates an age-old, native intimacy with the land. Liebenberg's preoccupation with righting the land in white and black is insignificant, however, compared to what this exhumed ancestry suggests about the self. If the unearthed skeletons in Liebenberg's text are likened to the exhumed corpse in Gordimer's novel, what is signified is a repressed inner landscape; what Michael Thorpe refers to, in relation to Gordimer's protagonist, Mehring's repression as "a truth beyond the self" (187). Mehring finally acknowledges that the black corpse is "always there" (Gordimer 236). Neither Ronin nor Oupa are "there"; the self is. Liebenberg's narrative, unlike Gordimer's, but like Fuller's, is not primarily a subversion of the nationalist discourse of white selfhood and its associated essentialism, but a story of the self.

Although the two are children, because Nyree's is a discourse of victimhood, her defence of self against Ronin might be interpreted as the female victim's defence of her place within the patriarchal tradition of the farm novel. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin relate feminism and post-colonialism in the project of writing back to the paradigm of male hegemonic selfhood, in which women are traditionally colonized and marginalized. Applying the critics' argument in Nyree's context, "forced to articulate [her] experiences in the language of [her] oppressors" – Oupa's story – Nyree has "had to construct a language of [her] own" – her own garden mythology (174-75).

Ronin claims to be doing "ol' Oups a favour" in killing Moosejaw, Nyree's totemic selfhood, which suggests that Ronin's persecution is an extension of Oupa's own – both of which Nyree must write back to and against to assert herself (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 185). Nyree describes being afraid of Ronin as she does of Great-grandfather, the source of his penetrating

stare (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 168). But if Liebenberg wanted only to undermine a patriarchal authority, she needn't have created Ronin. Her narrator might have as easily defended herself against Oupa, and the memory of Great-grandfather. I have also argued that although Angélique might provide an imaginative outlet for Nyree, she is contained within Oupa's myth, so that drawing on her memory, Nyree doesn't defend herself against the patriarchal tradition. Distancing herself from the myth in rejecting Oupa's language – the language of the oppressor – Nyree doesn't liberate her womanhood, but only claims victimisation elsewhere: through Ronin. If Nyree is represented as the victim of a gender bias, it is to support her position as prey rather than to unsettle it.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin note further that some feminist critics have argued that the essentializing categories of a patriarchal discourse have erected a false boundary between races in women's authorship (176). I argue that Liebenberg and Fuller's narrators are linked in selfhood and womanhood through their racialized identity. The authors are connected specifically as white women in the same context rather than only as women, and it is through this racialized identity that they identify and defend the self. Fuller and Liebenberg, writing into a discourse of victimhood, are not making claims to womanhood so much as they are making claims to white woman- and selfhood.

But as the corruption at the heart of whiteness is exposed in Fuller's text, even as she tries to mask it, the tenuous foundations of Nyree's selfhood become undeniable to her. Because it is "more than just fear" that Nyree feels for Ronin, he represents something other than Oupa and Great-grandfather's supremacy (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 195). Liebenberg refers to Nyree and Ronin's connection as a "secrecy that shrouds," which suggests that their intimacy is of the land (of secrets), but in shadow (repression) (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 195). Nyree's admits that she and Ronin are "intimate in a sordid way" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 195).

Hammond and Jablow distinguish between the representation of the Dark Continent, an externalisation, and the Dark Labyrinth, the psychological exploration of the self through exploring Africa (135). For Nyree, Ronin is Africa, the land, in that he is the "unexplored continent which [she] alone must discover" (Hammond and Jablow 136). In the foreword to *The Africa that Never Was*, Charles R. Lawrence reflects that the British authors Hammond and Jablow discuss "have revealed more about themselves […] than they have told us about Africa" (n.p.). As Nyree moves away from the Dark Continent to the Dark Labyrinth, Ronin's

second absence at the scene of Cia's fall, where she tumbles down the rockslide at Mermaid's Pool, affirms that he is not a physical, but a psychological threat to the girls. The rain that eventually falls on the farm returns the land to its orientation, where "everything [is] washed" of "everything [being] bathed in amber": romantic representation (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 203).

But Liebenberg doesn't take the journey through the labyrinth to its end point, which Hammond and Jablow describe as "a confrontation with ultimate truth," because, although the girls "go exploring every day," their "forest is coming back to life" (144; Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 204). Liebenberg's journey is circular because the rain that falls "[a]s darkness falls" this summer, the "dying day," can be paralleled to the rain that orientates the text around Ronin in the preamble (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 203). Neither Fuller nor Liebenberg map their own psyche as neither of their texts transcends their frame: Fuller's map of the continent and Liebenberg's garden.

In the European imaginary, Africa becomes "the new map of the unconscious," onto which the self is projected (Hammond and Jablow 145). Ronin is mapped onto the girls' garden as he follows them into the forest, where they go to consecrate Moosejaw's grave. Here it is Nyree who "lie[s] in wait for him," to lure Ronin in position to her as the hunter (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 205). Consecrating Moosejaw's death in the forest, Liebenberg links Nyree's loss, of Moosejaw and Cia, to the land, and so roots her self in Africa as the Fullers' lost children do them. The scene of Cia's death, which begins with "holy incantation[s]" to Moosejaw, followed by the "holy mission" of Cia's flight from Ronin, is depicted as a ritual sacrifice to the land and self (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 206, 209). "[S]tumbling over knobbly roots and rocks," Nyree reflects Ronin, "crashing through the forest with none of the seraph's nimbleness" as he hunts Cia down (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 210).

At first, the forest yields to Cia, "as she dances through the weeping willows," but then the "[v]ines […] claw at her, roots twist and buckle to snare her feet" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 210). Cia's entrapment by the forest reflects the construction of mythic selfhood as its own entrapment, although here the garden turns against Cia to support Nyree's reconstructed myth of the self, where Ronin is the serpent. Hammond and Jablow explain that the original image of the Dark Labyrinth, prior to its psychological orientation, was coupled to 'The White Man's Grave,' where Africa is represented as seductive and destructive (137). It is in this sense that Nyree represents the serpent, to distance herself from the ultimate truth of the self and

continue circling the maze. Cia falls "down the mountain in the ghost light" in place of the narrator facing "the naked mountain" of her self (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 210). Liebenberg lets Cia go so that Nyree can save herself, as the ghosts of Mum's dead children figure Fuller's victimhood and selfhood.

In the trauma of Cia's loss, the narrator feels that "everything becomes fragmented and confused" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 213). Nyree discovers herself, ruptured from Cia and fractured from the mythic whole, but this isn't ultimate truth, because what she shared with Cia is the mythic self of the forest. To know the truth of the self, Nyree would have to incorporate Ronin into her consciousness. Although Nyree finally recognises that Ronin "isn't there and […] was never there," having served his purpose in the story, he is "drive[n…] out of Modjadji's front gates" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 222). Nyree "know[s that] Mom blames Ronin" for Cia's death, placing herself in intuitive connection with the mother-land (knowing), and suggesting that the land supports her own mythic selfhood (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 221). But in cross-reference to Fuller's claim to know herself in relation to Mbembe's contention about representing Africa, Nyree's 'knowing' is only a subjective account of her own subconscious. Reflecting the old image of the Dark Labyrinth, Nyree expresses a "geographical ignorance" of the self (Hammond and Jablow 135).

With Ronin removed from the narrative, there is no longer a third person onto which Nyree can displace and project herself. She describes the silence between Mom and Dad as the "stranger" now (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 224). The liminality here reflects Mum's, and by suggestion Fuller's, position at the close of *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, where the Fullers' present derelict house is Nyree's mythic self ruined and the half-built future house, the fragmented self that Nyree alludes to but won't claim. Nyree describes the time immediately after Cia's death and Ronin's departure as having a "greyness about it" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 223). The present greyness in time is between the farmer and his old myth of dualisms, and the nomad, here as one who flees the old myth but into a maze.

Nyree recognises that "[s]ome of the magic is gone" in this new reality and that the "fairies have withered and died," but the silence and greyness suggest an irresolution to Nyree's story of the self, as she neither escapes the past, nor takes the present to its conclusion, but remains nowhere (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 229). "Great-grandfather's ghostly eyes" watch over the photograph of Cia that Mom puts on the mantelpiece below the sepia daguerreotype

of the patriarch, guarding mythic selfhood and its imaginary world (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 229). It is "only in [Nyree's] dreams that [she is] still alive, that [she] feels anything at all" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 227). In her dreams, Nyree cannot save Cia or Moosejaw, but she cannot animate any other self in her life.

In the final chapter, Liebenberg describes the loss of the family's farm to the new government. If the loss of the girls' Eden is read as an allegory for the transition to the new Zimbabwe, Nyree, like Fuller, writes herself into mythic Rhodesia. The loss is not of the land, but of an imagined home – "our garden." Nicholas Royle's *The Uncanny* (2003), in which he examines Freud's notion of 'Unheimlichkeit,' is useful for understanding Nyree's imagination of the forest. Drawing on Freud's 1919 essay "Das Unheimliche," Royle describes the uncanny as the experience of something at once strange and familiar: "a feeling of something not simply weird or mysterious but, more specifically, strangely familiar" (vii). Nyree's experience of the forest is strangely familiar because it is a fantasy – an imagined reality. The forest is strange because it is extra-ordinary; it is familiar to Nyree because she constructs it as home. Freud understood the uncanny as an unconscious reminder of oneself. What is unheimlich is concealed or repressed. The forest is uncanny to Nyree as Ronin is, because it is a projected space though which she escapes from, or denies, her displacement in Zimbabwe. Losing the forest and the farm, Nyree loses her protective landscape, or the sheltering space of the self.

As I concur with Harris's argument against political redemption in Fuller's text, so too do I argue for a personal rather than historical conclusion to Liebenberg's story of the self, because Nyree doesn't take her proper position in "hav[ing] lost it all" – Cia; Rhodesia – but maintains the innocence of the frame's garden of innocence (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 231). After suggesting that "now we have lost it all," the narrator writes, "It's Comrade Mugabe who's taken it. I saw him on TV, swearing an oath. There is going to be peace and freedom now" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 231). Referring to the family's loss of Modjadji, she writes that "we got the expropriation order, which means that the government is taking your house. It is going to be Confiscated. The government man in a dark suit came with a lot of AK 47-toting teenagers in a battered old army truck. They strutted about with their AKs and Dad called them 'sir' and sort of bowed to him a lot and then he signed a paper" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 233). The forest is lost to Ronin and the farm to Mugabe, both losses externalised and projected.

Describing the family's leave-taking of Modjadji, the narrator imagines the farmhouse in the years ahead, suggesting that the family's forced desertion of the farm will have "weakened it against time," which can be said to justify the family's nurturance of the land as home, and by corollary, the new government's insensitivity to the land in forcing its caretakers to abandon it (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 238). There is also the suggestion that the family's "time" will have passed, the colonial period associated with "the Cape Dutch gable […having] sagged" with the roof (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 238). But the "bullet holes" that Nyree imagines to mark the house walls strengthens her plaint for a forced and violent removal by the other, leaving the land wanting (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 238). Nyree describes the packed-up farmstead as "empty," which suggests that without the white farmer to cultivate it, the land returns to wilderness – empty land (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 236). In the years ahead, the Zimbabwean creeper will engulf the *stoep*, Oupa's vantage point devastated in barbarism and chaos.

Nyree's perspective of the present, and her own portent for the coming darkness, reflects the story of an African Eden ruined, but it also shows up the illusion of such a notion. With the ruin of "our garden," Nyree takes her last solace in "our attic" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 236). Above the farmhouse, it is "Cia's and mine and Moosejaw's. And Angélique's" – the world of the self beyond history: "dim and shadowy as ever, but the light seep[s] through" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 236-37). Locating an "enchanted" den above, but within, her land's absolute ruin, Nyree exposes her otherworld as a creation – a place to which she "climbs the creaking staircase" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 236). With the loss of the farm and Rhodesia, the old tradition – Great-grandfather's legacy – has died, and Nyree, who has to pay for the earth that he watered, lives on, but only in a dream: an imagined land that Liebenberg's story of the self is grounded in, revolves around, and is never entirely free from.

Chapter 3

'Our place of origin': Representing the land in *False River*

The insidiousness of the land that Liebenberg alludes to in her preamble, as a frame for the mythic garden, is alluded to also by Botha in the opening scene of *False River*, in which the young Paul and Dominique play alongside the pan. This opening scene, and its aftermath, can be said to serve as a framing device for Botha's text in that it positions the siblings in relation to the landscape and to one another. From the outset, Paul is related to the land; he is the knowing voice to Dominique's questioning of the natural world, telling her what "[i]t means" (Botha, *False River* 7). Visser suggests that Paul's seeking out the "sweet thorn shade" here is a metaphorical portent of his future demise, the "dead carp with its eye rotted away" that Dominique sees in the water intimating Paul's impending short-sightedness (Botha, *False River* 7; *Absence* 7). I suggest that the image of the dead carp alludes more to the rottenness of the children's environment, as both Fuller and Liebenberg's contexts are exposed to be.

In addition to the dead carp are the sinister barbels in the mud, who "graze" on the garden "[w]hen it's dark," whereas Paul, "pointing at some veld lilies sprouting a groove of cracked mud," sees a "cluster of midday stars" (Botha, *False River* 7,8). Paul doesn't represent the self's heart of darkness, but, "most handsome of us all," Paul reflects the beauty of the land (Botha, *False River* 9). The shade *is* a metaphorical portent of Paul's future demise, but foregrounded here against Paul's midday stars, the coming darkness doesn't lie in Paul's short-sightedness as such, but rather in the discrepancy between Paul's vision of the land and the way that the land has traditionally been envisioned.

The young Dominique relates to the land through Paul and his inheritance, so that she resolves her self as he develops himself in confrontation with the myth. The rain at the close of the first chapter is associated with Paul's crying from Pa's beating, after the children waste food using chicken and goose eggs to make mud cakes. "In the end," Dominique observes, "[Paul] always cried more than me" (Botha, *False River* 17). As "Paul Michiel Botha, which was the family name for firstborn boys," Paul is more mythically inscribed than his sister and so he relates to the land and the father more sensitively than her (Botha, *False River* 8). But Dominique sees, measures, and writes herself in relation to him.

Botha's representation of the land is written in the literary context of a history of subversive farm novels in South Africa. Coetzee cites Olive Schreiner, with her *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), as the great South African anti-pastoral writer. Afrikaans novelists to challenge

the narrative ideology of the plaasroman include Karel Schoeman (*Na die Geliefde Land*, 1972) Wilma Stockenström (*Uitdraai*, 1976), André Letoit (*Somer II*, 1985), Etienne van Heerden (*Toorberg*, 1986 and *Kikoejoe*, 1996), and more recently, Marlene van Niekerk (*Agaat*, 2004) and Eben Venter (*Horrelpo*ot, 2006). Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetzee are the two notable English novelists to redress the genre. Thus, where Fuller and Liebenberg write their texts in the literary climate of land-reform narratives, in which Rhodesia is inscribed and immortalized, Botha writes *False River* into a tradition of anti-pastoralism.

Rewriting the farm novel, Botha doesn't revise the garden myth absolutely along the lines of an anti-Garden, but shows an inconsistent relationship to the traditional story of the white self. Visser argues that "the text interacts with the conventions of [the farm novel] genre erratically and problematically," citing Botha's representation of race and gender (*Absence* 2). The Botha family servants are delimited in the narrative landscape in the manner defined by Coetzee in *White Writing*. "There's Tokolosh coming with the milk tractor," Dominique tells Paul on their way back from the pan. "He'll take us home" (Botha, *False River* 11). Abraham "was very short and strong and looked after the milk cows. He wore coloured beads under his blue overall and a bracelet made of duiker skin because he was a toordokter" (Botha, *False River* 11). On the way home, Paul "tugged Abraham's arm and shouted over the roar of the diesel engine, 'We want to swim, please stop.' Abraham brought the tractor to a halt" (Botha, *False River* 12).

At home, Selina warns the children not to come into the house with their dirty feet, after which Ma scolds Paul and Dominique and then instructs Selina to bath them. Ma "shouted to Selina as she walked towards the house. 'Clean these children please. Then bring in the laundry'" (Botha, *False River* 15). Dominique then narrates, "Selena held me firmly against her apron as she hosed the dirt off my legs. I could feel her tub of snuff pressing against my back" (Botha, *False River* 15). The black characters in Botha's text, here represented by the family servants, are, citing Visser, "not fleshed out" (*Absence* 55).

But against this interpretation for a simplistic portrait of the black other in *False River* is evidence of Ma and Pa's revision of the colonial principles at its heart. "We weren't allowed to call Abram 'Tokolosh,'" Dominique says, explaining that they were instructed to address all the grownup men on the farm as "Ntate" as a sign of respect (Botha, *False River* 11). Pa also told Selina to call the children by their names, rather than kleinmies and kleinbaas. Ma and Pa attempt to re-humanize the black other who has traditionally been excluded from the story of

the white self. “Pa had built brick-and-mortar houses for his workers (Botha, *False River* 11). “Pa did not hit his workers like other farmers did. Or make the boss boy do it” (Botha, *False River* 17). Where Fuller refers to Dad’s ‘boys’ as his most loyal labourers, Dominique explains that “Goldberg was one of Pa’s boss boys, but we did not use words like that in our family. Pa said Goldberg was his workshop foreman” (Botha, *False River* 17).

I explore the ambiguous associations between the land, gender, and mythic re-inscription in Botha’s text through the representation of Ma and Paul, and their relation to one another. Rejecting the grand narratives of the past as “she did not believe in God” or apartheid, Ma appears to represent the reformed female self emerging from a patriarchy (Botha, *False River* 23). “In our new house there was even a room where Ma could paint,” Dominique says, which suggests that, moving forward, the matriarch might be the author of, rather than the subject in, the story of the land, expressing herself over being planted against her husband (Botha, *False River* 13). But Ma had “copied [her paintings] from a book called *Treasures from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*,” so that she has only rehashed the traditional representations of a European mythology (Botha, *False River* 15). Dominique also refers to the acanthus pattern on the wallpaper in the spare room, whose design Ma had traced from the curtains and painted onto the cupboard. Ma may appear to be liberated in her broad-mindedness, but as a frustrated artist following a pattern, she is bound within the farm home and its traditional narrative of the land.

Paul poses a threat to this narrative. Lying “down on the grave of […] great-grandfather Paul Michael Botha,” it is Paul, rather than Ma, who transgresses fitting into the ancestry (Botha, *False River* 8). For his birthday, a marker of his inheritance, the young Paul “would like the school to burn down,” as he rejects all authoritative land or property (Botha, *False River* 13). When asked “what he want[s] to be when [he] grow[s] up,” against his legacy of farming, Paul replies, “I want to be a ballet dancer or own a bookshop” (Botha, *False River* 25). Paul aligns with Ma, not so much in the creative, aesthetic, or feminine, but in longing for “faraway places” (Botha, *False River* 41). “Now I am back here!” Ma tells the children. “In the Free State. Everything ends where it begins, they say” (Botha, *False River* 41). When Paul asks her if she still wants to get away, Ma says yes. Ma is trapped in a tradition which is limiting for herself, despite her forward-thinking.

The young Dominique is also represented within this tradition, evoking Africa with similar imagery to Fuller: “[t]he moon cast[ing] a bright, silver path across the pan. Faraway stars

squint[ing] then wink[ing]"; "[t]he sun discard[ing] its sting and pour[ing] honey across the late afternoon" in "April […] the most beautiful month on the Highveld" (Botha, *False River* 28, 34, 33). Hammond and Jablow refer to the image of The Land in Amber, through which the British author expresses his idealistic love for Africa: "[t]he Africa of this image is beautiful, open, sun-drenched – a golden land" (157). Liebenberg evokes this image of amber just before the rain falls on Cia, although the main site of Liebenberg's pastoral romanticism is the forest. In this regard, Botha's represented landscape reflects Fuller's more. I argued previously that Fuller connects her self with the land through her romantic evocations, and I suggest here that Botha's descriptions of the Highveld have a related function.

Visser argues that "the surroundings speak for Dominique as they correspond with and respond to Paul," because it is Paul that Dominique follows (*Absence* 42). I disagree, however, with Visser's argument for an absent interiority to Dominique's character, a "removal of self" in the narration of Paul (*Absence* 11). I argue that Dominique's evocation of a pastoral landscape not only "sustain[s Paul's] romantic characterisation," as Visser suggests, but represents a private place for Dominique's self (*Absence* 42). This landscape is independent of the patriarchal tradition represented by Pa. Dominique sees the landscape herself, "with [her] face pressed up against […her] bedroom window" watching the night sky, and in the intimacy of this relationship, she locates her self, as Fuller does, in the surroundings (Botha, *False River* 28). This landscape of the self provides a holding space for Dominique in which she can develop herself away from her parents, and alongside Paul.

Dominique doesn't move through the novel in obscurity to Paul, then. Ma and Pa describe the two as "a different kettle of fish" (Botha, *False River* 29). Paul reads the landscape differently to others. After describing Paul's punishment at school for writing too slowly and not between the lines, Botha relates a scene in which the children's family friends, James and Matthew Henderson, come to fish in the dam. After the boys have cast their lines, Paul skims a pebble along the surface of the water. "Hey, you're disturbing the fish. What are you doing?" James asks him, to which Paul smiles in reply, "Casting pearls" (Botha, *False River* 39). Dominique is distinguished at school as "[*d*]*iligent, obedient and neat*" (Botha, *False River* 33). Paul sees and reflects the beauty of the land, but as he moves away from the physical landscape into a world of conventional authority, his midday stars are eclipsed. Dominique reflects the landscape she is placed in, her obedience and diligence at school reflecting Ma's position in the patriarchy. But where Ma denies and defends herself against entrapment, claiming "a busy

and fulfilling life" on the farm, Dominique confronts the myth through embeddedness in the land (Botha, *False River* 41).

The point at which Dominique moves from imaginative evocations of the African landscape to a more tangible connection with the land is at the onset of her menses, where she is described in proximity to the earth. "I sat among the rustling stalks of opslagmielies with the voice of Meneer Louw in my head," Dominique says. "'Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception'" (Botha, *False River* 53). Describing Dominique's womanhood as a curse unto the woman, Botha addresses the marginalised position in Eden more directly than either Fuller, who writes Africa as agonist and antagonist, or Liebenberg, who displaces dislocation onto Ronin. Botha criticises this marginalisation through the image of a violent embodiment, the "blood […] running down [Dominique's] thigh" signalling the rape of the land (*False River* 53).

"[W]ip[ing her] eyes" here, Dominique reflects Paul's crying at his own subjugation (Botha, *False River* 53). As Paul moves away from the beauty of the land to school, Dominique aligns with his struggling to remain in place at home. Dominique is not displaced by the narrative of Paul, as the siblings are expressed and placed in relation to one another. "My story," which Paul publishes in the school magazine, follows his narrative from the "*slow*" and "*peaceful*" farmlands, though threatened by "*thunder*," to a "*hard, uncomfortable*" institutionalism (Botha, *False River* 65). "[*T*]*he intrusion*" that Paul feels at being made to work on the land on his return to the farm during the holiday reflects the invasion of "leaky and complicated" womanhood for Dominique (Botha, *False River* 66, 54). Paul closes his story with a description of the "*moon cast*[*ing*] *a cool light on the quiet landscape*," which echoes Dominique's evocation from her bedroom window (Botha, *False River* 66). I suggest a dual orientation between Paul and Dominique in relation to the landscape.

In "Telling 'free' stories? Memory and democracy in South African autobiography since 1994" (1998), Sarah Nuttall refers to the ironic constructedness in telling, what she calls, a free story about one's past, because "one has not located the truth about the past, but only an ongoing narrative of the self" (85). Nuttall also notes that, in the freeing of memory of the past, post-apartheid autobiographical writing tends towards redemption. I relate these points to Paul and Dominique's developing selfhood, as mediated through Ma and Pa. Discussing the possibility of sending the children away to private boarding schools, Pa tells Ma, "Sending the children away might save them from the Broederbonders. I know it's not the how we planned it, but it

could open up the world for them […] Just think […] I wanted to work on a ship after school. To see the world. My father would not let me. Would it not be wonderful if our children could be citizens of the world?" (Botha, *False River* 63). The story of redemption suggested here is both social and political, and personal and projected. The Bothas construct a story of selfhood for their children to redeem an unjust past, and also, their own place in it. Implicit in Pa's plea for the children's escape from the limited borders of the farm is his own thwarted desire for escape, which is an echo of Ma's.

The Bothas teach their children about the country's social and political context, but at the same time they expect the children to maintain standards of family exclusivity. Agreeing to the psychometrist's recommendation to send Paul to an English boarding school in Johannesburg, Pa warns his son not "to get any funny ideas about where [he] come[s] from" (Botha, *False River* 47). When Ouma Koeks says goodbye to Paul, she reminds him that he "carr[ies] the family name and [he] must make [them] proud," and driving Paul up to Johannesburg for school "Pa lectured [him] about not forgetting his heritage" (Botha, *False River* 48, 51). Botha describes this heritage: Pa's "great-great-great-grandfather Theuns Louis built a hartbeeshuisie during the Great Trek, and, after some orange harvests, a sandstone house with pressed ceilings" on Wolwefontein, where Pa grew up (*False River* 47). The children's legacy is of colonial forbearers and a family history rooted in the country's own history of race discrimination and white supremacy. Ma and Pa make their children aware of their whiteness as it relates to an exclusive position of unfair advantage, but the children are simultaneously expected to fit into a paradigm upholding this whiteness.

Paul's story for the school magazine, although ending on a high note, with Paul connecting firmly with the farmland beneath his feet, is largely characterised by frustration and despair. Paul expresses his estrangement from home and school. Every paragraph and instance of Paul's story is characterized by his suffering and dejection: "*stinging tears*," "*hopeless tears*," "*the iron veil of tears*" (Botha, *False River* 65, 66). When Paul wins the Natal Schools' Poetry competition in high school, "Pa sounded awed" when Dominique phoned home with the news, and Ma said, "I expected no less" (Botha, *False River* 76). In their expectation of their children, both within the ancestral tradition and a liberal ideology, Ma and Pa are blind to the story of the self that the children express. At the prize-giving at Hilton College, from which Ma and Pa are absent, the woman awarding Paul the prize comments on his "poignant perspective on the irredeemably alienated state of the human soul" (Botha, *False River* 77).

Paul's potential as a poet, and the possibility of his rewriting a tradition of self-representation and representation of the land, can be explored in relation to Damon Galgut's *The Imposter* (2008). Galgut's narrator, Adam, moves to his brother's derelict house in the Karoo in an attempt to resurrect his poetic career. The central metaphorical question in *The Imposter*, reflecting a common trope about place in South African literature, Rita Barnard writes in "Rewriting the nation" (2012), is "whether the landscape of South Africa's semi-arid interior – desolate, barren, featureless, prehistoric – can be turned into poetry" (668). Galgut wonders, through Adam, whether the post-apartheid landscape might be expressed and embodied differently, in a new pastoral vision. In relation to Botha's text, the question is whether Paul might be poet in and of a revisioned farmland. But as Adam fails to express his little patch of land in poetry, similarly is Paul stunted and bound by the expectations of him, so that he isn't able to realise his potential to rewrite the landscape from his perspective. Ma and Pa's redress of history, through the story of the self and other, is in conflict with Paul's freedom of self-expression. Rather than remake the land and self, Paul implodes under the weight of history and self-destructs.

Like Paul, Dominique isn't able to revision the landscape for herself, at this stage. Because Paul and Dominique react differently to their entrapment – Paul is rebellious, where Dominique is meek – they might be split into reactive and passive adolescent. But this would be reading into a Manichean story of good daughter and bad son, who "should take a leaf out of [his] sister's book," and I argue that these designations are skin-deep (Botha, *False River* 79). Benjamin Kilborne discusses psychic splitting as "an unconscious defence which, rather than dividing the world Manichean fashion into good and evil (or inner and outer, or rational and emotional), scrambles experiences so as to separate out and render unintelligible unwanted emotions" (386). Applying Kilbourne's argument here, Paul is split off from Dominique as the repressed landscape of the self, as he embodies an active rebellion to her passive one. Where Dominique is trapped in womanhood on the farm, Paul flees this oppressive landscape. But it is not that Dominique wants to escape, like Paul, into foreign landscapes, but that she loses the ability to access the beauty and comfort of the land as she matures into womanhood on the farm.

At the farm funeral of Vusi, his sister Maureen reads a poem of Paul's, which she introduces as "about this place. Where we all come back to" (Botha, *False River* 98). 'Northern Free State, July 1987' is Paul's expression of himself in this place, "*the bareback veld*," "*my huddled landscape*" (Botha, *False River* 99). Dominique is only able to settle into shameful womanhood

on the farm, as a reflection of Ma's position. And this is where the split between the siblings occurs, as Paul able to internalise the spiritual landscape of home (his poetry). Child of the land, Paul is good son, but he is bad as he disgraces his name. Dominique is obedient, but apathetic. What Dominique denies herself is moving beyond her parents' mythic inscription, even as Paul, "going [to Cape Town] to launch his career as a human being," misguidedly tries to (Botha, *False River* 99).

The motif of drought in both Fuller and Liebenberg's texts recurs in *False River*, as Botha opens the chapter following Vusi's funeral with: "The August winds blew past calendar boundaries across September into October. The rains are late" (*False River* 101). Where the suspended rains are associated with the family's precarious position on Serioes Farm in Fuller's text, and with Ronin's absence in Liebenberg's, here the late rain corresponds with Paul's departure. Dominique explains that "Paul had not been to the farm all year. He failed the only midyear exam [at university that] he attempted" (Botha, *False River* 101). The hostile landscape, with its corrosive winds, reflects a son that won't yield, to his place at home or in the pastoral tradition.

Within Botha's description of the dry farmland is also her most direct criticism of colonialism as she refers to "[a]ll florid opportunists colonising the land […] sitting tight in the corrosive wind, their leaves thin and impervious" (*False River* 101). Botha is the most directly, even if inconsistently, critical of the tradition of white writing of the three authors in this analysis. Although *False River* cannot be said to be absolutely representative of the contemporary farm novel in South Africa, as neither Fuller nor Liebenberg's texts can be said to be so for Zimbabwe, the differences in the authors' criticism and representation of the garden myth is significant. This is particularly so because of the tendency to subvert the literary tradition in South Africa, and to reinforce it in Zimbabwe. It might be suggested that the position the author takes toward the traditional mythology is based on the national history, so that in a country in which the white man has been stripped of his landed identity (Zimbabwe), the author re-inscribes this, whereas in a country in which the white man has experienced a relatively quieter transition to democracy (South Africa), the author interrogates this.

Viewing the authors' representation of the land from this perspective only would be simplistic, however, as each author's representation of the land and nation is mediated by their representation of the self. Visser writes that "[w]hile Botha appears to be acknowledging the imperative inclusion of the personal in the construction of history, it could, however, also be

argued that Botha reductively posits history as mere context" (*Absence* 39). I wouldn't go so far as to say that the historical and political aspects of Botha's text serve merely as context to Dominique's story of the self, but that the inscription of a mythic or national story is moderated by a personal one, so that Botha's criticism of florid opportunists is bound to the suffering that Dominique experiences because of this history.

I explore the relationship between history and the self in Botha's text in relation to an argument made by Stefan Helgesson in *Writing in Crisis: Ethics and History in Gordimer, Ndebele and Coetzee* (2004). Helgesson cites Coetzee, who argues that "a novel […] operates in terms of its own procedures and issues in its own conclusions, [it is] not one that operates in terms of the procedures of history and eventuates in conclusions that are checkable by history […] a novel […] evolves its own paradigms and myths" (13). In so far as *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* and *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* evolve their own paradigms and myths, they operate independently of history. Helgesson broadens the definition of history beyond its limited reference to the past, referring to "historicity," a more inclusive term, in which the subject is intimate with the present, and this understanding of history is applicable to the relationship between the self and the surroundings in Botha's text (20).

Corresponding with the departure of Paul and the late rains is Dominique's development of a "suspect" malady (Botha, *False River* 102). This illness, of which Dominique is ashamed, is a continuance of her embodied womanhood. The position is reinforced in Dominique's staying away from school and "shadow[ing] Martha around the kitchen" (Botha, *False River* 102). Outside of the farmhouse, Dominique follows Ma and Pa's ideals, teaching English to adults in the adjacent township. Although Paul reflects Ronin in his proximity to the narrator, and the late rain at his departure relates also to Liebenberg's text, I argue against a nervous condition in Dominique as it relates to the Manichean delirium. The neurotic orientation refers to is a state of psychological denial of the self, which I suggest of Nyree in her displacement onto Ronin, and of Bobo in her displacement onto Mum and the land. Dominique, however, embodies her mythic orientation as her own malady – her own shadow – and in this sense, she is the most present self of the three texts. "[E]ffacing her own agency and individuality" in relation to her brother in describing herself to his friend, Lew, as "Paul's sister," as Visser suggests, Dominique admits entrapment in the parental landscape (*Absence* 113; Botha, *False River* 29). If Dominique seconds herself to Paul, it is because she can only be daughter and sister, and on the farm.

As Dominique is included in the tradition, so is she then included in what becomes its climactic exposure, as "we wait" for the rain (Botha, *False River* 101). In Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1975), the rain doesn't come because the arid land, and its associated spiritual sterility, is the centre of Mungoshi's narrative. Although the rain does eventually fall on the Bothas' land, *False River* is comparable to *Waiting for the Rain* in its characterisation. Paul and Dominique share features of Lucifer and his older brother, Garabha: Lucifer has expectations placed on him because of his Western education (Dominique and Paul), and when returning home, he becomes paralysed by this weight (Dominique); Garabha has expectations placed on him because he is the eldest son (Paul), and where Lucifer is alienated artist (Paul), Garabha is part of the community (Dominique). Mungoshi, like Botha, depicts a younger generation burdened at once by a history of colonialism and by its parents' and grandparents' attitudes, expectations, and influence, and in this sense, Rietpan is definitively an arid landscape.

Lucifer's despair at his entrapment within the family is reflected by Dominique as she slips into a depression at Paul's departure. Dominique's condition here can also be compared to Mary Turner's reaction to the drought in *The Grass is Singing*. As Lessing describes Mary Turner sleeping badly at night as the rainless season progresses, Dominique refers to her "body clock [having] tipped over onto its side. Every night [she] watched the evening star slowly swindling into the beacon of morning" (Botha, *False River* 122). As a reflection of Mary Turner, Dominique is repressed white woman, isolated on the farm. But if Dominique is compared to Lucifer, then her condition transcends racial and gender boundaries.

Although I don't discount Botha's expression of Dominique's disempowerment, I argue that Dominique, more than a passive presence, functions narratively in Paul's destiny in mirroring him along the way. With the evening star swindling, Dominique is cheated of her former romantic vision of the land, as she, citing Lessing's description of Mary Turner, "gradually fade[s] and sink[s] into darkness" (*The Grass is Singing* 151). This is reflected by Paul, who refers to the army as "*this place*," as the bareback veld is subsumed (Botha, *False River* 119). If Dominique's entrapment at home is a reflection of Paul's, then she is not only or simply repressed white woman isolated on the farm, but more broadly represents the self of the African landscape that suffers under the weight of its particular history.

The farm's eventual release from drought coincides with Paul slitting his wrists with a discarded razor in the detention barracks shower. Paul is linked here with the land in

vulnerability as, in response to the hammering rain, the "bare veld is defenceless and starts bleeding between remaining clumps of rooigras" (Botha, *False River* 133). Where the rain after the dry season in Fuller and Liebenberg's texts is related obscurely to the narrative of the self – in Fuller, to the family's drunkenness, and in Liebenberg as a prelude to the girls' holy mission into the forest – the rain on Rietpan is a direct reflection of the dissolution of the Bothas. As "[l]ightning [strikes] at the foundations of the house. Wind [tears] roofing off the shed," the ideology on which the family have built themselves is threatened and injured, and their appearance to the outside world, severely damaged (Botha, *False River* 133). As "[t]he False River lived up to its name and broke its banks," this reality can no longer be hidden from or denied (Botha, *False River* 133).

Because of Paul's suicide attempt, he is required to undergo psychiatric evaluation at a military hospital in Pretoria. Paul describes the panel of experts as "[t]he professorial avatars of Christian Nationalism […] Covered to the eyeballs in their own hubris" (Botha, *False River* 138). When Ma and Dominique visit Paul in the hospital and Dominique asks him about the tribunal, Paul says, "I sat in front of a panel of white men in white coats. Probably macademics from the univershitty over there" (Botha, *False River* 140). Paul positions himself against a military, medical, and national authority. "Could they reasonably ask me if I was mad?" Paul says, recalling his encounter with the tribunal for Dominique (Botha, *False River* 141). "Did it not perhaps occur to them that they were mad? Supporting and upholding as they do, the madness of our times" (Botha, *False River* 141). "I told them, "You people are in no motherfucking position to judge my sanity. You are fucking mad. You guys. Not me" (Botha, *False River* 141).

Although Paul's heated argument might be dismissed as the rantings of a dissident son, his sentiments have been expressed by critics. In "The mind of apartheid: Geoffrey Cronjé (1907-)" Coetzee, through a discussion of the principles of the Afrikaner nationalist, "call[s] apartheid mad" (1). In her discussion of white post-colonial guilt in *The Grass is Singing*, Joy Wang refers to the "collective insanity" of white nationhood (45). Paul is in fact expressing Ma's sentiments against Christian Nationalism, although she admonishes him after her meeting with his psychiatrist, "who said you were not very cooperative," she tells Paul (Botha, *False River* 142). And goes on, "He mentioned things like attitude problem. Issues with authority. These are not unfamiliar accusations, Paul. Perhaps it's time you see that your perspective is that of the minority" (Botha, *False River* 142). Paul's particular madness, if it can be called that, is that he refuses the self expected of him.

The character who 'goes mad' in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* is Tambudzai's cousin, Nyasha, who, suffering under her father's expectations, develops an eating disorder and has a nervous breakdown. Because both Paul and Dominique suffer under their parents' expectations and unravel to more or less an extent, both reflect Nyasha, as they do Lucifer and Garabha. It might be argued that Dominique relates more directly to Nyasha as they are both repressed woman at home. But as I argued that Dominique's relation to Lucifer challenges race and gender boundaries, so too do I argue that Paul's relation to Nyasha does. The expectation is to conform to a certain gender role or type of sexuality; in Paul's case, husband-farmer. Part of Paul's psychiatric evaluation is a delineation of his sexual orientation. "They asked me if I ever harboured sexual thoughts towards other men," Paul tells Dominique about the tribunal (Botha, *False River* 140). The younger generation represented by Mungoshi, Botha, and Dangarembga are expected to follow a selfhood defined by an older generation.

The coming of the rains on Rietpan reflects the beginning of Dominique's liberation from this restrictive selfhood. A portent of Dominique's impending release is suggested earlier. Preparing watermelon jam with Martha, Dominique discovers Paul's "Love poem for a winter's morning," and reflects on her first boyfriend and sexual liberation: "The last time I saw him, he took me to his room, locked the door and pulled the striped curtains closed […] he unbuttoned my blouse and lay me down on his bed" (Botha, *False River* 104, 105). Dominique then relates this liberation to Paul and the landscape. "I wonder who Paul was in love with then," she reflects, "when he wrote that poem […] I felt I knew what Paul meant in his poem. The landscape widening within, harriers tracing wind in a bone-marrow sky. The promise of a drought breaking" (Botha, *False River* 105). Knowing the landscape widening within, Dominique shows the beginnings of a shift from observing and then being inscribed into the land, to internalising it.

The promise of this shift is of a drought breaking, so that when it rains on the farm, Dominique reaches a kind of culmination in herself. Masturbating in the bath in reminiscence of her first sexual encounter, following her visit to Paul in the hospital, Dominique relates the downpour to her own sexual gratification. After "the dense pleasure broke," she "lay there listening to the sky opening her sluices" (Botha, *False River* 143). In the privacy of the bathtub – a containment of the storm – Dominique resists the "hoped-for rain […] turning into a curse" for herself (Botha, *False River* 142). That is, she embodies womanhood for her own pleasure rather than in acceptance of the traditionally positioned female self.

Bearing in mind the racial and national differences between the texts, I consider Dominique's liberation in relation to Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue* (1996). Before Paul leaves the farm again after Vusi's funeral, Botha re-enacts the opening scene of the novel, in which Paul and Dominique return from the land and are reprimanded by Pa. Here, visiting Wolwefontein, the pair's engagement with the land is more personal and intimate. In place of the ancestral graveyard of their former adventure, Dominique describes "the cropped plain fold[ing] away to thorn veld. Along verges khakibos turned spiky below shimmering poplars, and cosmos peeped white and pink through the blond grass on tender stems flecked with butterflies. Clouds formed a watercolour in the distance" (Botha, *False River* 145). The river in flood doesn't represent an antagonistically violent landscape, but rather one that supports Dominique's embodied release: "[c]oming […] that point of arrival that in men was an accessory to the creation of new life" (Botha, *False River* 143).

The comparison that I wish to make between Botha and Vera's text relates to Zhizha, Vera's mute protagonist, who "see[s] the river which has watered our pain, which sings about all our belonging. A river is a mouth with which to begin" (*Under the Tongue* 143). As the silenced Zhizha is given a voice in Vera's text, so too does Dominique progress from an unknowing self, in a family burial site, to a place where the False River lived up to its name and broke its banks. Visser relates the fluidity of water and memory, so that the False River running through the text reflects the unreliability of Botha's memories, which the author accounts for by calling *False River* a fiction (*Absence* 40). I suggest that the falsity relates to the landscape imposed on Dominique – a deceptive Eden – so that when the foundations of the farmhouse are struck and the False River breaks its banks, Dominique is released from this imposition, and like Zhizha, is freer to express herself.

It is also significant that between the text's opening scene and its re-enactment in relation to the False River, Pa's scolding of the children shifts from the physical to the verbal. This is appropriate to Paul and Dominique's age, but it also suggests that the text is living up to its name in language. Reflecting on Zhizha's rape in *Under the Tongue*, Samuelson refers to her growth out of silence into a new language through which she is able to express her body's pain ("A River" 17). This relates to the argument by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin I mentioned in relation to Nyree's re-presentation of Oupa's story, where woman, as the colonised, has had to construct her own language with which to express herself against the language of her oppressors. This has particular significance in Botha's text, which was first written in English and then translated by her into Afrikaans. It might be argued that part of Botha's revision of

the traditional mythology was to distance herself from the language of the farm novel, and its representations of patriarchy and whiteness. In English, Botha, like Zhizha, finds a mouth with which to begin, expressing an embodied female self, a progression also from Fuller and Liebenberg's representations of dissipation and projection.

The English/Afrikaans duality is also explored within the text. Dominique's naïve, questioning self looks to Paul who "could speak Afrikaans and English," which Pa "said […] made you a true South African" (Botha, *False River* 8). Lecturing Paul about not forgetting his heritage as they drop him off at boarding school in Johannesburg, Pa says that his family had always tried to build a bridge between the English and Afrikaans communities. But then, remembering how his Ouma Miemie suffered in a concentration camp during the Boer War, Pa mutters, "Those swine almost wiped us out and still expected us to fight on their side in the First World War" (Botha, *False River* 52). Pa expresses ambivalent sentiments on the cultural divide. Although, at first, Pa hopes for Paul to go to Grey College in Bloemfontein where he went for high school, it is he who appeals to Ma to send the children out into the world. Ma, for her part, "did not really like those schools in Natal. She said that English South Africans think they are better than us" (Botha, *False River* 64).

When Dominique returns home to the farm on her first holiday from boarding school, she notices, "Pa and Ma's English suddenly sounded strange to me. It fell into the category that at school would be considered awful. I felt ashamed for thinking it" (Botha, *False River* 83). Botha's translation of the text can be interpreted to mirror Dominique's movement between the Afrikaans and English worlds. Discussing her translation of *False River* into *Valsrivier* (2013) in her interview with Heyns, Botha refers to the "physiological translation that took place initially from experience to memory to English, and then back into Afrikaans" (qtd. in Visser "An intimate relationship"). Interpreted in relation to Dominique: moving away from the farm, Dominique makes over her memories into English, and returning, she goes back to her parents' language, but re-formed. Dominique moves between the farm and the outside world, and its associated English and Afrikaans, as her awareness of herself and her surroundings develops.

The movement between the farm and the world beyond the farm also relates to Paul's moving to Johannesburg. "[C]all[ing] Johannesburg Sodom and Gomorrah," Pa speaks to a history of perceiving the city, which was described by Winston Churchill as "Monte-Carlo on top of Sodom and Gomorrah" (Botha, *False River* 33; qtd. in Kruger 272). Imagining Johannesburg

thus, Pa expresses the sentiment of South African pastoral described by Coetzee, where the farm is "a still point […] between the wilderness of lawless nature and the wilderness of the new cities" (*White Writing* 4). Paul's migration from the farm to the city relates to the literary trope of 'Jim comes to Joburg,' where the rural black man is corrupted by the city (Gray 61). Paul is Jim in that he leaves the farm, a cradle of traditional values, and from there declines.

Dominique describes the house in which Paul stays in Yeoville as a withering landscape, with "[m]orning glory twin[ing] around a broken gatepost," and on the front stoep "a tiled floor below the morning glory's pulpy flowers and weak stems. All show and no substance to the plant. A midden squatter to decorate detritus" (Botha, *False River* 152, 155). Inside, there is a pile of dirty dishes in the kitchen, accumulated gunk on the rim of the basin, a wilting basil plant below, an oven caked in grime, an overflowing rubbish bin, peeling wallpaper, and shoes and clothes scattered along the hallway. Bearing in mind Samuelson's discussion of the national home post-transition, moving away from the tradition, Paul regresses. Paul no longer looks after himself, and neither does he care for his garden, which is described with "an overgrown lawn" (Botha, *False River* 152). When Pa comes to fetch Dominique, he says, "Good God, what kind of person lives like this […] Look at how he's living. Like a pig, a bloody pig. What kind of person's house is this?", which suggests that Paul regresses to barbarism (Botha, *False River* 160).

Discussing the 'Jim comes to Joburg' trope in Douglas Blackburn's *Leaven*: *A Black and White Story* (1908), Michael Chapman observes that "the Jim-comes-to-Joburg story would become the South African story" (209). The German doctor that provides Paul with drugs tells Dominique that "Yeoville is the departure lounge to the new South Africa," and if Yeoville is Paul's home, and reflects Paul's story, then the new South African story here is one of decline (Botha, *False River* 156). Paul's fate – drug addiction and self-destruction – suggests that there is no place for him, male descendent of a patriarchal lineage of white farmers, beyond the farm, or, that there is no healthy and productive landscape in which he can construct an alternative to the tradition. Paul's deterioration indicates the corruption at the foundations of the traditional story of the self, but it also reveals a wasteland for the white self in the new South Africa that is becoming in Botha's text. If Paul represents the white male self emerging from the country's history, he is not afforded redemption, and is stuck, like Bobo, in no-man's land, or moreover, sacrificed, like Cia, to Africa. Paul's character differs from the entrapped and self-destructive villain of the subversive farm novel in that he is the victim of past ills, rather than its perpetrator,

as Botha represents a new generation of the patriarchal line who cannot find a home or place for themselves in the world.

Dominique's place in Paul's house in Yeoville mirrors her position in her parents' home on the farm, as submissive female of the pastoral tradition. Following Paul to Johannesburg from Cape Town, Dominique shows the secondariness to her brother that Visser suggests in her defining herself as "Paul's sister." Alone in the house, Dominique cleans up after Paul, and when he doesn't return after several hours, she phones her father, who comes to collect her, vulnerable "young woman alone in a place like that," to take her "home to the familiar air of planting and reaping and narrowing margins" (Botha, *False River* 160, 161). Dominique's vulnerability in a place like that is typified by her rape by the German doctor: Dominique "did not want him to," but she "let him because [she] did not want to be in the house alone"; "she did not stop him" (Botha, *False River* 158). If Dominique's figurative rape at the onset of her menses reflects her repression on the farm, her rape by the German doctor reinforces this position that she cannot move past, which suggests that, in the new South African story, Dominique, as the white female self emerging from the country's history, is equally unredeemed.

But although Dominique is the victim of a patriarchal tradition, in both the old and the new South African story, I argue that her narrative, unlike those of Bobo and Nyree, is not absolutely or ultimately a narrative of the victimized self. Samuelson reads the rape of Mazvita and Zhizha in Vera's *Without a Name* (1994) and *Under the Tongue*, respectively, to reflect a violation, but also a restructuring of the traditional narrative of womanhood, and it is in this sense that I read Botha's representation of Dominique. Samuelson refers to Vera's "'re-member'[ing] the bodies of women" ("Re-membering" 94). Applying this argument in the context of *False River*, Botha rewrites Dominique's embodiment (re-members her), so that she becomes the driving force of her own re-placement.

Discussing the re-placement of woman in the post-colonial state, Dorit Naaman argues that women "start to negotiate and redefine their position in patriarchy" (333). In *Nervous Conditions*, redefining one's position in a patriarchy means rejecting and moving away from the position that the mother has historically occupied, and I suggest a similar movement in Dominique's liberation. At the start of the country's transition to democracy, Dominique is at home on the farm, under her parents' wing and teaching embroidery to women from the squatter camp. "My malaise came and went," Dominique explains. "I did not go back to Cape Town. The embroidery was Ma's idea" (Botha, *False River* 164). The creative outlet is also

supported by Pa, who tells his daughter, "How wonderful to start your own business and create employment" (Botha, *False River* 164-65). Directed by Ma and Pa, Dominique's embroidery business, rather than reflecting the weaving of a new landscape for herself, is an expression of a self that is confined to a home of planting and reaping and narrowing margins.

Dominique describes tracing butterflies from Ouma's book of stencils as "[m]imicry of mimicry" (Botha, *False River* 165). Copying the creative expressions of the maternal line, Dominique only represents a repressed creativity and stilted artistry. Describing Ma helping her with the stiches, Dominique reflects that "[t]he vocabulary of the craft held the history of its unchanging purpose. Blanket and buttonhole stich, cross, satin, feather and running stich" (Botha, *False River* 165). Although Dominique might be referring to the technicalities of the craft, the intimation of her reflection is that this history is related to Ouma's, Ma's, and her own stifled creativity. On a family holiday to Plettenberg Bay with Oupa Bob and Ouma Celia on Dominique's earlier lapse from school with her suspect malady, Ouma complains about Oupa abandoning her on the weekends for sport. "'What your ouma should be doing,' Ma said, "is painting,'" to which Dominique retorts, "Ma, you can draw just as well. Why don't you do it?" (Botha, *False River* 110). Third-generation woman, Dominique is threatened with being circumscribed within these limited borders of expression and productivity.

It is Adi who is responsible for Dominique's "rural upliftment," which is Paul's facetious terminology (Botha, *False River* 169). When Adi visits the farm with Paul, he and Dominique sit next to each other at the dinner table, holding hands while Pa says grace. Delimited by the voice of the patriarch, Dominique glances at her sketchbook, in which she has sketched songbirds in cages as an embroidery motif. But next to Adi, Dominque remembers that "[s]ome cages were open and the birds had hopped out onto branches. Pastel leaves fluttered down the page" (Botha, *False River* 169). In Adi's presence, Dominique is able to imagine a different reality for herself than entrapment and stifling. The historical context meanwhile is the country's liberation from its fraught past. Dominique describes the day that it is announced that Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were to be released from prison as "a hot cloudless February Highveld day. The sky open for a whole country to take a deep breath" (Botha, *False River* 164). The country's liberation reflects Dominique's own potential for liberation, and her potential to redefine the landscape for herself.

Discussing the interregnum, the period between Mandela's release in 1990 and his election to office in 1994, Stephen Clingman refers to "[t]he South African world during these years [as]

so foreboding that cataclysm was as easily imaginable an outcome as peace" (634). Political theorist Antonio Gramsci wrote that the "crisis [of the interregnum] consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear" (276). I suggest that Paul symbolically subsumes the potential national cataclysm (morbid symptoms) in the transition to South African democracy, so that the country and Dominique can move forward. Or, in Gramsci's terms, the crisis of Dominique's selfhood is resolved in the old (Paul) dying, so that the new (Dominique) can be born.

Where Zimbabwe's Independence is journeyed over by Fuller in the story of herself, and is used as a blinding metaphor by Nyree for her loss of innocence, Botha acknowledges and gives space to the passing away of apartheid, and particularly as it relates to Dominique's own transition out of the past. In the past order, Dominique reflects the angel in the house in her domesticity and subordination, and also as she watches over Paul. Paul might be sacrificed to the land like Cia, but Cia is lost so that Nyree can save herself in the old country, whereas Paul is lost to the old country so that Dominque can save herself in the new. Paul is lost and re-placed, by Adi. I obviate the potential argument that Dominique is merely rescued by another man, only perpetuating her passive position, and argue rather that Dominique is agent in her own destiny in that, letting go of Paul and their imagined landscape and choosing Adi for herself, Dominique moves forward.

Clingman characterizes the interregnum as moving through phases, the literature reflecting historical changes, which I suggest can be related to Dominique's malaise that came and went while she is still on the farm at the beginning of the demise of apartheid. Moving to Johannesburg to study at university, Dominique can be said to reposition herself in the new South African story, and in relation to Paul, who is still under the corrupting influence of Sodom and Gomorrah. In this new landscape for Dominique, her home, "a cottage at the end of an avenue of blue gums next to a sports field in Melville," reflects Adi's home, "a cottage on a farm just outside Johannesburg. There were blue gums and frost and lightning strikes" (Botha, *False River* 177). When Dominique finds her cottage broken into after a weekend visit with Adi to the farm, it is intimated that Paul has been the intruder. This can be interpreted as Paul's potential intrusion into Dominique's place in the new South African story (with Adi). But Paul only steals Dominique's belongings to feed his drug addiction, through which he self-destructs, so that he can't actually take her place in this story. This transitional period is also characterized by Ma's coming and going as she did work in the city for the Women's National

Coalition, but Dominique realises that she "did not really want to live with Ma," as she moves away from what Ma represents for the self (Botha, *False River* 177).

The constant and consistent figure in this period for Dominique is Adi. Adi's character is offset against Paul's. After dinner on Paul and Adi's visit to the farm, the boys and Dominique go out for a drink. "You can go with them," Pa tells Dominique. "He [Adi] looks decent, unlike the other riffraff your brother consorts with" (Botha, *False River* 170). What Paul calls Adi's "civic-mindedness," his wanting to contribute to the transition of the country, is juxtaposed against Paul's "emigration fantasies," based on "an epistolary in [his] suitcase and a library in [his] head" (Botha, *False River* 170). "Ma said […] you could see that Adi had been properly educated, unlike Paul's raw intelligence that just slid into caustic wit" (Botha, *False River* 174). Where Paul declares himself agnostic at ten-years old, Dominique describes Adi as "religious. He described his political and spiritual awakening when a priest called Caesar Molebatsi came to Michaelhouse and roused him from his privileged slumber" (Botha, *False River* 177). I argue that, in Botha's representation of self, Paul represents the old South Africa, and Adi the new. The comparison between Adi and Paul culminates then in Pa calling Adi "my son" after Paul dies, which suggests that the new South African story cannot be reconciled with the old one; there is only rupture and replacement (Botha, *False River* 195).

However, Mbembe warns against a simple social model of a before and after to the colonial/post-colonial story, and in this way, Adi doesn't replace Paul, but takes his place in a continuing South African narrative (15). Adi tells Dominique that they "are entangled," which I relate to Mbembe's definition of an emerging time in the postcolony: "this time that is appearing, this passing time"; "the *time of existence and experience*, the *time of entanglement*" (Botha, *False River* 183; 16). Dominique's dislike of the city supports Mbembe's contention for an emerging time. "I do not like the city. I was listless at university and my marks bore witness," Dominique says, which suggests that, unsettled and unresolved in herself, Dominique is still emerging from the past (Botha, *False River* 178). Also, Adi's proclamation that he and Dominique are entangled is made as he announces that he would be leaving to study in England for a time, so that their union, and its intimations of liberation and renewal, are suspended. "'We are entangled,' Adi said kissing [Dominique's] fingers. 'The first time I saw you when you were fourteen I knew we would be together. Nothing will change, you'll see" (Botha, *False River* 183). The scene of entanglement between Dominique and Adi represents a promise of their future together, and the potential for a new story of the self.

Clingman describes the final phase of the interregnum as "an extraordinary fusion of horror and promise, of past, present and future combining in unprecedented ways" (647). Adi leaves for England just after the vote comes in from the country's first democratic election, which is theoretically the cut-off point of the interregnum, although, as I have suggested, these cut-offs are artificial. Clingman's description of this phase is apt for Dominique's fragmentary transition, even as it extends beyond the borders of the interregnum. In the absence of Adi and the promise of their future together, Dominique becomes stuck in the transition and she reverts to the old, past ways to try to resolve it. She follows the guidance of Ma, who self-reflects: "I have been stuck on this farm for thirty-five years. Go to Cape Town. There is nothing here for you" (Botha, *False River* 184).

In Cape Town, with Paul, Dominique tries to recreate their imagined landscape: they swim in the sea on the beach where Ingrid Jonker died and drive to the cemetery where she was buried, as they retrace their own past. Dominique substitutes Paul's "coke-fuelled" horror for Adi's promise as she "put[s] a knife into Adi" (Botha, *False River* 189, 191). Ma disapproves of the breakup, and Dominique judges herself in Manichean terms: "I felt bad. I was bad" (Botha, *False River* 192). In this story, there is only one future for Dominique, in which she again "cleaned Paul's room, packed his clothes away and phoned home" (Botha, *False River* 189).

But in the new democracy, this past narrative is not sustainable, as its symbolic figurehead, Paul, son of a farmer and with the potential to carry the tradition into the future, falls. Paul cannot settle in Johannesburg, the stage of the new South African story, nor in Cape Town, repeatedly "need[ing] to get away from here. Away from the drugs" (Botha, *False River* 193). But "[t]o farm on Wolwefontein one day was always Paul's dream," which might reflect Visser's portent for Paul's final loss of perspective, here seeking fulfilment in returning to the farm, but which suggests, moreover, that the Bothas misunderstood their son, and misread his idea of selfhood (Botha, *False River* 187).

Dominique refers to Paul's dream in recounting their exchange as they sit on the roof of his rented house in Somerset Road. Paul wants news of everyone; Dominique doesn't tell him about the disinheritance that she and Christiaan had to sign. With a view of the sea and Table Mountain at twilight, Dominique says, "Sjoe, Paul, it's beautiful." "Nothing like Wolwefontein," Paul replies (Botha, *False River* 187). Greg, Paul's former housemate, tells Dominique that "Paul always wanted to go to Wolwefontein when things got really bad" (Botha, *False River* 189). Paul does fantasize about becoming a farmer, and longs for a

restoration of the self in reconnecting with the land. He continues to represent this connection. The pathology is that he cannot realize or actualize his dream. Visser reads the failed relationship between Paul and Dudu, his girlfriend from Kenya, just prior to his death to reflect Botha's position on racial reconciliation in the new dispensation, but I argue that racial reconciliation is not Botha's primary mandate, but rather, Botha seeks to express the reconciliation, or irreconciliation in Paul's case, of the self (*Absence* 55).

To further this claim, I return to the idea of entanglement. Sarah Nuttall relates the concept of entanglement to the post-apartheid moment, suggesting that the country's historical segregation has given rise to a theoretical discourse of segregation, which risks perpetuating these essentialisms (*Entanglement* 31). Nuttall argues for a discourse of entanglement that, rather than denying difference, recognises similarity. As Botha suggests entanglement between Dominique and Adi, rather than between Paul and Dudu, her text doesn't supersede the old paradigm to form, what Nuttall calls, "a (white) creolité […] emerg[ing] from a properly post-apartheid context," but this is because *False River* is a novel of transition, not a novel of (properly post-apartheid) redemption (*Entanglement* 82).

Discussing the country's emergence from its apartheid past, de Kok argues against "a grand concluding narrative" to the apartheid era, in the same way that Mbembe argues against a simple break from colonialism into the future: because such a notion would only reinforce the dualistic thinking of the past, and furthermore, de Kok argues, give rise to a culture of forgetting (61). De Kok suggests the elegiac form, with its cycle of praise, lament and consolation, to be a more appropriate expression of the country's ongoing transformation. In the reconfiguration of loss into memory is a self and a country that is always becoming or transitioning, and in Dominique's closing elegy to Paul and the land is her final, although endless, re-membering of history.

"[*D*]*o you still remember*?" Dominique recollects the scenes of her narrative, placing her and Paul in Wolwefontein, "*our place of origin*" (Botha, *False River* 197, 201). Dominique's elegy is "*a map*" to locate herself and Paul in the landscape, but her history differs from Fuller's mapped immortalisation of Rhodesia because Dominique's remembrance is based on an acceptance of loss (Botha, *False River* 199). Where Fuller tallies her personal losses against the country, so that her perpetual journeying leads nowhere, and Liebenberg's garden of the self builds to a momentous fatality, in which everything is lost with Rhodesia, Botha's narrative is contained by loss. Unlike Bobo and Nyree, who represent themselves as the victims of

history, Dominique embodies the national and historical. Within Dominique's vision of the present is a containment of the past, and with the return of Adi at Paul's death, the promise of a future of entanglement.

Section 2

Representing the child

In the previous section, I explored the representation of the self as mediated through representations of the landscape, both geographical and imagined, comparing the authors' depiction of the land to a tradition of white writing about Africa. In this section, I explore the authors' representation of the self through the child's voice and experiences. Again, I begin with Fuller's text, from which I develop my analysis to Liebenberg and Botha's representations of the child. Here, the texts will be analysed against a Western literary convention of representing childhood, as well as localised conventions in Zimbabwean and South African literature.

Chapter 4

'A kid in war': Representing the child in *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*

In *Contesting Childhood*: *Autobiography, Trauma, and Memory* (2010), Kate Douglas notes that the cover image of childhood autobiographies is often a photograph of the author as a child. Douglas argues that childhood, when represented in autobiographical form, is commodified: "Childhoods are produced and sold (by writers, publishers, and booksellers) and bought and consumed (by readers)" (44). Douglas positions this commodification within a Western cultural paradigm, where the child, representing innocence and vulnerability, is "a cultural symbol of authenticity" (45).

On the cover of the 2002 Pan Macmillan publication of *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* is a photograph of a prepubescent Bobo, smiling as she walks away from a family car that is parked next to a farm shed. Other details of the photograph include young black boys milling around the car, presumably Bobo's father at the driver's door, the landscape fading off into a mountainous horizon, and a huge African sky onto which the author's name and the title of her memoir is inscribed. The rose-tinted image contains all the markers of a constructed Africa into which the self is inserted, as discussed in the previous section on representing the land, but following Douglas's argument, the self is particularly indisputable here – is authenticated in this context – because of her childhood identity. As a child, innocent, vulnerable, and with an

immature awareness of the world, Bobo is excused from the position of coloniser, oppressor, and even, agent of construction. The cover image sets up a frame through which Fuller's memoir should be read, as Bobo's 'African Childhood' is authentic in that she was there, in that landscape, as the photograph attests, but also in that childhood is its own landscape, or home, in which the child-self belongs.

On the cover of the 2003 edition is a photograph of the lower legs of a young girl, with school-shoed feet and a band-aid on one knee. The photograph appears to be a stock image, reflecting the constructedness of the fiction of childhood, and its associated innocence and helplessness, which the band-aid then supports. The 2015 edition features a small photographic image of Bobo walking with her head bowed, within a large black and white African pattern or print. The image of Bobo is taken from a photograph that appears in the text, in which she and Vanessa are walking along a kopje. I suggest that the pattern on the cover stands in for the African landscape, into which the black and white clipping of young Bobo is inserted. As with the first edition mentioned, the photograph, taken from the Fuller family collection, reinforces Bobo's presence in this landscape, which is then further justified by her status as a child.

On the cover of the Random House publication (2002) is a photograph of Bobo as a toddler. This photograph also appears in the text, captioned, *Bobo*: *Boarfold* (Fuller 34). Despite the background landscape of the photograph in which the little Bobo appears being definitively un-African, the image nonetheless supports a frame of innocence for the text in the same way that the cover images of the Pan Macmillan editions do. The imagined landscape of childhood transcends or nullifies geographical borders, as childhood is its own exclusive world of the self.

The defence of the child's place in the African context is carried through the text, which is interspersed with photographs taken from the family album: of the family members, their experiences, servants, and friends. This schematic is a construction in itself, even as the child is positioned as incapable of such duplicity. Placing a family portrait at the opening of the chapter, Fuller affirms her place in the family and its landscape, and convinces the reader of her perspective. Fuller's part in the literary commodification of her childhood is to represent herself and her setting in a way that the white-African reader can relate to. The represented child acts as a medium through which this adult reader can relive his/her past, or recapture something of it for the present self. Representing the innocent and vulnerable child, Fuller satisfies her own desire, and the white adult reader's, for a reconstruction of the past and home in which the child belongs.

The incontestability of the child's place in this innocent past is unsettled, however, by the text's epigraph. The epigraph, "Don't let's go to the dogs tonight, / For mother will be there," is taken from a 1926 poem by A.P. Herbert, in which Herbert refers to British greyhound racing, which was a family recreation activity at the time (n.p.). The poem, "Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight," details a light-hearted exchange, with a young man entreating a young woman not to waste her youth and to come out with him, to which she responds that she would rather stay at home to avoid seeing her family at the races (Herbert 25-28). With reference to what I suggested in the previous section to be Bobo's matrophobia, or fear of becoming like her mother, the epigraph might intimate the narrator's apprehension of exposure in relation to Mum. If Bobo goes to the dogs, she will be seen or revealed against her family, and particularly, against Mum and Mum's madness.

The phrase is used later in the text by Pa when he and the girls pick up Charlie Chilvers, an Australian hitchhiker, who stays on to look after the girls while Mum is in hospital, pregnant with Richard and under orders of bed rest. "Where are you going?" Dad asks Charlie. "Wherever you're going, mister," she says, to which he replies, "Hell, you don't want to go where we're going […] To the dogs […] to the bloody dogs" (Fuller 193). Pa's expression of the family's decline reflects their struggle to survive on Devuli Ranch, the impending loss of Richard and Mum's nervous breakdown. Going to the dogs is a family affair, which I relate to the fiction or construction of childhood.

Douglas refers to a crisis point in Western society's conception of, or belief in, childhood at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, which saw an explosion in the publication of childhood autobiographies. Douglas relates this explosion to the turn of the century and its resultant cathartic revisions of personal history and identity (12). She also links the explosion in childhood autobiographies to public events in the United States and United Kingdom at the time in which children were killed by other children, or in which the child's parents were implicated in the murder, shattering preconceptions of childhood as a time of innocence, and also implicating the family in the child's vulnerability (5). Douglas notes that childhood autobiographies published from this time often locate the family as the site of abuse, physical and/or emotional, with the threat or danger to the child arising from within the familial household rather than beyond it.

It is this last point of Douglas's that I relate to Fuller's framing of the text with her epigraph. If Bobo goes to the dogs it is specifically because mother and the rest of the family are there;

with the epigraph, Fuller implicates the family in her suffering. The change in tone of the couplet between Herbert's application and my interpretation of Fuller's application can be said to reflect the social and literary progression in the understanding and representation of the child away from innocence. Fuller's loss of innocence, or perhaps even her lack of innocence, is suggested in relation to her family, and more particularly, to her mother.

Discussing the literary (re)creation of childhood, Douglas classifies scripts for remembering into nostalgic and traumatic (16). In the nostalgic mode, the adult author yearns for an idealized past that is now lost. Discussing the psychology of nostalgia, Svetlana Boym writes that, "[a]t first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams" (xv). In the nostalgic script for remembering childhood, the past, as home, is reimagined and re-inscribed. In line with traditional cultural perceptions of childhood as a time of innocence, the nostalgic mode dominated autobiographies published before the 1990s, as Douglas notes, when traumatic scripts for remembering childhood eclipsed this pattern (85). In the traumatic mode, childhood is lost to the past through the experience of trauma. Nostalgic remembering can also be used to construct a fantasy of the past, which is then exposed through traumatic reality.

I argue for a combination of the nostalgic and traumatic modes of remembering in Fuller's text. The most direct reference to the two modes, and their juxtaposition, is in Bobo's reference to Olivia's death, when her "life is sliced in half" (Fuller 95). "The first half is the happy years, before Olivia dies," Bobo explains; "[t]he second half of my childhood is now. After Olivia dies" (Fuller 95, 96). Fuller doesn't chart a linear development through nostalgia to trauma, however, but intersperses the two modes, because even as she suggests that her childhood before Olivia's death was happy, this narrative is not free from trauma. Bobo's earliest family memory is the story of Adrian's death. "It's a sad story," she says referring to Mum's recollection of Adrian's loss (Fuller 29). "It's a Family Theme and it always ends badly" (Fuller 29).

Fuller also erratically returns to the nostalgic mode following the death of her younger sister. Reflecting on the loss of Richard later in the text, Fuller writes, "When we first moved to the [Devuli] ranch, before Richard died, in the brief, blissful period when Mum was well enough to be at home – with her health, and with her swelling belly, and with the end of the war, it seemed as if we might be allowed some peace and undisturbed happiness. There was then a pause in my life of uncomplicated childhood, a period of delicious hubris" (204). Nostalgically

remembering her childhood after Olivia dies, and also suggesting a traumatic childhood before her sister's death, Fuller doesn't build nostalgic memory (of Olivia, Adrian, Richard) to shatter it absolutely with a traumatic one (their deaths), as she is continuously rebuilding the past.

The further argument is that Fuller doesn't express traumatic memory to expose the idealization of nostalgic memory, or that she doesn't reconstruct the past to reveal its fiction, but rather, she juxtaposes the two modes of remembering to emphasize the extent of her loss. Douglas suggests that "[n]ostalgia is more than a longing for a lost past; it is an overt longing for a past that may not have existed" (94). In nostalgic representation, remembering the past justifies its existence; with the representation of trauma, the existence of an innocent childhood is shown to be a construction – part of the nostalgic imaginary. Fuller's loss is not of a constructed past because she believes in a happy, uncomplicated childhood, so that the trauma she experiences serves, rather, as further self-justification for her losses.

It should be noted that Bobo's childhood is not innocent in that it is a time of safety and purity, in which she is untainted; the innocence accorded nostalgic representation relates to the child's naiveté. Characterizing a literature of nostalgia in post-apartheid South Africa, Medalie recognizes the authors' nostalgia for their childhood during apartheid as "a nostalgia for a time when (in contrast to widespread perceptions of post-apartheid society) morality was simpler and wrong-doing or wrong thinking easier to identify" (37). I apply this argument to Bobo's context to suggest that a happy, uncomplicated childhood for Fuller reflects a time when her sense of self was unthreatened. Without an objective moral conscience, Bobo follows the family's lead. Morality is simple for her as her consciousness reflects her parents', so that wrong-doing and wrong-thinking is measured against what the family does and thinks. I understand Medalie's argument to suggest that a white author nostalgically reconstructing her childhood post-colonially is longing for the ignorance of a child, because this ignorance is easier to live with than the conscience of an adult.

Fuller has said that "[i]n *Dogs* what I wanted to show people is that if you're a kid in war you have no idea what's going on. You try to make sense of it the best you can, but you really can't explain it; you don't have a vocabulary for it yet […] as a kid you don't understand that, so there was no real forum for me to write about politics" (qtd. in Law 8). Harris argues that in nostalgic representations of childhood in white Zimbabwean memoir-autobiography, the idealized memory is a de-historicized and de-politicized one, in which the self has a home. The memoirist writes her childhood to show how she belonged, or she repossesses the 'I' that

belongs in writing her childhood. This self belongs in so far as it is written independently of the national reality. I would argue that Fuller chooses the vocabulary of a child so that she needn't understand, engage with, or try to make sense of a war that undermines her sense of belonging in the country. It is not that a political perspective is absent from Fuller's text, as Harris's argument might be construed, but that the country's politics are filtered through the developing awareness of the child; what is absent from Fuller's perspective is a moral conscience. Representing the child's naïve perspective, Fuller denies responsibility in the country's colonial history, and so absolves herself of the sins of the past.

Reconstructing the past as an adult author looking back at her childhood-self, Fuller is not innocent, because, as Douglas notes, "[c]hildhood [is not] remembered as the child experienced it; it [is] overtly reconstructed as the adult has re-experienced it" (94). Moreover, there is a double strand of innocent, naïve child and knowing, worldly, and therefore guilty, adult running through the text. This is reflected in the child's narrative being interspersed with accounts from an older Fuller. "I put in a little bit of history in the first book [*Dogs*] so readers could orient themselves," Fuller explains, "but I slipped out of my voice to do that. I took off the clothes of the child and slipped into my adult voice, saying, 'Here, for the record, is what was going on'" (qtd. in Law 8).

Where Fuller's account of the First Chimurenga is contained in its own chapter, there are other briefer interludes in which she contextualizes the story she is telling. For instance, when Mum defends white-run Africa to a visiting English guest and makes reference to the struggle for Kenya's independence, the adult Fuller intercedes with a small historical paragraph in italics: "*After independence, Kenya was run by Mzee, the Grand Old Man, Jomo Kenyatta. He had been born in 1894, the year before Britain declared Kenya one of its protectorates* […]" (19). For 'Chimurenga, 1974,' she writes that "the civil war in Rhodesia was eight years old. In a matter of months, terrorist forces based in Mozambique under the new and guerrilla-friendly Frelimo government would be flooding over the border to Rhodesia […]" (Fuller 51).

Other references are less impartial. At the close of the chapter in which she describes her childhood experience of Karoi, Fuller retrospectively narrates, "That's how I remember Karoi. And the dust-stinging wind blowing through the mealies on a hot, dry September night. And a fold-up and rip-away lawn prickled with paper thorns. And the beginning of the army guys […]" (44). Here, the adult voice reinforces claims to a persecutory environment, and so the victimisation of the self. In her description of Zimbabwe's Independence, Fuller inserts a

passage in italics about the Great Trek of 1835, but this is only to sardonically refer to, what she calls, "the Little Trek," the exodus of Afrikaner families out of newly-independent Zimbabwe (149). Returning to the child's voice, she then explains that some of the English families leave Zimbabwe too, so that "[t]here is only a handful of us left," isolated and vulnerable (Fuller 149).

Thus, even though there is at times an adult voice interpolated into the childhood experience, this knowing or worldly perspective is not used to compensate for the child's limitations. The adult voice rather tends to support the child's understanding and representation of herself. The knowing, worldly, and therefore guilty voice, is silent in the text; a subtext that is subsumed in the subjectivity of the child's narrative of nostalgia and trauma.

Substantiating her argument for Fuller and other white Zimbabwean memoirists limited engagement with the political and historical context, Law refers to the authors' representation of Zimbabwe's struggle for liberation. "[I]t is such a surprise," Fuller writes, "when we lose the War. Lost. Like something that falls between the crack in the sofa. Like something that drops out of your pocket. And after all that praying and singing and hours on our knees, too" (146). She goes on to describe the "*freeanfair* elections in February 1980, just before [her] eleventh birthday" (Fuller 147). In April, "Robert Gabriel Mugabe takes power as Zimbabwe's first prime minister. [Bobo] had never even heard of him" (Fuller 148).

This echoes a sentiment expressed by Lauren St John in *Rainbow's End*: *A Memoir of Childhood, War and an African Farm* (2007), which Law includes in her analysis, when St John writes that, at Zimbabwe's Independence, she had "only recently registered the name of Mugabe" (193). Law argues that the bewilderment expressed by these authors at Independence reflects the destabilisation of an absolute whiteness. But what these statements also reflect is the ignorance and innocence of a child in war who has no idea what's going on.

If Fuller engages superficially with politics to reflect the limited awareness of the child, then Law and Harris's argument that Fuller writes over the national story with the story of white identity doesn't hold. Expressing the child's naïve consciousness, Bobo cannot be included in Mbembe's classification of the West's narration of itself against an African other. Bobo articulates the subjectivity of the experiencing child rather than that of the experienced narrator, who accedes to her own subconscious to construct herself in relation to an other. Fuller's othering, following this argument, is not a means through which she subconsciously reinforces her own identity, but a conscious strategy on behalf of the author to represent the child's

reception of existing racial hierarchies. Because it is the family through which the child first develops its perceptions, beliefs, and judgments, Bobo's racism reflects her parents'.

When Bobo asks her father about the barren, worn soil of the Tribal Trust Lands – why aren't the Africans practising good soil conservation, farming practices, and water management – he explains, "Because they're *muntus*, that's why," to which Bobo replies, "When I grow up, I'll be in charge of *muntus* and show them how to farm properly" (Fuller 105). It could then be argued that, affirming Bobo against Dad – "I'm a jolly good farmer […] Aren't I, Dad, aren't I a good farmer?" – Fuller, as the older self, self-reflexively illustrates how the younger self is conditioned into accepting race essentialism (105).

I do not, however, contend that that Fuller's evocation of the child is a self-conscious, knowing construct, through which she criticizes and undermines narratives of innocence. Although I recognise that Fuller's limited engagement with the political and historical context reflects the child's own limited awareness of reality, and that the child's engagement with the world is primarily with, and filtered through, its parents, I argue that Fuller's representation of a younger self allows her to evade her own (mature) engagement with the national story and to displace this story, and its associated racism and narrow-mindedness, onto an older authority (not herself).

This argument can be substantiated in comparing Fuller's representation of the country's political transition to St John's representation. Although St John expresses the same shock as Fuller at Zimbabwean Independence, observing that "overnight our way of life ended […] was eradicated in an instant," she acknowledges the implications of this transition for herself, lamenting her disillusionment and her confrontation with reality (91). Where St John shows the stirring of a moral awareness as Mugabe assumes power in Zimbabwe, expressing remorse for what she describes as the lie she had been told about the past, Fuller maintains the child's naïveté. Fuller neither suggests a development in her own nascent conscience in the aftermath of the country's liberation, nor does she reflect thoughtfully and penitently on the country's transition in her capacity as mature author.

Fuller engages with the racial duality between the self and other at Zimbabwean Independence through the child's experience. Early in the narrative, Bobo explains that,

> To begin with, before Independence, I am at school with white children only. 'A' schools, they are called: superior schools with the best teachers and facilities. The black children go to 'C' schools. In-between children who are

> neither black nor white (Indian or a mixture of races) go to 'B' schools. (Fuller 7)

This description, in which Bobo is secure in her identity, is then followed by a passage in which this security is unsettled:

> The Indians and coloureds (who are neither completely this nor completely that) and blacks are allowed into my school the year I turn eleven, when the war is over. The blacks laugh at me when they see me stripped naked after swimming or tennis, when my shoulders and arms are angry sunburnt red. (Fuller 7)

In her confrontation with the black other, Bobo "stand[s] out," and is antagonised for her whiteness (Fuller 8). "'Argh! I smell roasting pork!' they shriek. 'Who fried the bacon?' 'Burning piggy!'" (Fuller 7, 8). These passages suggest that an African childhood lived through the transition to Independence signifies, for Bobo, the displacement of the child, whose identity, in this context, is definitively racialized. Law and Harris's argument for the predominance of the narrative of the white self over history can be reconciled with the story of the child, because what Bobo understands of the development of history is the location and then dislocation of her white self.

Bobo's confrontation with the other at school is comparable to Tambudzai's in *Nervous Conditions*. Arriving at her new mission school, Sacred Heart, Tambudzai "looked and looked and searched carefully through the crowd, but [she] could not find a single black face" (Dangarembga 194). "The white students needed careful study to decide whether they were different or similar to me," Tambudzai reflects, "whether they were likable or not and what their habits were" (Dangarembga 195). Tambudzai's experience of the white students at her new school reflects Bobo's reaction to the black children who enter her school after Independence, when she realises that she is "White. African. White-African" (Fuller 7). The child's confrontation with another race is an experience of difference, as the child instinctively understands and measures the world in relation to itself.

The dividing line between nostalgic and traumatic remembering for Fuller might be signified, not by Olivia's death, but by Zimbabwean Independence, when the child's sense of self is destabilized. Later in the narrative, when Fuller describes the end of the war and the country's Independence at more length, it is again in the context of the excluded white child: "Tomorrow, the children who have gone to 'B' schools, for coloureds and Indians, will be here. The children from 'C' schools, for blacks, will be here too" (149). The crisis point in Fuller's story of the child, at Independence, is the loss of her home at school, the child's microcosmic reality.

Bobo's experience as the white child in this context can be further explored in comparison to the black child's experience of Zimbabwe's liberation. Bobo experiences the war indirectly, relaying its reality through child-like accounts, which appear to be reproduced from the child overhearing its parents speaking, or from explanations that have been given to the child about what's going on. For 'War: 1976' Bobo writes, "Mum and Dad both join the police reservists, which means Dad has to go out into the bush on patrol for ten days at a time and find terrorists and fight them. I watch him strip the gun and clean it" (Fuller 60). She recalls an instance when a policeman comes to her school to talk to the children about landmines. "I only know a few people who have gone over mines," Bobo reflects (Fuller 57). She describes once, in the car with Mum and Vanessa, witnessing an African bus go over a mine. Hiding from the devastation and refusing to look, Bobo had to take "Vanessa's word for it" (Fuller 58).

In contrast to the passive and largely removed nature in which Bobo relates to Zimbabwe's struggle for Independence, black children played a much more active role in the country's war. Referring to her displacement at school by the arrival of non-white children, Bobo explains that "[t]omorrow child soldiers will arrive […] these *mujiba* and *chimwido*" (Fuller 149). During the liberation struggle "[g]uerillas actively recruited [black] schoolchildren by making them more conscious of the poverty and misery of their situation and telling them that there was a way out and that they could fight for better conditions" (Zimfep 22). Where Bobo, the white Rhodesian child, belongs at (a historically white-only) school, the black child, to find a way out to better conditions in which to locate him/herself, is removed from school.

Reflecting on the literary representation of child soldiers in the liberation struggle, Robert Muponde argues that childhood becomes a metaphor for the origins of a new nation ("Children" 120). But for the black child to act in the birthing of the Zimbabwean nation, he/she must be temporarily suspended from childhood. Bobo refers to the child soldiers as "worldly and old" (Fuller 149). Their "fixed, long distance stares" – "[t]hey can track their way through the night-African bush by the light of the stars" – reflects the reference to these schoolchildren having been made more conscious through their knowledge of the national situation (Fuller 149). Where Bobo belongs at home in the country in her ignorance of the war, the black child, a child of resistance, belongs through the experience of war. After Zimbabwe, the liberated nation, is born, the black child returns to school, to childhood, displacing the white child from home.

In "'The Eyes of a Buck': Figuring the Child in the Zimbabwean Short Story in English" (2004), Muponde discusses a different form of oppression and resistance of the black child in Dambudzo Marechera's "House of Hunger" (1978), in which the child is entrapped and alienated by the adult world, and more particularly, within the family unit. Muponde notes that "Marechera's children are meant to project a counter-idealisation of both the family as a sheltering space and children as possessing […] 'unfallen freshness of insight' and 'incorruptible naiveté,'" ("Eyes" 99). Muponde is wary of critical readings of Marechera's text that fix the anonymous narrator and community of children in "House of Hunger" into archetypes of African victimhood, pointing instead to assertions of selfhood in the realm of childhood experience here ("Eyes" 106). I have referred to Fuller's representation of the self in relation to a discourse of victimhood, but in contrast to Muponde's argument for "House of Hunger," I suggest that Fuller's claims to victimhood are simultaneously claims to the self. To explore this argument in relation to Fuller's representation of the child, and to examine the extent to which Bobo is alienated and entrapped by her family, as Marechera's narrator is by his, I will examine Bobo's relationship with the characters that share her sheltering space: Mum, Dad, and Vanessa.

The opening scene of the text suggests the social and familial context in which Bobo grows up. "Mum says, 'Don't come creeping into our room at night'" (Fuller 1). Because of the national situation, Mum and Dad sleep armed, and to prevent accident, Mum warns Bobo not to disturb them then. Although this is an outwardly protective act, it leaves the young Bobo vulnerable at a particularly vulnerable time, when she might "need Mum and Dad," and so dependent on Vanessa to minister to her night needs (Fuller 1). When Mum wakes up in the morning, she comes into the children's room "and scoops the sleeping baby [Olivia] up to her shoulder" (Fuller 5). Mum's care of Olivia, read in conjunction with her neglect of Bobo during the night, suggests that Bobo has been displaced as the baby of the family, who needs looking after. As rejecting and neglectful of Bobo, Mum might be said to be an absent mother, but Mum is in every way present in Bobo's story of the self. Mum might then be classified in the Derridean sense of present-absent (Derrida 93). In Fuller's representation of Mum's often toxic presence are traces of the mother that she is not.

Mum features centrally in Fuller's memory of her childhood because her outrageousness, fuelled by drink, affects Bobo, the child, adversely. Bobo refers to Mum's drunkenness with familiarity: "[Mum's] eyes are half-mast. That's what my sister and I call it when Mum is drunk and her eyelids droop"; "Mum is already sitting yoga-crosslegged, cradling a drink on

her lap"; "The Leaning Tower of Pissed […] Mum is drunk again" (Fuller 9, 21, 31). In addition to the embarrassment that Mum's drunkenness causes Bobo in public, and the risks her behaviour incurs, is the emotional detachment from Bobo that results from her alcoholism. If Bobo doesn't represent the innocent, uncorrupted child of a Western cultural imaginary, Mum doesn't occupy a healthily supportive and functional maternal role.

Mum is at once neglectful of Bobo and emotionally needy of her daughter. In an instance in which her mother is drunk, Bobo mulls, "[Y]ou never know what will set Mum off," as Mum "throw[s] what Dad calls a wobbly" (Fuller 10, 11). Mum's behaviour reflects her neglect of the family and it also illustrates her puerility. Mum tells Bobo the sad story of Adrian's death "more than a hundred times" (Fuller 29). When Mum is "drunk and telling me about Adrian," Bobo recalls, "she is wet all over me. Arms clasped over my shoulders, she is hanging around my neck, and I can feel her face crying into the damp patch on my shoulder" (Fuller 31). Bobo is deprived of comfort and nurture, and she has to comfort and mother Mum. Uncontained in the family space, Bobo is displaced from childhood.

The sad story that Mum tells Bobo about Adrian's death reveals something further about Bobo's vulnerability and alienation in the family, as Adrian's loss is related in a before and after of fulfilment and disillusionment. Mum tells Bobo that, "The happiest day of my life was the day I held that little baby [Adrian] in my arms" (Fuller 29). "To begin with Mum is happy," Fuller tells her mother's story of being newly married with two children, but "[t]hen Adrian dies before he is old enough to talk. Mum is not yet twenty-four and her picture-perfect life is shattered" (30). "I understand," Bobo explains, "through the power of [Mum's] emotion, her tears, the way that she is dissolving like soap left too long in the bath, that this has been the greatest tragedy of our lives. It is my tragedy, too, even though I was not born when it happened" (Fuller 31). Bobo carries the weight of Adrian's death because she is continuously burdened by Mum's relating of the story, and because she was the child to follow him. "You were the baby we made when Adrian died," Mum tells Bobo in conclusion to the sad story (Fuller 31). Bobo is born after Adrian, but, as Mum's incessant recollection of that little baby and the happiest day of her life suggests, Bobo cannot replace him. It is in these terms that Fuller frames her victimisation in the family.

Bobo then assumes responsibility for Olivia's drowning. Olivia is Bobo's "fault" from her inception, as the seven-year old Bobo believes that Olivia "is the direct result of [her] prayer" for a baby brother or sister (Fuller 85). Bobo positions herself as Olivia's guardian, a notion

that is reinforced in the scene of Olivia's death. Mum drops Bobo and Olivia, a toddler, off at Aunty Rena while she, Dad, and Vanessa go shopping in Umtali, instructing Bobo to keep an eye on her little sister. When Olivia is found dead in the pond, Bobo believes that "[i]t was my fault. It was definitely my fault," because "[she] let Olivia drown" (Fuller 91). Bobo then assumes responsibility for Mum's heavy drinking and psychological decline following Olivia's death, so that she feels she is "also responsible for Mum's madness" (Fuller 94).

Dad is also implicated in the family's downward spiral after Olivia dies. "After Olivia dies," Bobo says of her traumatic childhood, "Mum and Dad's joyful careless embrace of life is sucked away, like water swirling down a drain. The joy is gone" (Fuller 96). But the trajectory and significance of Bobo's relationship with Dad differs from that with Mum. Where Mum's character, and the troubled nature of her relationship with Bobo, is suggested from the outset, Dad is a more hidden character at first, appearing to be the counter-voice to Mum's hot-headedness. "Cool it, Tub," Dad warns Mum as she fervently defends white Africa to the English guest (Fuller 18). The morning after Mum's wobbly, Dad drives Bobo back to boarding school, with a still-drunk Mum wedged in the back of the pickup. Dad asks Bobo to check if Mum is still alive back there because they'll "get into trouble if [they] try and take a dead body over the border" (Fuller 14). When they stop for the customs officials at the Zimbabwe-Zambia border, Dad tells Bobo to "[s]hut your mother up, will you?" as Mum sings 'Olé, I Am a Bandit' (Fuller 15). Dad's flippancy might seem inappropriate considering Mum's behaviour, but it also serves to distance Bobo from Mum and her self-destruction. Dad implicates Mum, and Mum's behaviour, rather than making the traumatic childhood Bobo's fault.

Dad's voice can be said to offset Mum's in placing Bobo in her proper position in the family. If Mum alienates Bobo from her childhood in projecting her self onto her daughter, Dad re-establishes the parent-daughter triangle, putting Mum in her place so that Bobo can assume hers. The morning after Bobo must wake Vanessa to take her to the toilet during the night, and Mum comes into their room to attend to Olivia, Bobo goes out onto the veranda to meet Dad for morning tea. "Morning Chookies," he greets her, "Sleep all right?" (Fuller 6). It is also Dad who comforts Bobo after Olivia dies. When he and Mum return from town to Aunty Rena, "Dad catches [Bobo] in his arms," telling her, "You're so brave, Chookies" (Fuller 92). The description of Dad's grief here echoes that of Mum's as she tells Bobo the story about Adrian's death: "[Dad] is crying silently, both his cheeks are wet, and his face is drawn and grey. He dries his tears on my neck" (Fuller 92). Where Mum wallows in her grief with Adrian's story, and turns silent and withdraws after Olivia's death, Dad, although suffering, is still able to

comfort Bobo. It should be stated though that Dad, although paternal, does not restore Bobo to childhood innocence, or return her to a state of incorruptible purity, however fallacious, because he functions within the context of the family. My appraisal of Dad, and the effect that he has on Fuller's childhood-self, is in relation and comparison to my appraisal of Mum and how she is suggested to contribute to Bobo's trauma. Dad provides a relatively sheltering space for Bobo, but he is still part of a problematic parenting pair.

It might even be argued that Dad's flippant manner, towards Mum and her behaviour, is a placation or an indulgence of his wife, only perpetuating Bobo's entrapment, because, although Dad might oppose Mum, he never absolutely tells her off. This disservice to Bobo is then compounded when Dad loses his mooring at Olivia's death. The transition from nostalgic to traumatic remembering signalled by Olivia's death reflects a shift in Bobo's memory of Dad from supportive parent, who contains Mum, albeit superficially, to grieving parent. The chapter 'Afterwards,' in which Fuller imaginatively bifurcates her childhood into the happy years and those after Olivia dies, is distinct in her representation of Dad's behaviour. Dad is now positioned alongside Mum. "Sometimes Mum and Dad are terrifying now," Bobo reflects. "They don't seem to see Vanessa and me in the backseat. Or they have forgotten that we are on the roof of the car, and they drive too fast under low thorn trees and the look on their faces is grim" (Fuller 96).

After Olivia dies, "Mum and Dad drink until they can hardly open the car door" (Fuller 96-97). Participating in Mum's drunkenness, Dad disrupts the balance of Bobo's, already tenuous, childhood security. Acknowledging Bobo's independence and her needs as a child, Dad presents her with the possibility that she is innocent of the grievances she feels weighed down with by Mum. But with Dad included in Mum's recklessness, this potential is lost and Bobo is reminded of her anxieties, into which Dad is now integrated. "If we crash and all of us die," Bobo ruminates, "it will be my fault because Olivia died and that made Mum and Dad crazy" (Fuller 99).

However, Dad's negligence of the children may be attributed to the shock and trauma of Olivia's death, because he doesn't continue to be dragged down with Mum until her nervous collapse after Richard dies. In the time leading up to Richard's death, Dad distinguishes himself from Mum as a parent to the girls. When Mum is ordered bedrest at Mutare hospital because of complications with her pregnancy, Dad takes Vanessa and Bobo out with him to look for cattle to farm on Devuli Ranch. Read in the light of my previous interpretations of Mum and

Dad's relationship with their daughters, here, Dad actively engages with the children, where Mum is absent, passive, and holding on to a fantasy of the past in which she imagines that the birth of another child will return her to the happy years. When Mum begins having problems with the pregnancy, Dad tells her to "[l]et this one go," but "Mum wants the baby" (Fuller 173, 174).

On the cattle-herding expedition, Bobo becomes violently ill after drinking contaminated water and is nursed by Dad and Vanessa. Chronically vomiting and with diarrhoea, Bobo is returned to an infantile state of absolute helplessness and dependency, and Dad "stays in camp with [her]" (Fuller 183). But Dad's attendance when Mum is in hospital only emphasizes Mum's absence from the family, so that "[a]ll of [them] are miserable, lonely without Mum" (Fuller 192). Bobo reflects, "We don't want to wash our hair alone and have no one to tell us to cut our fingernails. We want Mum to come home" (Fuller 192). These statements suggest that Dad, however supportive of Bobo, is part of a parenting pair, as I've suggested, and that Mum, in her own way, is a mother to the girls, although Bobo's dependence on Mum only worsens her loss when Mum withdraws into drink and herself.

It might be assumed from the opening passages of the text, in which Vanessa tends to Bobo during the night, that she becomes a surrogate mother to her younger sister in Mum's absence. But Vanessa carries out her sisterly duties begrudgingly, and with the annoyance of an older sibling forced to attend to a younger one. Interspersed in the first scene of Vanessa escorting Bobo to the toilet is Bobo's recollection of a conversation with Mum. When Bobo is flushing the chain of the toilet, she notices the magazine cut-out that is glued to the cover of the cistern, which then sparks her memory of asking Mum about it. In this recollection, Mum reacts to Bobo with the same fatigue as Vanessa does, "sigh[ing] again" at having to explain everything to Bobo, and in having to mind her "twittering on" (Fuller 4). The comparability between Vanessa and Mum in their response to Bobo suggests that Vanessa, perhaps following Mum, is no more mindful of Bobo, as a mother figure, than she is.

The relatively grownup voice of Vanessa, and the adult voice of Mum, distinguish Bobo as the child and reinforce her identity as the child. It might be argued that Fuller positions her younger self, relative to Vanessa and in the family, as the baby, because she is denied this position in almost every other way. When Vanessa appears in Fuller's story of her childhood, it is usually to cringe over and admonish Bobo for her childishness. "You're just a kid," Vanessa tells Bobo, refusing to keep watch as Bobo urinates in the open on a pit stop on the girls' adventure with

Dad (Fuller 176). And then later on the trip, when Bobo shouts out a "bad word" repeatedly, "Bum! Bum!", Vanessa says, "You're so *immature*" (Fuller 181). Vanessa is particularly intolerant of Bobo because of her immaturity, and Fuller's emphasis on this interaction between the siblings serves to reassert Bobo's child-likeness.

The cut-out that Bobo notices on the cistern is from *Scope* magazine, which she describes from her naïve perspective: "a blond woman in few clothes, with breasts like naked cow udders, and she's all arched in a strange pouty contortion, like she's got backache. Which maybe she has, from the weight of the udders" (Fuller 3). The child voices a pre-sexualised consciousness. Bobo's physical and sexual immaturity is emphasized against Vanessa's relative blossoming. Bobo describes Vanessa as "the conversation-stopping beauty in our family. Some old men try to kiss her and ask about her boobs" (Fuller 72). There is a repeated reference to Vanessa "ha[ving] boobs now" – "nice […q]uite big" – and to her "suddenly heavier, womanly" body at fourteen, and the "soft and secret" smell of her (Fuller 191, 219). Against this is Bobo, "a stick insect," "tearing around the farm on a motorbike, worm-bellied and mud-splattered" (Fuller 74, 299). She has "holes in her knickers," and "wipe[s her] nose on [her] arm" (Fuller 191, 215). In the contrast between the prepubescent Bobo and the womanly Vanessa, Fuller marks Bobo out as the child.

Fuller's juxtaposition between the girls is more significant than the simple disparity between different aged siblings, because Bobo doesn't appear to grow out of childhood into womanhood. Or, Bobo's transition into maturity is not detailed in the way that Vanessa's is, and the focus is on her unwomanliness. Fuller describes her own sexual maturation obscurely. Bobo's experience of boarding school is described through the conservative rules of the all-girl school that she attends, where they "must wear [their] uniforms […] no shorter than an inch above the knee"; they "must tie up [their] hair when it touches [their] collars"; and they "must wear high-waisted, low-legged thick brown nylon underwear" (Fuller 232). Vanessa distinguishes Bobo at fourteen as never "hav[ing] even been kissed," which is then followed by Fuller's recollection of her first kiss the next year, in which she bites the boy's tongue (Fuller 265). There are references to Bobo, "[f]reak," embarrassing Vanessa with her social awkwardness in their interactions with men (Fuller 105). Bobo's social and sexual naiveté, which distinguishes her as the child in relation to Vanessa, is perpetuated into her adolescence, and in this way, Bobo's childhood is prolonged.

The appearance of Bobo's future husband, Charlie, and their courtship and marriage towards the end of the narrative, is sudden. When Charlie asks Rob, his river manager, to prepare a meal for "the wonderful woman he is bringing to the bush with him," Rob "snorts, 'That little sprog. She's your idea of a beautiful woman?'", which Fuller explains away by Rob having known her since she was a child (299). But Rob's surprise at Bobo being the object of desire of a tall, dark, and handsome man can be said to reflect the reader's astonishment, because up to that point, Bobo *had* been represented as a little sprog. If Fuller does suggest her sexual maturation, it is only in relation to Charlie, and even then, indirectly – when Dad asks the couple how many tents there were on the camping trip and Charlie says one. The centre of Fuller's narrative is her childhood, a childhood that spans the narrative even as Fuller is growing up.

It might be argued that Bobo's tomboyishness and late sexual blossoming are merely part of her nature, but it is significant that, in nature, Bobo tends away from the feminine, represented in the family by Mum and Vanessa, towards the masculine, represented by Dad. Bobo gravitates towards Dad in quality because it allows her to maintain the child inside, the not-yet-woman. Becoming like Mum and Vanessa, Bobo would have to grow out of the child that they cannot tolerate. It is not that Bobo tends towards the masculine per se, but that she develops in relation to the family's gendered associations with the child. Dad provides the most supportive framework for the child to be herself. Vanessa and Mum baby Bobo, but their relationship with the child is characterized by intolerance and neglect. To retain the child that is valued, Bobo subconsciously tends to be like Dad. Bobo doesn't follow Dad in sexual orientation, but away from womanliness – for Bobo, to the position of the a-sexual or pre-sexual child.

The three-way relationship between Dad, Bobo, and Vanessa, through which Fuller writes the child, is illustrated in an incident in which Dad teaches the girls how to load and fire the FN rifle. Because of the country's war, the girls must learn to defend themselves, and so Bobo is grouped with Vanessa in grownup responsibility: "Vanessa and I, like all the kids over the age of five in our valley, have to learn how to load an FN rifle magazine, strip and clean all the guns in the house, and ultimately, shoot-to-kill" (Fuller 74). However, Bobo is still distinguished here as the child. It is here where she describes herself as "a stick insect dangling from the end of a chattering barrel" (Fuller 74). Dad reinforces the distinction between Bobo and Vanessa, forcing the older girl to strip and clean the gun, and in response to Bobo's child-

like eagerness to put the gun back together – "I'll do it. I'll do it" – Dad insists that Vanessa must learn to do it (Fuller 75). Afterwards, Dad teaches Vanessa how to shoot.

Bobo, for her part, is eager to complete the task for Vanessa, not to displace her in grownup responsibility, but to impress Dad, in the same way that she seeks to reflect him as good farmer. Dad associates Vanessa's apathy here with her femaleness, or more specifically, with her womanness, losing his temper at Vanessa's reluctance to handle the gun and shouting, "*Fergodsake* don't just stand there, do something! Bunch-of-bloody-women-in-the-house" (Fuller 74). Bobo doesn't want to grow up to be a woman like Vanessa because of Dad's negative association and disfavour. "'I'll do it, I'll do it,' [Bobo] say[s]. I want to do it to show my dad that I'm as good as a boy. I don't want to be a bunch-of-bloody-women-in-the-house" (Fuller 75).

Because Bobo's desire to align with Dad here is specifically in opposition to a female orientation – being a bunch-of-bloody-women-in-the-house – her association with him reflects both an evasion of womanhood to maintain herself as the child, and an evasion of womanhood because of its gendered implications in this context. That is to say, Bobo wants to be like Dad, to be as good as a boy, rather than to be a woman in the house: entrapped and disempowered in the pastoral tradition. Bobo associates herself with Dad to escape this potential orientation.

What might be called Bobo's gendered reorientation of herself can be related to Lynne Friedli's reference to 'passing women,' or women who dressed like men in the eighteenth century. Friedli explains that this crossdressing was not a definitively sexual transgression, although it might have involved this, but a means through which a woman rejected the maternal role and identity imposed on her, and empowered herself by appropriating the role of a man (234). Bobo's alignment with her father in character might be read similarly, where Fuller dresses or writes herself to be like Dad in a refusal of the female role and identity expected of her. As the voice of the child, Bobo suggests the possibility for a girl to grow out of this fate and its limitations, and to become something other than the woman in the house.

The question then is whether the space is opened up in post-colonial texts for female refashioning. Mum doesn't conform to a conventional female role, but her rebellion is largely pathological, and moreover, Mum's mental illness can be said to reflect the traditional association between white/European female madness and the colonial space, as introduced by Lessing in *The Grass is Singing*. But where Mum might not be the woman refashioned, the girls both exhibit an unconventional femininity.

I have referred to Bobo's tomboyishness. In the incident when the girls are taught how to load the FN, much emphasis is placed on "Vanessa's undereagerness": "[s]he is slow and unwilling"; "reluctance personified" (Fuller 76, 74, 75). Bobo describes Vanessa as having "inherited [the girls'] paternal grandmother's enormous eyes; a pale, almost glassy blue and she can hood her eyes like a cat and go very still and deep and distant" (Fuller 74). But Vanessa is "not a Dozy Arab," Bobo insists. "She's a Quiet-Waiting-Alert Arab. She's an angry Arab" (Fuller 74). When Fuller describes Vanessa's apprehension in managing the gun, she emphasizes reluctance over passivity, even defiance in Vanessa's manner. The story culminates in Vanessa shooting the terrorist target through the head and heart, but remaining unmoved – "Vanessa looks resigned and not at all triumphant" (Fuller 77). As reluctant and impervious, Vanessa doesn't fit into the conventional womanhood of the farm novel, and so can be paired with Bobo in defiance of this bounded classification. Vanessa's emotional independence and distance from the family also reinforces Bobo's own defencelessness. Because Bobo lacks Vanessa's strength of character, she is more a victim of their traumatic childhood than her older sister is. Against Vanessa's detachment is Bobo's discourse of victimhood.

If Bobo is the victim of a traumatic childhood, there are various degrees of trauma contributing to her victimhood. Within the family is the loss of Adrian, Olivia and Richard, Mum's alcoholism, Dad's helplessness here, and Vanessa's detachment. Beyond the family is the loss of Rhodesia and the absoluteness of a white self. Ian Hacking describes psychological trauma as "a spiritual lesion, a wound to the soul" (4). Trauma wounds the self in that it is embedded in memory. The self identifies with and grows around the wound. Fuller echoes Hacking's description of psychological trauma in her expression of traumatic displacement: "My soul has no home." Fuller follows this statement of a personal, embodied trauma with reference to her geographical dislocation or homelessness, being born between Africa and England. But Fuller's actual, or original, psychological wounding relates to Adrian and her own place in the family. Fuller experiences a displacement of self through the story of Adrian's loss, which becomes an embedded memory.

Describing her origins, Fuller refers to the African legend of the Coming-Back Baby. According to this legend, Adrian was not given a proper burial and so his soul haunted the family, waiting to claim the next child. Fuller must defend herself against the loss of her brother, and the loss of the happiest day of Mum's life, in justifying her very existence, her own soul. Because she survives Adrian, the Coming-Back Baby, Fuller maintains that she had her "own soul already" (38). "I was not the soul of my dead brother," Fuller asserts. "I plucked

a new, different, worldly soul for myself" (35). Separating herself from Adrian, Fuller validates her own life. But despite Fuller's self-validation here, the traumatic wound remains in memory, as she continues to identify with the trauma of displacement and homelessness, in the family and beyond, as she develops. As the revenant, the ghost that keeps coming back to consciousness, Adrian does haunt Bobo because he represents the source of her wounded identity, which she internalises and grows around.

Drawing attention to Fuller's familial displacement, I do not negate the impact of the national trauma, but suggest, rather, that the root of the injury is in the family. Bobo's belonging is threatened from the point of her inception, and she cannot, and does not, successfully re-inscribe herself into home through her memoir. Fuller may express the political ignorance of the white child, whose place in Rhodesia has historically been unthreatened, but Bobo's dis-ease regarding her place and belonging in the family is palpable from the outset. Fuller includes her physical and geographical homelessness in the wounding of her soul, but the primary trauma of displacement is from the family home, the ostensible sheltering place and foundation on which the child forms, and develops, its selfhood.

Here I return to my comparison between Bobo and Marechera's narrator in relation to Muponde's argument of alienation and entrapment in "House of Hunger." Although the two narrators have a different experience of childhood, which may be attributed, in part, to their racial distinction as it relates to the national context, I apply Muponde's allusion to the "dystopic family" and "dystopic childhood" in "House of Hunger" to Bobo's environment and experience ("Unhappy family" 520). Bobo's childhood can be defined as dystopic – not an idyll of innocence – particularly because of her dystopic family. Bobo is alienated to some extent by each member of the family, the principal entrapping relationship, affecting and reflected in each of the others, being with Mum. The effect of these relationships is that Bobo is alienated from the sheltering space of the family, and entrapped in an isolating space where the child is dislocated and disconnected from childhood.

Where my argument for Fuller diverges from Muponde's argument for Marechera's narrator is in the manner in which selfhood is asserted. Muponde proposes that the narrator of "House of Hunger" eludes victimisation in finding alternative spaces for the child and self, whereas I argue that Fuller doesn't offer any redemptive spaces in the dystopic childhood that she represents ("Eyes" 106). Fuller never entirely frees her self from the burden of the dystopic family. Narrating a relatively non-constrictive relationship for the child, such as that between

Bobo and Dad, Fuller doesn't allow herself to claim the freedom that he offers or represents, be it temporary or even illusive, because she writes over it with the story of the family. Bobo is unable to access the potential for an alternative space for the child and self as her narration is continuously underscored by her entrapment in the context. Bobo cannot escape her familial context, or, Fuller, the author, doesn't give her the imaginative or creative scope to.

In Bobo's limited awareness as the child, she is bound and defined by the family, and denied the possibility of writing herself out of it, or being able to construct different boundaries of selfhood or spaces of resistance. For Muponde, the resistance the children in "House of Hunger" express against the familial and societal dystopia undermines critical readings of their victimhood ("Eyes" 106). The corollary for Fuller is that her muted resistance emphasizes her victimhood, and further, that it is through this expression of victimhood that Fuller claims selfhood, as I argued in the previous section on representing the land. Following this argument, it is within the entrapped space that Fuller asserts herself. Fuller keeps herself bound within the dystopic childhood because it is the basis of the identity that she constructs for herself, as a child of trauma.

Fuller continues the defence of her victimhood through her childhood, from her position in the dystopic family to the loss of Rhodesia and the usurpation of white Africa at Zimbabwean Independence, and the family's losses of land. Fuller's self-pity over the national trauma is an extension of her primary displacement from the family; what then becomes her characteristic defence of self. Muponde's reading of the dystopic family in "House of Hunger" as a metaphor for the dissolution of an idealized African nation is applicable to Fuller's dystopia ("Unhappy family" 521). The dystopic reality of the Fullers' family-life exposes both the idealization of childhood and the myth of white-African nationalism – in combination, the fallacy of a pure, virtuous, and united family-nation. Where Marechera suggests the potential for a revised narrative of childhood and nationhood, as argued by Muponde, Fuller only suffers and grieves the falsehood ("Unhappy family" 524). It is through her nostalgic longing for an idealized childhood and a past that never truly existed, that Fuller is helpless, a child-like state that she never fully resolves. Where I concur with Harris that Fuller expresses homelessness alongside claims to belonging in Africa, and that these claims to belong are mediated through the author's narration of her childhood home, I argue that displacement is the dominant story of the self.

If Fuller represents an alienating and entrapping childhood, which is then perpetuated into developing selfhood, how does her story of the self provide an escapist outlet for the adult

Rhodesian reader, as I suggested in relation to the text's cover image? In this argument, the white adult Rhodesian reader reads into Fuller's text the idealization of the innocent child to justify his/her own innocence in these circumstances. If the reader indulges in escapism into childhood through Fuller's text, it is because Fuller provides the nostalgic framework for this. Fuller's is an escapist text in that the representation of an alienating and entrapping childhood is a justification of the child and its innocence. Writing the child, Fuller's representation functions on two levels: Fuller both consciously writes the child with its limited awareness of reality, but she also subconsciously writes the child to defend herself, and it is in both senses that she projects and displaces adult responsibility, which is her own escape into childhood.

Chapter 5

'Only a child': Representing the child in *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam*

The cover of the 2011 edition of the Virago publication of *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* is as evocative as the cover images of Fuller's text. The image is a stock image of childhood: a detail of a small child's sandaled foot riding a bicycle with training wheels. The fictionalised image is in line with Liebenberg's fictionalisation of her own childhood. Fictionalising her memories of the past, Liebenberg produces and sells – commodifies – her childhood. Her cover image reflects the same paradigm of construction that Fuller's authentic family photographs do.

Riding a bicycle, or learning how to ride one, the child is removed and excused from the historical context into the realm of childhood, in which it is beyond reproach. In these exceptional circumstances, the child is innocent of its surroundings. The bicycle's training wheels reflect the child's young age, and the associated innocence, vulnerability and dependence. The image is also given the effect of authenticity in its sepia stain, as if it were a yellowing photograph from a long-lost age: nostalgic youth.

The original cover image of the text on its first publication in 2008 is a photograph of the torso of a small girl in a white cotton baby-doll dress. In her (faceless) anonymity, the child becomes a symbol of innocence and purity. Again, the image is infused with an ethereal light, which reinforces the virtuousness suggested by the dress. And similarly to the first image discussed, the fading and yellowing at the edges suggests an authenticity to this representation of childhood, in its exclusive position. The highlight of the image is the child's hand holding one half of an open peanut butter and jam sandwich, as familiar a childhood trope as the bicycle with training wheels. The two cover images are constructed so as to contextualise the coming story, but also to subliminally win the adult reader to the child's side. Recognising and relating to the age represented in the image, the reader is primed to buy into the child's irrefutable perspective.

The effect of these images is reflected in the text's title. 'Voluptuous delights' relates to the child's characteristic sensual indulgence in the world, and the expression also reflects Liebenberg's indulgence in both memory and fiction – her past and the literary construction of childhood. The motif recurs in the text as Cia and Nyree eat peanut and jam sandwiches in its opening and closing scenes. The practice is described as a ritual between the girls: "Cia peels

hers apart, as she always does, and slowly licks out the filling, while I squash the slices of bread together between my palms until they turn doughy and ooze peanut butter and jam goo, then gulp it down" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 3). The custom of indulging in peanut butter and jam sandwiches unites the girls in an insulated world that is impermeable to adults and their politics. "[P]eeling-and-licking and squashing peanut butter and jam sandwiches," the girls occupy a realm of physical and immediate pleasure, in which the musings of a developed consciousness, with its morality and principles, do not apply (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 87).

In the closing passages, Nyree, eating "peanut and jam sandwiches […] one last time," relives the girls' tradition in memory of Cia and, what is then, their lost childhood (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 238). Nyree "squash[es] the layers of bread between [her] palms," as she always does, and then, conjuring Cia in her imagination, she "solemnly peel[s] one half of [her] sandwich and slowly lick[s] out the filling," re-enacting Cia's habit (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 238). The girls' ritual takes on added significance following Cia's death as it characterizes and comes to represent their innocent childhood, or the false idyll that Liebenberg constructs for them. Nyree's nostalgic longing for Cia, which is represented through her enactment of the girls' peanut butter and jam ritual, reflects her longing for a lost past of pleasure and indulgence, and ignorance. The pain that Nyree feels remembering Cia is conflated with the suffering that she experiences in moving from innocence to experience.

Developing an argument for a Western literary convention of representing childhood, Douglas draws on analyses of late nineteenth and early twentieth century autobiographical writing from Europe and Australia. "In these studies," Douglas writes, "autobiographies represent childhood as a mythic stage – a site for the recovery of Edenic memories" (10). Liebenberg writes into this convention more directly than Fuller, because as a novel, a fiction, Liebenberg's literary landscape is more malleable than Fuller's. Free from the generic limitations of memoir-autobiography, which is theoretically written through recollection rather than imaginative creation, Liebenberg's representation of childhood is more constructed.

The mythic stage that Douglas refers to is represented by Liebenberg in the girls' fairy folklore. "[T]riflings like tooth mice and firefly fairies pale next to the powerful magic that dwells in the forest," Nyree explains (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 19). The girls' belief in this powerful magic reflects their youth and innocence, and it is this mythology, which they create around the forest, that allows them to claim this space and the time of their childhood. Because only

the girls can see the fairies that live in this ethereal world, and "feel the pinpricks of magic in the air," the forest represents their private and impenetrable childhood home (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 113). Nyree's familiarity with the different types of fairies and their characteristics, which she describes at some length, suggests her intimacy with this otherworld. The forest is not merely a place that the girls visit, and in which they observe an otherworldliness; the girls inhabit the realm of the forest and participate in its creation. Imagining the forest, Liebenberg represents Nyree's childhood as a mythic stage, in which she unambiguously belongs. Intimate with, sensitive to, and active within the forest, Nyree, the child, is emplaced.

In addition to the childhood home that Liebenberg creates for Nyree through her representation of the forest, there are numerous other nostalgic episodes that Nyree relates growing up that function similarly to emplace her in childhood. These include family outings and holidays, the girls' dealings with the boys at school, and their forays into town. By nostalgic episodes, I don't mean that these recollections are necessarily of idyllic circumstances, although at times this is the case, but moreover, that the incident is related as a reminiscence, in description and tone, that is at once sentimental, and whimsical and light-hearted. For instance, Nyree says of the family's outing to the Umtali Farmers' Co-op:

> At the Farmer's Co-op, Cia and I get lost somewhere in the maze of chick, duckling and piglet pens, and after we're found in the lost-property office and hauled out to the car, we proceed to drip ice-cream from our 99s on to the seat until Cia throws up from the mechanical horse ride, and we're both banned from setting foot again within a hundred-mile radius of town, as God is Dad's witness. (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 28)

In another instance, the girls smoke with the boys from their school:

> One time me and Cia stole one of Oupa's cigarettes, even though it'll be straight to boarding-school for us if we ever get bust, and smuggled it into school. A gang of us crouched around it and took turns sucking and puckering up so that the smoke didn't just belch out of your mouth, but blew out in a nice thin hosepipe to prove you'd inhaled it. I was good at it. (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 34-35)

Although, in the examples given, the occasion narrated in not idyllic in the absolute or definitive sense, these descriptions are nonetheless characterized by an idealism. Nyree's child-like expressions are idealistic in that they reflect her naïve sense of the world. Preoccupied as she is with a child's seductions, Nyree is removed from the larger national context. With a child's mentality, 99s, Oupa's cigarettes, and impressing her male contemporaries is what Nyree knows, and moreover, it is what she is expected to know. I call this narration nostalgic

because it dwells on the time and place of childhood in which the narrator is vindicated in being carefree.

Alongside these 'unconventional' representations of nostalgia are more classical, romantic examples. Nyree's description of the girls "slip[ping] to the languor of high summer" when Ronin returns to boarding school is an example of this romanticism: "We spend the days crocodiling through the waterhole that Dad built for us on one of the lower terraces above the farmhouse, slathering, half submerged, over hairy mangoes, basking like bloated hippos on the rocks […]" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 118).

What might be said to be the epitome of the narrative's nostalgic representation in both its romantic description and conjuring of the past is the girls' discovery of their grandmother, Angélique's chests in the attic. Nyree describes "Angélique's private trousseau of delicate lace and linen [shrouded] in tissue paper […] her dainty silver dance-card holder, black filigree fans, silk gloves, ornate lipstick holders […]" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 140). "Draped in mink stoles and dripping in clip-on earrings, [the girls] are in heaven" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 141). The above examples reflect Liebenberg's voluptuous literary style.

Although the examples of Nyree's experience in town and with the boys from school represent her as the child and emplace her in a childhood that is insular and self-contained, the richness and opulence of the descriptions in the above examples reflect Liebenberg's construction of this fiction more directly. Here, Nyree is similarly contained in an insular childhood, but there is a more obvious wistfulness for this mythic stage. The representation of a voluptuous childhood is obviously-nostalgic because it reflects an idyll of sensual delights and indulgences.

Douglas explains that, in the studies reviewed, the construction of an innocent childhood is a means through which to emphasize its loss, or "a 'fall' – a move from childhood to adulthood that entails the loss of sexual or some other form of 'innocence'" (10). I argue the same for Liebenberg's narrative: that the fantasy of childhood is detailed and emphasized in a build-up to its conclusion. Following this argument, Liebenberg highlights Nyree's naiveté and child-like whimsy to create an idyll, or a height from which to fall. The narrative is centred on and revolves around this idyll. The fall from innocence is represented at the close of the novel by Cia's literal fall from the mountainside, and then, shortly afterwards, and linked in metaphor and significance, the liberation of Zimbabwe and the loss of the family farm.

The actual losses occur at the very last part of the text, but are intimated in the opening frame, where "years later" an older Nyree is "take[n…] back" to that time that has passed (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 1). The loss of innocence is also foreshadowed in the course of the narrative as Cia's life is threatened on several occasions: when she is pulled under water by Ronin in the swimming baths in town; when she is almost lost in the fire that sweeps the farm during the drought; and when she is thrown from her tube down the rockslide at Mermaid's Pool. In this way, the loss of the girls' idyll is inseparable from its construction. Or, stated in line with the objectives of the autobiographers Douglas refers to, the idyll is constructed around its loss. The idyll and the fall are the flipsides of the myth, an argument I make too in relation to Liebenberg's representation of the land, and Nyree's disillusionment is the conclusion to an idealisation of childhood.

The convention of representing childhood through its innocence and loss characterises white autobiographical writing in English in South Africa in the 1990s. The South African convention, characterized by the mode of the confession, is delineated by Heyns in "The whole country's truth: Confession and narrative in recent white South African writing" (2000). Heyns develops his argument in relation to Mark Behr's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Smell of Apples* (1995), eleven-year old Marnus's account of growing up in Cape Town in the nineteen-seventies. The fall in Behr's novel is the rape of Frikkie by Marnus's father, a general in the South African Defence Force. The time of childhood innocence preceding the trauma is interspersed with accounts from an older Marnus of his experiences as a soldier in the South African Border War. Behr has said that the novel represents "the beginnings of a showdown with myself for my own support of a system like apartheid" – Behr was a spy for the South African security force while a student leader at Stellenbosch University – and that "if the book's publication has assisted white people in coming to terms with their own culpability for what is wrong in South Africa, then it has been worthwhile" (qtd. in Heyns 42). Heyns is wary of Behr's 'coming to terms' with his own culpability, suggesting that, rather than facing and assuming fault, Behr, through his confessional novel, eases his responsibility for fault. The basis of Heyns's argument is Behr's use of the child-narrator, through which, Heyns argues, Behr, exploiting the precepts of childhood innocence and virtue, absolves himself.

Heyns's argument might be applied to Liebenberg's representation of Nyree. Liebenberg may construct a childhood idyll to expose it as a fiction, but through the voice of Nyree, who is oblivious to the fabrication of this idyll, Liebenberg absolves the older narrator who looks back (and who is at least partially herself) of responsibility for her position in history. In the opening

frame of the text, the now-mature Nyree is taken back to the time in her childhood when Ronin appeared and Cia was lost. The idyll is represented here from the perspective of an adult, with a developed sense of awareness and understanding of reality. When the adult narrator says that "[i]t was so long ago, though, and I was only a child," she is aware of the constructiveness of this mythic stage and the innocence she represents (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 1). When she says, "I wonder how much of what I remember is the truth," she acknowledges the gap between the child's world of make-believe and the adult's world of a more objective reality (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 1). With this objectivity, the older narrator explains to and counsels the reader that the forthcoming story is narrated from the subjective and naïve perspective of a child, whose sense of truth cannot be relied on.

However, acknowledging the subjective truth of the child and her story, Liebenberg simultaneously explains away or vindicates the narrator's part in this story. That is, Liebenberg's explanation of the child's innocence and naiveté serves also, and perhaps primarily, as a vindication of this position and its associated slippery truths. Nyree is only a child, as the young Bobo is a kid in war. Neither fully understands the reality in which she grows up, and it is precisely because of this lack of understanding that the child-narrator cannot be held accountable for her reality, or her perspective of it. Narrating the story from this irrefutable perspective, Liebenberg absolves both the child and the writer who represents the child.

This argument can be developed in an analogy between Liebenberg's text and Jo-Anne Richards's *The Innocence of Roast Chicken* (1996), which Medalie includes in his discussion of nostalgia in post-apartheid South African literature, "The Uses of Nostalgia" (2010). Liebenberg and Richards's novels are both semi-autobiographical accounts, written by a white woman, of a young girl's childhood experiences on a farm during the latter half of the twentieth century in Southern Africa. Richards tells the story of Kati, whose idyll on her grandparents' farm in the Eastern Cape is shattered when she witnesses the imposed self-castration of a black farm worker after he rapes a white woman. The childhood narrative is juxtaposed with the narrative of the older Kate, who is irrevocably scarred by this experience. Both Liebenberg and Richards represent the farm as Edenic, and the childhood trauma as a loss of this innocence. Where the texts differ in representation is that Richards's narrator takes responsibility for this loss and her position in history, both through the guilt expressed by the child and through the adult that cannot forget.

The point of comparison that I want to draw attention to is that, in both texts, the fall from innocence is secondary to the charm of the lost childhood. Whether or not the author/narrator directly assumes responsibility for the fabrication of an idyllic past, the representation of the idyll is the principle narrative. Medalie discusses Richards's depiction of Kati's charmed childhood and its loss within "the category of what one may call 'My Apartheid Childhood Revisited,'" arguing that, despite the narrator's ultimate development of a politically-proper consciousness, "[t]he appeal of the lost childhood remains. That idyll is the true heart of the novel and the core of its nostalgia," an argument that is equally applicable to Liebenberg's representation (37). Although Liebenberg intimates the narrator's loss of innocence at the text's outset, continues to allude to the impending trauma throughout the narrative, and concludes with a climactic fall, the childhood idyll is the foundation of the novel, in length and in its representational power and depth.

The distinction between Liebenberg, and Behr and Richards's representations – the latter two authors blaming themselves for the false idyll – is made more generally by Harris between the representation of childhood in Zimbabwean memoir-autobiography and the South African convention. As I mentioned in my analysis of Fuller's representation of the child, Harris argues that the Zimbabwean author inscribes him/herself into the nation in representing a personal, a-historical, and a-political story of the past, in which the child belongs. In the South African confessional mode, the author represents an idealized childhood, claiming absolution in recognizing the idealization and in taking responsibility for the shattering of this ideal.

The two modes of representation might be linked to each country's historical context, as I suggest the authors' representation of the land to be. The white Zimbabwean author's inscription of the child-self is in reaction to displacement: psychologically, when Robert Mugabe stated that white Zimbabwean farmers "belong to Britain and let them go there […their] home is outside the country," and physically, through forced land removal. In response to dislocation, the white Zimbabwean author reclaims the self in representing a childhood that exists independently of history. When history asserts itself, at Zimbabwean Independence and the through the new government's land reforms, the author claims the ideal to be shattered from outside. That is, the white Zimbabwean author externalises guilt and culpability in blaming history for the lost childhood. In a relatively peaceful transition to a post-apartheid South African state, the white South African writer, for crimes yet-unpunished, appropriates the full guilt of a past in which the child belonged. Both modes are self-indulgent in that they serve to exculpate and justify the child/narrator/author.

I have discussed Fuller and St John's reaction to the election of Robert Mugabe in 1980. Law also includes Wendy Kann's *Casting with a Fragile Thread*: *A Story of Sisters and Africa* (2006) and Cheryl Clary's *Useless, Worthless, Priceless* (2007) in her critique of texts that she calls myopic in their engagement with the country's war of Independence. "[N]o-one in my generation recognized that we were fighting a war to preserve an unstable way of life," Kann reflects (139). "[W]ho would want to fight with us?" the innocent Clary asks (36). This limited subjectivity regarding the war is then reflected in the authors' destabilized identity at the birth of Zimbabwe. St John reflects that in this new reality, "[her] identity was gone, and the shock was overwhelming" (192). These examples suggest that it is the historical trauma through which the child falls and is displaced from utopian childhood. Following Law, the authors' recollection and reflection of this lost past is then a way of clinging to its idealisation.

Liebenberg's representation shares characteristics with both the South African and Zimbabwean conventions of representing childhood. Following the South African convention, Nyree's childhood idyll is the heart of the narrative in creative energy. The idyll is developed through evocative descriptions to a climax, when the narrator falls from Eden. The impending loss of the idyll is foreshadowed, but its effect, when actualised, is cursory compared to the nostalgic heart of the text. But in the conclusion to the lost childhood, Liebenberg conserves the Zimbabwean pattern in that the narrator doesn't take responsibility for the loss of the mythic stage.

Nyree's primary scapegoat is Ronin. When Ronin first arrives to stay with the family on Modjadji, Nyree characterises him in the same imaginative fairy-tale as she does the forest: Ronin "look[s] like Prince Charming" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 66). But "Prince Ronin['s]" charm is revealed to be bitter-sweet; "[l]ooked at more closely," Nyree observes, "his Prince Charmingness cheapens a little" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 66,71). As Ronin develops through the narrative into the culprit, guilty of robbing Nyree of her idyllic childhood, he loses his princely charm. It is Ronin, rather than the mythic stage, that is revealed in deceptiveness.

I discuss Ronin's part in Nyree's representation of herself in the previous section. What I want to highlight here is how the narrator's fall from childhood innocence is represented as a push from outside. I also suggest in the previous section that the transition to Zimbabwean Independence, which signifies for Nyree the absolute loss of an Eden in which the child-self belongs, is represented similarly to Ronin's incrimination. With the death of Cia, Nyree is

disillusioned of her fairy-tale on the farm; with Zimbabwean Independence and the country's land reforms, she no longer belongs. Nyree's childhood is lost as it is taken away from her.

I am not suggesting that Nyree be held accountable for her lost childhood. If she were made to appropriate the full burden of history, her story of the self would be as much an over-compensation as Richards's is. But focusing on the losses of Cia, Rhodesia, and Modjadji, even if they are metaphorical, and not directly acknowledging the fictional convention of childhood that she writes into, and Nyree's own part in its creation, Liebenberg's representation of the fall appears perfunctory, and rather than exposing the fiction, only reinforces it.

Cia's death marks the end of the mythic stage of childhood, but the loss fails to affect a transition in Nyree. Nyree's description of Mugabe's instatement into power and the family's loss of the farm following Independence is written from the same naïve perspective that the idyll was reflected. These descriptions function, as the nostalgic descriptions throughout the text do, to protect the innocent child and guard against her loss. Much as Nyree's nostalgia in the construction of the idyll binds her to this time and place, so too does her conclusion to this stage. What the extension of Nyree's nostalgia beyond the fall ultimately suggests is that, within the scope of the narrative, Nyree fails to transition out of childhood. She loses her innocence, but hasn't yet gained the adult perspective from which to recognise the fantasy of her past.

In a feminist critique of *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar redefine the idea of 'the fall.' In *The Madwoman in the Attic*: *The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1980), the critics argue for a counter-narrative to the patriarchal myth of origins in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), in which woman is positioned in relation to man, and her fall understood to be demonic. Gilbert and Gubar propose that Brontë represents the fall of woman as "not a fall from grace (in the religious sense) but a fall into grace (in the cultural sense)" (255). That is, falling from the conventional gender position, Catherine is liberated from conservative womanhood. The potential implication for Liebenberg's text is that, falling from childhood, Nyree is liberated from the idealisation; the convention; the fiction. But Nyree's fall is represented as a negative rather than a positive, or a gain. She is neither freed nor enlightened through her fall, recognising it only as a loss to herself. Womanhood is not a possible liberation for Nyree from her childhood naiveté, but represents the reality of losing the past. Nyree doesn't fall into womanhood and assume the freedom from convention, but maintains the nostalgic idyll in holding onto the child.

Liebenberg's perpetuation of the child-like state beyond the fall from innocence functions similarly to Fuller's representation of her own prolonged childhood through much of her adolescence. Prolonging the fictions of childhood innocence and ignorance, the self continues to belong, at home and in the country. Although Liebenberg and Fuller's texts differ in the way that the narrative is structured and in how the narrator represents herself as the child, the discourse of childhood at each text's foundation is similar. Where Fuller's narrative jumps back and forth chronologically, leading to the absolute loss of Fuller's childhood in her marriage and relocation abroad, Liebenberg's story of the child is linear. Liebenberg represents a before and after to Ronin's appearance in Nyree's childhood and Cia's death, detailing the childhood in anticipation of its loss. Because Fuller integrates the stories of her narrative in an a-chronological manner, she introduces the childhood trauma at an earlier stage. Fuller emphasizes the depth of the family's loss in representing an accumulation of traumatic losses, of her siblings and the family's land, with nostalgic representations to accentuate the trauma. Liebenberg holds off representing the childhood trauma by concentrating her nostalgia on the mythic stage. The texts appear to differ in that Fuller's is written around traumatic remembering and Liebenberg's around nostalgic, but the primary trauma in each text is the loss of childhood, and in both texts the representation of this loss serves in defence of the self. The loss of childhood is not the focus of these texts, even if this loss is emphasized; the child is.

The comparability I suggest between Fuller and Liebenberg's representation of the child can be elucidated with reference to my discussion of Muponde's argument regarding victimhood in Marechera's "House of Hunger." Where Fuller fails to find a place for herself in the narrative of the child, Liebenberg constructs spaces for the young Nyree to escape into. The chief site of Nyree's imaginative flight from her reality is the forest, through which she transcends her context into another world. This world of Nyree's imagination is definitively the world of the child, with its fairies and magic. In addition to the enchantment of the forest, Liebenberg allows Nyree space for herself as the child in the various other nostalgic interludes in the narrative. Because the text is narrated through Nyree's nostalgic perceptions, the child is placed at the centre of every story. Childhood overrides any other context. Where Fuller's traumatic remembering alienates her from her childhood, first through the family and later through the national reality, Nyree has the capacity to create alternative spaces for the child and self, in which she belongs.

But in contrast to the sense in which Muponde argues for Marechera's narrator's creative capacity, in the ability to imagine a new story of childhood in which the child is not only or

simply a victim of the agency of its parents and adult society, Liebenberg's representation is conservative. The spaces that Liebenberg imagines for Nyree's flight from reality only reinforce the traditional representation of childhood. Rather than suggesting progressive or creative spaces in which the child might imagine herself, Liebenberg rewrites the conventional childhood tropes of innocence and naiveté. Although Nyree may appear to have more freedom to express herself than Bobo, her independence is contained in the fictional convention of childhood, in which the child's agency is delimited by the fiction or fantasy. Nyree escapes into a childhood in which the childhood-self is already defined.

When Nyree is stripped of her nostalgic illusions, she is in the same position as Bobo: a victim of a fate, where an external reality imposes itself on the personal. Cia's death, and Nyree's associated fall from idyllic childhood, uncovers a familial and political reality in which the child no longer so easily, or blindly, belongs. Prior to the fall, Nyree lives largely in a world in which Cia is her only companion. Mom and Dad are referred to obliquely.

Mom is included in Nyree's narrative of her childhood intermittently. Through the child's eyes, Mom is represented as the figure of authority, to be feared. In the first scene in which the girls are eating peanut butter and jam sandwiches, Nyree describes being reprimanded by Mom for sometimes taking their tea like the Afs do: "it's called mixing cement and we aren't allowed to mix cement. If we get caught – spluttering cement and giggling – Mum hollers at us not to be so disgusting all our disgusting little lives" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 3). When the girls return home that day from watching the chicken slaughter at the *khaya*, their ponchos now covered in blood and mud, Nyree admits, "Secretly, I'm scared witless of Mom catching us, and catch us she surely will" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 10). And in their confrontation with her: "Mom has a face enough on her to scare the bejesus out of anyone […She] hisses, 'Get to your room. Now. And come out for supper only if you want to be thrashed to within an inch of your lives'" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 11). What appears to be Mom's characteristic imperiousness is also reinforced in her relations with Oupa, who she castigates for, amongst other things, his absurd sermons to the farm workers in which he removes his glass eye, his warped religious instruction to the girls, and his persecution of Ronin.

Looked at more closely, Mom's commanding manner is her way of trying to keep the farm and family in order in Dad's absence. With Dad away fighting in the country's war, the running of Modjadji, the parenting of the girls, and looking after Oupa and keeping him in check falls onto Mom's shoulders. The strong front that Mom maintains is revealed in her transformation on

Dad's homecoming. Nyree contrasts the two faces of her mother. The tough parent "strid[es] around the farm in a pair of flared hipster denims, a rifle slung over one shoulder, not taking any nonsense from the likes of us" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 28). "[W]ip[ing] the sweat off her brow with the rolled-up sleeve of one of Dad's shirts," Mom steps into the role of the patriarch when Dad is away (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 29). When Dad returns home, Mom "lets her hair down, slips into satin petticoats and perfume and the timbre of her laughter changes" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 28). From the young Nyree's perspective, this romantic description of Mom is charged with a little girl's identification and wistfulness.

Nyree goes on, "When [Dad's] home, I remember the mother she was – a shyer, gentler mother. She used to wear shimmery green eyeshadow and make delicate little violet petals out of icing and she'd put '*Ipi Ntombi*' on the record-player and dance with us round the *voorkamer*, spinning faster and faster till we were all dizzy" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 28-29). Through these descriptions, and in contrast to a mother that "[n]ow […] doesn't have time for that sort of malarkey," Mom is represented as part of Nyree's nostalgia (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 29). Referring to the mother that runs the farm and family without Dad, "Oupa says it's wearing the war-widow mantle that crushes what's fragile in a young woman" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 29). The mother that she is now, the imperious single parent, masks a fragility and vulnerability: the gentle mother that she was and that Nyree longs for.

Because of Dad's absences from the farm, he is an even less developed character than Mom is, and his position as a soldier serves to strengthen his own mythic status. Dad first appears in the text as "a great hulking beast [who] pounces on [the girls] from the shadows" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 25). "The beast is our Dad," Nyree explains, "home from the bush, and he's been ambushing us this way" for years (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 25). Nyree describes her father as "a hero and a stranger" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 26). In Dad's long absences from the farm, away fighting the Terrs, Nyree imagines her father in epic proportions. Fighting in the country's war, Dad is a romanticised hero. In the child's mind, Dad's absences are justified because he is doing what is right – "because he has to fight the Terrs" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 26).

In addition to the heroic status that Nyree imagines for her father in relation to the war, Dad is associated with the country's political reality. "It is when Dad turns up that we notice [the war]," Nyree says (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 27). It is when Dad returns home to the farm that the reality of the war enters the narrative, because otherwise it is displaced with

Nyree's otherworld of the forest and the other experiences that occupy the child's imagination. But even if Nyree "notice[s]" her political reality when Dad comes home, this political reality is still represented from the naïve perspective of a child. Nyree explains that whenever Dad is home, he and Mom discuss the war late into the night. The girls "can tell that things are worsening," but "[w]orse in what way [they] don't know" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 29). When Nyree refers to her parents discussing the political situation in South Africa, she says, "Lately they talk a lot about something bad that has happened in South Africa" – "The South Africans used to be our friends, but not any more, because they've done something bad. Me and Cia don't know what crime they committed" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 29). If Dad brings home the political reality of the country and its war, this reality is engaged with by Nyree in child-like terms.

Dad returns home to the farm three times in the course of the narrative before Cia's death: the first, mentioned above; the second when the family go to Victoria Falls, as Dad is going to be on television defending the Rhodesian Action Party; and the third after the fire. In the instance in which the family go to Victoria Falls, Dad, "who's back home from call-up," is referred to as a matter of course (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 119). In the first and last instances, the most significant and revealing fragments of Nyree's representation of her father is his treatment of and sentiments regarding the *munts*. When he's back home, Dad "stomps around the farm marshalling the labourers, who've evidently grown slovenly in his absence" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 26). "The wrestling [of the farm back to order] is accompanied by a great deal of cursing, guttural grunts and haranguing of the slovenly troops. 'Hey *eiwe*! What the hell've you *munts* been doing while I was away?' is how he interrogates Jobe" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 27). When Dad comes home after the fire has burned through the forest, "he says a lot of things about the *munts* that [the girls] aren't allowed to say" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 155). In the little that is revealed to the reader of Dad, he appears to be the imperious patriarch of the farm, concerned with keeping his land and the country in order. But aside from the awe that she expresses at the outset for Dad, Nyree engages little with him. Dad's appearance in the text is subsumed in the preoccupations of the child, and the few references that Nyree does make to him trail off into this, her main story.

Prior to Cia's death, then, Mom and Dad are represented by Nyree cursorily. Dad is a long-lost crusader, who swoops into Nyree's childhood narrative intermittently, but who is not present enough, or who is not given the requisite attention, for his character to be developed properly. Mom features in Nyree's childhood as the parental presence who condones or disapproves of

the child. Nyree expresses a longing to bond more closely with her mother, and her attachment to Mom is evidenced in her fear of losing her to Ronin, but she engages emotionally with Mom little more than she does with her father. Both Mom and Dad appear in the background of Nyree's nostalgic idyll, and the threat that their presence might pose in disrupting the illusion with reality is countered by Nyree's lack of awareness and her child-like tendency to get caught up in the next amusement.

It might be argued that Nyree doesn't directly express feeling for her parents because she has a child's undeveloped emotional capacity and lacks the ability to understand and articulate her feelings. Thus, when the characters of Mom and Dad are brought to the fore following Cia's death, their representation by Nyree is apposite to expressing the family's grief at their loss, but it also suggests a new and developed awareness in Nyree. Where Mom and Dad are represented peripherally and with little depth in the nostalgic story of the child-self, following the family's trauma, Nyree, although briefly, develops their characters more fully, and the attention she gives to them here suggests her own development of character. Nyree might not explicitly recognise her childhood idyll as a construction which guards against reality, but following its loss, she does show a developed sense of awareness in relation to her parents, and so inadvertently to an aspect of her childhood – her family – that is written over with child-like whimsy. Although Nyree still expresses a child's perception of the loss and her parents' reaction to it, her cognizance of them and their undoing might reflect her true transition and the climax of the text.

Mom and Dad are exposed in the penultimate chapter. Although it is not stated directly, it is intimated that Mom has a nervous breakdown following the shock of Cia's death. Nyree describes her mother "stumble[ing] blindly on through her day, deaf, too, to anything but the voices in her head. She hisses back at them sometimes. I catch her hissing and spitting at them while staring into nowhere" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 226). Mom's breakdown can be compared to Bobo's Mum's nervous condition, and moreover, to that of Mary Turner in *The Grass is Singing*. Mom's condition reflects the link between female madness and colonial spaces that I've alluded to. From this perspective, the imperiousness that Mom displays towards the girls, Oupa, and the workers on the farm is a defence against her own entrapment there. This is suggested by the fragility and vulnerability that Nyree believes to be below the surface of Mom's tough skin, and which is then exposed with the family trauma.

In the argument between Mom and Dad, an example of one of the fights that come to characterize their relationship following Cia's death, Mom complains to Dad about being "*a slave for* [*him*]*self and* [*his*] *miserable, whingeing father*" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 225). What might be discerned from the subtext of Nyree's story of her childhood, which is then uncovered in Mom's unravelling, is Mom's frustration and loneliness in having to keep up the farm in Dad's absence. In this sense, the war-widow mantle, which Oupa refers to Mom wearing in her stringency as the stand-in for Dad as boss, crushes what's fragile in a young woman, but not because this fragility is annihilated in Mom's appropriated role as farm owner, but because it must be supressed.

In the chapter in which Nyree depicts Mom's breakdown, she refers to her own "shut[ting] down"; a "tiredness [that] has sapped [her] of all feeling" (227). In the immediate aftermath of Cia's death, Nyree describes "a weight around [her] neck […] towing [her] down" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 218). She "is breathing inside a thick membrane […] not really there, deadened" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 218). Nyree's depression is a direct response to the loss of her sister, but in light of Mom's own depression, Nyree's reactive melancholy suggests something further. If Mom is nursing her own sorrow, she may not be present emotionally for Nyree as a mother. As a response to Mom's lack of emotional engagement, Nyree escapes imaginatively into the forest and through her other childhood pursuits. The primary outlet for Nyree's frustrated attachment to Mom is her relationship with Cia. In this argument, Mom's neglect of the girls, due to her own psychological suffering and because of the demands placed on her in her position, results in their fierce attachment to one another, through which they create an otherworld. At Cia's death, Nyree loses this otherworld associated with her sister and she also loses the attachment which has come to replace her primary attachment to Mom. Because Cia becomes Nyree's attachment figure, at this rupture, Nyree loses a sense of herself. Sleeping alone in their shared bedroom on the night of Cia's death, Nyree recognises that "[a]lone now in our room, without Cia […] I don't know what to do. We are still one after all, and with her gone, I am no more" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 217).

If Mom's breakdown is taken to reflect a chronic depression, which has resulted in her being an absent parent to Nyree, she reflects Bobo's mother in more ways than one. The authors diverge, however, in their representation of Dad. Where Bobo's father counteracts the effect of Mum, even if only partially, Nyree's father only reinforces the child's neglect. Nyree's Dad is physically absent for much of the narrative, and he is also implicated more directly than Mom in neglecting the children. In the dialogue of Mom and Dad's fight, she accuses him of not

having "*been a father or anything to* [*Nyree*] *all these years*" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 225).

Dad is the more obvious culprit in the girls' neglect, but it is also his neglect of Mom that impacts them. Mom's breakdown is exacerbated by Dad's reaction to Cia's death. "Dad is angry," Nyree explains. "It is like he is imprisoned in anger. It is always there, the anger, rippling just underneath his skin" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 223). In an accusatory retort to Dad's threat to leave the family, Mom says facetiously, "*No, no, I don't know what we'll do without your genius for screaming at natives, your crude language and foul temper*" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 225). Cia's death not only exposes Mom and Dad in and of themselves, it also exposes their relationship, which it not referred to during the course of the narrative, but which then erupts under pressure.

The family pathologies exposed at Nyree's fall from innocence – Mom's depression, Dad's temper, and both of their frustrations and combined consequential withdrawal from Nyree – suggest a dystopic family. The familial tensions that I've suggested to characterize Nyree's family are uncovered after their trauma, but provide a perspective from which the prior narrative can be read. Nyree's escape into her childhood pursuits in the face of absent parents can be interpreted as a defence against this reality, as I've suggested the sisters' attachment to each other is. In *White Writing*, Coetzee suggests that the pastoral writer imagines the African earth as mother, a metaphor I have made reference to, and more often than not, Coetzee argues, "it is a harsh, dry mother without curves or hollows […] or […] a mother cowed by the blows of the cruel sun-father" (9). If Mom and Dad are interpreted in these terms, Nyree avoids confronting them. What they represent, as such, is a rejecting homeland in which the child is displaced, alienated, and neglected. Realising the characters of Mom and Dad and the reality of her childhood context at Cia's loss – what Simoes da Silva calls "a view of Africa as uncaring and unfit parent" – Nyree is awoken from her idyll ("Longing, Belonging, and Self-Making").

But although a transition in Nyree's awareness of reality is suggested at the beginning of the second-last chapter of the text where Mom and Dad and their relationship begin to unravel, this transition is not properly realised, and Nyree's defences not broken down completely, because the exposure of the dystopic family is nullified by a redemption. After representing Mom's breakdown, Dad's temper, their strained relationship, and Nyree's own depression, Liebenberg describes a family reconciliation. Nyree finds Mom weeping over photographs of Cia, and reunites with the absent parent, describing the two of them "gorging on the photos and we're

really together, she's really here and she really sees me and I'm basking in it, in her seeing me" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 228). "[G]orging" can be linked to 'Voluptuous Delights' as a redemption returns the narrator to the illusive utopia. Nyree's description of Mom here also confirms her past emotional absence as a mother to both Nyree and Cia. But just as soon as this reality is uncovered it is appeased by a reunion between mother and daughter(s). The family reconciliation is then made absolute with Dad's participation. Finding Mom and Nyree seeped in an emotional union over the photographs of Cia, Dad himself breaks down: he "clutches [a picture] to his breast, bows low and starts to sob" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 228).

In this redemptive conclusion to the family's trauma, the potential for Nyree's evolution to a more developed and less defended consciousness is written away. Concomitant to the exposure of the dystopic family is Nyree's progress away from naïve awareness to a more mature understanding of the world. But when the family resolves the conflicts precipitating this transition, its foundations fall away. That is, if the basis for the dystopic family, and so the dystopic childhood, is smoothed over with a redemption, Nyree's transformation, however small, becomes void. The family's reconciliation reinforces the primary argument that Nyree doesn't move beyond childhood, because she progresses neither from the child's position of ignorance, nor from a defended position. As "[t]hings are better now" following the family's reunion, Nyree reverts to idealism (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 228).

I have mentioned Nuttall's reference to a discourse of redemption characterising South Africa's transitional period. The South African confessional mode of representing childhood and the past is a narrative of reconciliation that is written into this larger discourse. Reflecting this mode of representation in narrating a childhood idyll from which the narrator falls, Nyree (and Liebenberg) are implicitly redeemed, a position which is then reinforced by the family reconciliation.

The redemption suggested at the family's reunion is not unequivocal, however. Nyree recognises the imperfect restoration of the idyll through the change in Dad. "Dad's anger has dissolved," Nyree explains, "his rippling skin has sagged and he doesn't holler at the Afs any more, but he's not quite the same either. There are shadows around his eyes now. When he comes home from fighting he doesn't do the ambush. I see the shadows and I know he'll never be the same again" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 228). Nyree may reconcile with her parents following Cia's death, but the reality of the dystopic family has been brought to consciousness. The attention this awakening is given, however, is insubstantial compared to

the attention given to nostalgic remembering in the text, so that the impact of the loss is diminished. If Nyree develops in awareness in relation to the exposure of the family reality, the realisation of this development is undercut by both the restoration of the family, and by Nyree's fantasy of the past. The fall, as I've suggested it relates to the family, is not developed enough to be a significant part of the main narrative, or moreover, to challenge or counter the idealisation on which the nostalgic representation is based. In the aftermath of Cia's death, Nyree focuses on her own suffering, which is related to her recognition of the dystopic family, but the emphasis here is on bereavement rather than its insights. The insights into a dystopia are apparent, but they become lost in the larger framework in which the fall from childhood is outweighed by the reminiscence of it.

The primary position of the innocent and ignorant, but also the defended, child is reinforced finally in the last chapter in which Nyree describes her experience of the country's liberation. As with Bobo, Nyree's experience of the political transition is mediated through her school-going experiences. Prior to Zimbabwe's Independence, Nyree's school contemporaries are Dell, Jeremiah, and Damian Gilchrist. The white elitism of this group is implicitly suggested; black children are absent from the first part of the narrative, at least as contemporaries to Nyree. The only black children mentioned are those from the *khaya*, who are described in stereotypically abject terms: "hordes of *picanins* scrambling about in the dirt courtyard that's been pounded and brushed bald […] they have scabby knees and belly-buttons that stick out like shiny black marbles" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 5). Where Dell, Jeremiah, and Damian are included in the narrative of Nyree's childhood, the *picanins* are depersonalized: "They are named Sipho, Themba, Javu and whatnot" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 5). Prior to her fall from innocence, Nyree has no interaction with children of another race. Part of the childhood idyll is Nyree's exclusive position in it, where she exists unthreatened by any social or political reality.

Nyree's sense of self is threatened, then, by Gaddaffi and the other black children who join her school after Independence. Nyree describes these children as adversaries. Gaddaffi is represented as a potential spy, who will inform on the white children if they should speak against the new government. Describing the new black children at her school, Nyree says, "behind their backs, we called them the Non-swimmers and laughed at their belly-buttons that bulged out of their cozzies" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 232). This description echoes that of the *picanins* in the *khaya*, which suggests that Nyree perceives her new school contemporaries in the same way as she does those destitute children: as removed from herself.

Nyree resists confronting the reality of the child who has lost the security of her place at school, and her home in the country, just as she resists the reality of a dystopic childhood. These realities rear their head after the fall from innocence, but they are not given space enough to be developed properly or in a manner that suggests a real development in Nyree. Here again, in Nyree's experience of school through the transition to Independence, the focus is on change and loss rather than on a potential shift in the narrator's awareness.

Harris develops her argument for the inscription of childhood belonging in white Zimbabwean memoir-autobiography with reference to Fuller's text and to Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa*: *A White Boy in Africa* (1996). Godwin inscribes himself into his Rhodesian childhood differently to both Fuller and Liebenberg. Unlike the two female authors, whose narrators' include themselves in the country's "we" to reflects an exclusively white Rhodesian position, Godwin imagines his child-self as belonging to both white Rhodesian society and the black community (Harris 109). In direct contrast to Bobo and Nyree, the young Peter's reaction when starting school is that he "had never seen so many white children in one place before" (Godwin 54). Harris describes Peter's "coming-to-awareness of white identity at a white school," which contrasts to his "memories of childhood [that] exist in a place beyond such racial markers" (109, 110). Like the two young girls, it is at school that Peter is confronted with his racial identity, but here the narrator is disillusioned with his white patriotic schooling. In all three texts, the child's confrontation with another race at school unsettles his/her identity and sense of self. The white female self is more defended here, which might be attributed to a tradition in which *she* is implicated in 'the fall.' That is to say, the male author has less to defend and justify *him*self against.

In conclusion to Nyree's new school-going experience after Independence, she explains that when the black children "soon outnumbered us […] Mom and Dad took me away from the school for Non-swimmers" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 232). Physically removing Nyree from a new, and potentially progressive, childhood reality in taking her away from her now mixed-race school, Mom and Dad prevent her from, and protect her against, confronting this reality. When Nyree concludes her description of the black newcomers at school, and her own feelings towards them with her parents' intervention, it suggests that Mom and Dad are responsible for Nyree's denial of reality. Mom and Dad remove Nyree from the threat to her child-self, and in her child-like perspective of reality, Nyree only mimics her parents' sentiments.

Nyree expresses apprehension towards the new black children following Mom and Dad's warning to her not to say anything against the new Zimbabwean government at school. The sentiments expressed by Nyree towards the family's new reality are filtered through her parents. "[N]ow we have lost it all" at Independence "are her words, Mom's, her voice crisp and brittle" and "Dad says [Mugabe's] speech was a bunch of Cold War rhetoric" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 231). Nyree's repetition of the adults' sentiments, and her inclusion of their perception of reality into her own narrative, precludes the development of the child's voice. The child's voice, as it echoes its parents, persists past Cia's fall and the loss of idyllic childhood, and also past the loss of Rhodesia and the fall of Nyree's child-self. And with the persistence of this voice is Nyree's defence against this new reality.

This last argument can be developed in looking at the construction of the narrative as a whole. Similarly to Fuller, Liebenberg represents the child's voice through the adult's. Nyree, like Bobo, understands her reality through the words of authority that have been spoken to her, and these words are integrated into her own expression. When Nyree describes her parents' warning to watch what she says at school, she explains, "Spies are everywhere, you see – your own neighbour could inform on you" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 232). "Even if it wasn't Gaddaffi who informed on you," Nyree continues, "it could be any one of the other black kids who came to our school since Independence allowed them to Darken its Portals. Trust no one" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 232). These statements illustrate how the adult's voice and perspective is incorporated into Nyree's own understanding and expression of the world. In the early part of the narrative, Oupa's sermons to the girls exemplify the adult's influence on the child's expression as he makes them repeat his lessons aloud. "Dereliction of duty," drones Oupa, is the very road to perdition.'" "Where does is lead, lasses? The dereliction of duty?" "Straight to perdition, Oupa" "Aye, that is surely does" (Liebenberg, *Voluptuous Delights* 13, 15).

The incorporation of Mom's, Dad's, and Oupa's voices into Nyree's narrative of the self, directly and indirectly, is characteristic of the child and its perception, but it is specifically this quality which can be said to be exploited by the author. The representation of the child's voice that is tempered by the adult's is apposite to the construction of the childhood idyll and the precepts of innocence and naiveté at its heart, but when this voice persists past the loss of the idyll, the purpose of the fall needs to be reviewed. If Nyree still repeats Mom and Dad after the fall, she hasn't come into her own voice, or a voice beyond childhood. Representing the child's voice past the loss of innocence, Liebenberg lets Nyree hide behind authority. Escaping into

childhood in this way, Nyree denies the new reality for the self because the self is still undefined. If the child's voice is largely unresolved at the text's conclusion, the new reality is only another story which Nyree relates. And if Liebenberg allows Nyree to escape into narrative in this way, she herself, like Fuller, does too.

Chapter 6

'A credulous Gretel': Representing the child in *False River*

The cover image of *False River* positions Botha's text in the same way that the cover images of Fuller and Liebenberg's texts do theirs. On the cover of Botha's text is a photograph of the young Dominique and Paul taken, the insert informs, on the family's farm, Rietpan. Like Fuller's cover image taken from the family collection, the photograph on the cover of *False River* authenticates Dominique's childhood. The image of the child-Dominique on the farm in which she grew up authenticates the forthcoming childhood narrative as it occurs in this setting, and also because it is narrated by the child with its incontestable perspective. From Botha's cover image, it appears that her text is written into the same fictional convention of childhood that Fuller and Liebenberg's covers suggest their texts to be.

The photograph of Dominique and Paul on the cover, hazy and yellowing at the edges, suggests both an authenticity to the childhood narrated, and also a romanticism around, and nostalgia towards, this mythic stage. The setting for the image is rural, the pair on the dirt bank of the pan with a few scrubby trees alongside and the horizon beyond. Dominique and Paul are on the right-hand side of the image, shoulder to shoulder, both laughing and with an arm outstretched. Visser suggests that an "energetic inequity" between the siblings is foreshadowed in the cover image, where, she argues, the young Dominique runs after or is held back by her older brother (*Absence* 7). But although Paul appears very slightly ahead of or in front of Dominique in the image, the general impression of the photograph is one of joy and sharing between the siblings, the young Dominique's head thrown back in delightful laughter. The cover image of Botha's text reflects a rural childhood idyll with Dominique and Paul, and their relationship, at its heart.

To address how far and in what manner Botha concurs with the idealisation of childhood that is suggested by the cover image, I return to Heyns's argument around the confessional mode of autobiographical writing in South Africa in the 1990s. Heyns identifies J.M. Coetzee's *Boyhood*: *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1997) as an exception to the nostalgic and confessional narratives of the period. Heyns argues that Coetzee's representation of childhood stands apart from the convention in that the protagonist, John, is not split into the unenlightened child and the conscious, but disturbed, adult. The child-John is not innocent in the conventional sense. He is equally unforgiving of his parents and brother as he is of Eddie, the coloured boy who comes to work for the family. John lacks a naïve consciousness, and *Boyhood* lacks an adult

narrator to counter that naïve consciousness. The child here is aware of his place in the guilty party of the past, as Coetzee writes John's alienation *through* him rather than of him. John is conscious of his complicity in history and admits his failure to belong.

In Coetzee's representation, the child takes responsibility for himself, but this is not to say that he expresses guilt over his position. Coetzee's protagonist is aware of his guilt, but he is not positioned as guilty. That is, the child is conscious, but not remorseful. In the absence of a castigating voice, as there is no adult John looking back at his younger self, and because this younger self is unashamedly culpable, the narrator/author is not absolved. Where Coetzee's narrative of childhood differs from the confessional mode is that the story of John is not premised on self-absolution. The self represented in *Boyhood* is not overtly nor implicitly absolved through the narration because it is not Coetzee's intention to excuse his narrator.

I refer to Coetzee's *Boyhood*, and develop Heyns's argument around the author's representation of the child, not to draw a simple equivalence between Coetzee's representation and Botha's, but to explore how Botha's representation of the child might differ from the conventional mode of the confession. The young Dominique is represented as more conventionally innocent than John is. She embodies a naïve consciousness. In the opening scene of the text in which Paul and Dominique play alongside the pan, Dominique's innocence and naiveté are expressed in relation to her older brother. "I don't believe you," are Dominique's first words to Paul after he tells her that the barbels in the mud will wake up if you step on them (Botha, *False River* 7). She then says, "Ma says if you feed silkworms beetroot, they weave threads of crimson. Is that true? I mean, what does crimson mean?" (Botha, *False River* 7). Dominique's child-like curiosity continues as she asks Paul to read what it says on Oumagrootjie's grave, and asks him about Hongersnood, the mad man living in the reservoir. Although these first interactions between the siblings can be used to substantiate Visser's argument for Paul being the leading character in the siblings' relationship, for the purposes of my argument here, I draw attention to the young Dominique's child-like awareness of, and interaction with, the world.

This representation of Dominique, the child, and her innocent perception of reality dominates the first quarter of Botha's narrative. Here, the child's voice predominates. When Dominique and Paul swim in the pan, she says to him, "Let's pretend we are crocodiles […] We must only let our eyes stick out" (Botha, *False River* 12). And then, "I know what I want from Father Christmas" – "I am going to write him a letter and Mamma said she will post it today. It's a secret" (Botha, *False River* 13). In response to Paul's retort that Father Christmas lives in their

house, Dominique says, "He does not, he lives where it snows. Do you know what you want for your birthday? You need to tell Ma" (Botha, *False River* 13). The short sentences and staccato collection of ideas and associations in this first section of the narrative reflect the child's wandering but developing consciousness.

Botha also writes the child's voice to echo the adults on which the child depends for its knowledge. Dominique, like Fuller and Liebenberg's young narrators, incorporates her parents' voice into her own. Describing Ouma Celia as she arrives with Oupa Bob on the farm for Christmas, Dominique narrates, "Ouma carried her dogs past the birdbath into the entrance hall. Pa called them ridiculous, coddled pompoms" (Botha, *False River* 21). She then refers to her mother's perception of Ouma's parents' divorce: "Ouma was scarred by her parents' divorce. Ma said Ouma's shame was like an antique mothballed scent bottle in her heart, taken out to douse the family on special occasions" (Botha, *False River* 21). Ma and Pa's voices are also filtered through the child's consciousness and represented second-hand. For instance, when Dominique describes her ancestors having been "cut down by the Great Trek, the Great Flu and great age," or when she refers to "Pa's great-uncle, Oom George, who tried everyone's patience" (Botha, *False River* 8, 10). I am not suggesting that Dominique parrots her parents' speech in this way, but rather that there is a mediating voice in the narration of the child.

Considering the characteristics of the child's voice that Dominique displays here, she might be included, at least in this portion of the narrative, within the literary convention of childhood. With an innocent consciousness, Dominique is not the self-aware child-narrator of Coetzee's story, who both recognises and takes responsibility for the child's reality. However, if Botha's representation of the child differs from Coetzee's in Dominique's (initial) naïve perspective, her story doesn't follow the conventional representation of childhood in its entirety either. This is because even as the child's voice narrates the story and context, it is shadowed by a darker perspective that is implicit in this narration. Dominique's childhood idyll, as a haven of oblivion to the real world, is continuously countered by her parents' imposition of reality, so that even as the child's voice tells the story from the child's naïve perspective, her ignorance only serves her so far in the idyll as it cannot block out this imposed view.

I mention in the previous section on representing the land that the first chapter of *False River* closes with Ma scolding Paul and Dominique for making mud cakes with real chicken and goose eggs – "There are people going hungry, but you have thrown food into the mud!" – and Pa beating the children as "[i]t is [his] duty to teach [them] the difference between right and

wrong" (Botha, *False River* 15, 16). The young Dominique may display the child's naiveté and ignorance of the world, but the socio-political reality is brought to bear by Ma and Pa. Although Dominique diverges representationally from Coetzee's young John in that she *is* the innocent child, the fiction of childhood is not the only, or the dominant, story of Botha's narrative. Dominique experiences the child's world, with its associated flights, whims, and diversions, but this world is not conventionally idyllic because it doesn't supersede the real world, and just as soon as Dominique gets caught up and carried away in whimsy, she is brought down to earth by her parents, who remind her of her context.

In the second chapter of *False River*, Dominique's description of the family Christmas on the farm, which both sets of her grandparents attend, is framed and punctuated by Kobus and Johnny's intrusion into her childhood. "Kobus and Johnny came from the orphanage in Winburg," Dominique explains. "They were much older than we were and came to stay during school holidays because their parents had abandoned them. We were awed by the vastness of their misfortune" (Botha, *False River* 18). Although the primary reality that the Bothas wish to make their children aware of is the social inequality resulting from the country's apartheid regime, Kobus and Johnny nonetheless represent the less-fortunate or less-privileged other that Ma and Pa bring to the child's attention. Ma allows Kobus to sit in the front seat of the car when they drive to and home from the bottle store, and when Dominique protests, Ma says, "Kobus does not get the chance to be in a car as often as you do" (Botha, *False River* 19). Dominique also relates an instance when she and Kobus take Ouma Celia's luggage upstairs and he pushes her against the wall and threatens to punish her for nine months. When Dominique shows Ma the mark Kobus leaves on her arm, she tells her, "Remember how lucky you are, they don't have homes or families" (Botha, *False River* 21). The chapter closes with Kobus entering Dominique's room in the night before going to Paul's.

Against Dominique's reminiscences of Oupa Bob and Ouma Celia's ornate house in Pretoria, and widowed Ouma Koeks with her grey bun and arthritic hands, is Kobus's disruption of Dominique's ostensible childhood idyll. Represented as predatory, Kobus is a literal threat to Dominique, but he also disrupts her childhood innocence because, in his presence, Ma doesn't safeguard Dominique in the child's position as the centre of its universe. In their ethical imperative to show the children the world that they live in, Ma and Pa unsettle Dominique's potentially harmonious farm upbringing. The structural framing of more nostalgic recollections with the intrusion of the boys suggests that Dominique cannot escape into the fiction of idyllic

childhood, or into the child's position of innocence. And Ma and Pa are at least partially responsible for exposing this illusive innocent childhood.

Dominique's experiences as a young child are tempered, then, by the morality instituted by her parents. In her developing awareness, Dominique internalises what might be called her parents' voice of conscience. On the night before her first day at school, Dominique explains: "Buckled shoes and a green dress lay folded at the foot of my bed. I was lucky. When Pa grew up, bywoners travelled on donkey carts between farms with no money for uniforms" (Botha, *False River* 28). She then recalls the shop owner, from who she bought her own school uniform, complaining that it wasn't worth his while to stock uniforms for so few farm children. "Ma said if schools in the location had the same uniform then he would have a bigger offset" (Botha, *False River* 28). The pattern through which Dominique may be classified within the fictional convention of naïve childhood – the echoing and incorporation of the adult's voice into her own – is the same pattern through which this convention is undermined, and its associated idealism broken down, as Dominique comes to understand herself and her place in the society in which she lives, rather than merely as an innocent child in a-historical childhood.

Because of her parents' politics, Dominique is made different to and isolated from the other children around her. "Ma would not go to church on Christmas Day because she did not believe in God," Dominique discloses. "That was the worst secret I knew […] Everyone belonged to the Dutch Reformed church and all the children went to Sunday school" (Botha, *False River* 23). "Our family were considered to be communists," Dominique explains, "an accusation so grave that no-one dared say it aloud" (Botha, *False River* 62). Later, when Dominique brings a friend from high school home with her to the farm, she refers to Pa explaining to Fiona: "Our political views have marginalised us from playing a role in our community […] No Afrikaans person from Viljoenskroon invites us to their homes any more" (Botha, *False River* 89). At the bottle store where Dominique and Kobus are made to collect Ma's order, Dominique waits in the *Non-Whites* section because Ma made the children use the entrance reserved for blacks. Dominique "felt shy among all the black men in front of [her]" (Botha, *False River* 18). "You know, I'm actually a supporter of you people," the bottle store owner tells Dominique when she reaches the counter, and then when she and Kobus are outside, he says, "Your mother really loves kaffirs […] It's not right for a white girl to go in there" (Botha, *False River* 18).

Ma and Pa, as ethical parents who teach the child about the social and political reality, rupturing the cocoon of childhood innocence, enlighten Dominique, but their education in morality, and

their own principled stance, also leave her in an internally-conflicted position as the child. When the psychometrist that Ma takes the children to in Johannesburg asks Dominique if she is happy at home, Dominique replies, "Our farm is the best place in the world" (Botha, *False River* 43). When she asks Dominique what her three wishes would be if she could wish for anything in the whole world, to herself, Dominique says, "I wished that Ma and Pa would vote for the National Party and go to the Dutch Reformed church. I wished we could be the same as everybody else" (Botha, *False River* 43). To the psychometrist, she says, "I would like peace in the world. I would like nobody to starve" (Botha, *False River* 43). Dominique's response to the psychometrist – her selfless wishes – reflects her developing conscience, as mediated through her parents' conditioning. Her censored response to herself suggests that she is alienated from "everybody else" in her social reality because of her parents' ideals. Dominique's affirmation of the farm as the best place in the world is undermined by the alienation that she then expresses to herself, as her idyllic childhood is unsettled through Ma and Pa's ideology.

Although Botha's representation of Dominique's childhood differs from the conventional mode in a narrative thread that runs counter to the nostalgic one, Botha does represent Dominique's transition out of childhood as a juncture. Dominique's transitional point follows the first quarter of the narrative that I've demarcated as definitively representational of the child, and is marked by the onset of her menses. I've mentioned that a 'fall' from childhood into adulthood is characteristic of the traditional representation that Douglas explicates. As Dominique refers to her condition in biblical terms – "Unto the woman, he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and they conception" – her movement from childhood into adulthood might be considered to be a fall. But the fall that Douglas refers to relates to the loss of mythic childhood innocence, and because Dominique's childhood is not mythically innocent, as I've suggested, she cannot be said to 'fall' from it. Dominique's menses may mark the loss of childhood and the beginning of womanhood, but this is a transitional stage rather than a rupture of the self. It is useful to compare Botha's representation to Liebenberg's on this point. Liebenberg's text follows the conventional representation of mythic innocence, which forms the heart of the narrative, culminating in Nyree's fall and the exposure of the idyll. Botha's text may reflect Liebenberg's in that Dominique's loss of childhood is represented as a break, but this point of the narrative, although significant, is not the only, or the absolute, point around which Botha's self-representation hinges.

The comparison between Botha and Liebenberg's texts reveals, not only that Dominique's loss of childhood is a part, rather than the basis, of her story of the self, but also that the representation of childhood itself is not as substantial a part of Botha's text as it is of Liebenberg's. Botha represents Dominique's childhood within the first quarter of the text, and nostalgic remembering is only a fraction of this representation. In contrast to both Liebenberg and Fuller, whose representations emphasize and linger on the period of childhood and the child's innocent state, Botha's fictional child is never completely innocent, and her represented childhood is not made as much of. Botha's representation of Dominique in the first part of *False River* exposes the fiction of childhood innocence, and suggests that Dominique experiences reality sooner rather than later. Botha's representation of the child differs from Liebenberg's representation, which is dominated by nostalgic remembering, but her depiction differs also from Fuller's combination of nostalgic and traumatic remembering, where the representation of trauma is used to draw attention to the loss of innocent childhood. Loss is an integral part of Dominique's story of the child and self, and the loss of childhood innocence, or the fallacy of its existence, is incorporated into this larger story of mourning.

Dominique's symbolic transition to womanhood at the onset of her menses may not be the centre of her story of the self, but it does reflect a development in her selfhood. Dominique's development is reflected in a shift, in this section, in style and voice, which is characterised now less by the child's enquiry and more by a mature consciousness. As Dominique develops a more mature voice there are, however, still remnants of a child-like awareness, as she continues to refer to what "Ma said" and what "Pa said." But there are also instances of direct antagonism to this voice of authority. "When Ma came home that night," Dominique says, referring to her experience at the onset of her menses, "I told her about the blood and she promised not to tell anybody" (Botha, *False River* 56). When Pa congratulates Dominique the next morning on becoming a woman, she "decided never to tell Ma a secret again" (Botha, *False River* 56). Here, Dominique separates herself and her own voice from Ma's. Dominique further distinguishes herself from Ma when she tells Paul, "I believe in God" (Botha, *False River* 58). This assertion of Dominique's is in direct contrast to the earlier one in which she states, with a child's embarrassment and dismay, that Ma does not believe in God. The more mature Dominique orientates herself differently in the world to her mother. As Dominique matures into womanhood, she grows out of the child's voice into a more developed perspective in which Ma and Pa are represented as part of her story of the self rather than its authority.

Dominique's progression into maturity is also associated with her leaving the farm to attend St Anne's high school in Natal. Bearing in mind the significance of race in the child's perception of its home within, and displacement from, the school environment in Fuller and Liebenberg's texts, I consider the discrepancies in the authors' representation of race as it relates to the representation of the child. In *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* and *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam*, the black other is largely removed from the child's world, and engaged with in the hierarchical lines of master-servant. Where Bobo and Nyree confront this other as black children begin to enter their school after the country's Independence, threatening their up-to-then insulated sense of self, Dominique is made aware of racial otherness early in her childhood, through what I've referred to as Ma and Pa's moral education of the children. Where Bobo and Nyree engage with the black other as it threatens the child's position, Dominique engages with racial difference ideologically.

In *Native Nostalgia* (2009), Jacob Dlamini draws on the memory of his childhood experiences in the township of Katlehong during the apartheid era to unsettle, what he refers to as, "the neat master narrative of the struggle in which blacks suffered and struggled the same" (67). Expressing nostalgia for a time in which his race was historically oppressed, Dlamini suggests that the absolute and divisive categorization between blackness and whiteness, victims and oppressors, is a fiction. "[T]he world of apartheid was in effect a world of grey zones," Dlamini writes, and just as the apartheid regime was an attempt to assert order in a world of moral ambiguity, so too are redemptive attempts to overcome the past in using simple racial divisions to tell the story of the country's history equally as limited (157). Dlamini's representation of his childhood differs then from the nostalgic and confessional narratives of Richards and the like that I discuss in the last chapter. Where, in the convention outlined by Heyns and Medalie, the authors compensate for their reminiscence of a time of order and neat morality with a counter-story that is ideologically identical in its distinction between black and white, Dlamini addresses the root of problematical division and simplification.

In their subversive anti-apartheid ideals, the Bothas inevitably delineate the self in racial terms: the self is white and the other is black. Ma and Pa separate Dominique out from the black other in reminding her of her privilege, and so their story of the self might be included in Dlamini's critique of reductive accounts of the country's history in black and white. But to undermine the national story and its injustices, Dominique's parents must orientate her within its paradigm of dualisms. Moreover, in her representation of race dualism, Botha is not trying to explain away

her nostalgia for the past, like Richards or Liebenberg, or to defend herself, like Fuller. Botha represents the race binary in characterizing the historical context in her story of the self.

Where Bobo and Nyree's school-going experiences are narrated through the transition to democracy, Dominique attends school during the years of apartheid and racial segregation. At Solomon Senekal Primary, Dominique is not confronted with the black other, but nor does she compare herself to the other white girls her age. Her primary point of comparison here is Paul. The difference between the siblings is the base of Dominique's account of her initiation into school. "I'm going to have the same teacher that you had," Dominique tells Paul the night before she starts school (Botha, *False River* 29). "Don't worry, your teacher will like you because you are such a goody two-shoes," Paul tells Dominique. "You will like your teacher. You like everybody" (Botha, *False River* 29). Implicit in this affirmation of Dominique is the suggestion of Paul's own difference from her. As Paul and Dominique begin to diverge in nature, Paul might be said to become the other in Dominique's childhood. Paul becomes other to the developing Dominique because he is the child offset against her in her story of the self. Paul is also other in Dominique's story because he does not live up to Ma and Pa's expectations, whereas Dominique's adjustment to school made her parents "proud" (Botha, *False River* 33).

Dominique's experience of high school is narrated following her transition to womanhood at the onset of her menses. This narration reflects the shifts in her consciousness as she is now more reflective and self-aware of her reality in relation to, and as influenced by, her parents' ideals. Describing her first meal at her boarding house, Mollie Stone, Dominique notes that "[a]ll the black girls sat together and all the Indian girls sat together and all the white girls sat together. Ma said it would be wonderful because people got to mix here in a natural way" (Botha, *False River* 70). From a more mature and detached position, Dominique refers to Ma's voice ironically. She is no longer the child who is enmeshed in, and defined by, her parents' perspective. Here, Dominique separates herself from Ma's voice and perspective, which she herself views critically. Dominique's observation of the self-perpetuating racial distinctions in her boarding house exposes Ma's ideals as an idealisation.

In contrast to Bobo and Nyree, whose narration of school is characterised by racial distinction, Dominique makes little more reference to race in her description of her high school experience, at a mixed-race school, than she does of her experience of otherness at Solomon Senekal Primary. She refers to Zulu kitchen staff serving the girls their meals, which highlights the girls' relative privilege, and, particularly in relation to the black school girls, reflects a social

inequality beyond race. Dominique also refers to "one of the Malawians" who makes her stand guard one night as she unscrews the burglar bars of a window so that she can escape to, she tells Dominique, "suck [her] boyfriend's dick in the back of his car" (Botha, *False River* 74). The girl's overt sexuality is characteristic of the general student body at St Anne's, an incongruence for Dominique that I will discuss shortly, and does not appear to be related, in Dominique's mind, to race.

Overall then, racial discrimination, even in an innocuous sense, doesn't define Dominique's high school experience. After these initial and indefinite references, Dominique makes no reference at all to race as a distinctive feature in her further descriptions of her school and dormitory life. It is only when Dominique returns home to the family farm in the school holidays that social, racial, and political concerns reappear more definitely in her narrative, with reference to the goings-on of the farm school and the townships, and Ma and Pa's political views and involvement. The discrepancy between Dominique's school life and the socio-political reality that she experiences on the farm reflects the bubble that she exists in at St Anne's. When she explains to the girls that her surname is the same as the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the "fact [is] met with, 'What? Who? What is a Prime Minister?'" (Botha, *False River* 72). "The consensus in the common room," Dominique explains, "was that companies queued outside our wrought-iron gates for the privilege of employing St Anne's girls. Such was the quality and breadth of our education" (Botha, *False River* 72). In the insulated world of the boarding school, Dominique experiences a false sense of race blindness. But the relative absence of references to race in Dominique's representation of her school experience also suggests that racial, social, and political matters are primarily the concerns of Ma and Pa, not necessarily the child's or the adolescent's. This reality is incorporated into Dominique's story of the self in her childhood years on the farm, and then again on her return to the farm from high school.

At St Anne's, the othering that Dominique relates is personal, and cultural rather than racial. Where Dominique is othered on the farm for belonging to a family whose political beliefs marginalise them from the Afrikaans community, at an English boarding school Dominique is othered because of her Afrikaans identity. On Dominique's first evening at Mollie Stone, one of the other girls comes into her dormitory and says, "You're that girl from Viljoens…uhm…Viljoenskraal or whatever, who won the scholarship?" (Botha, *False River* 70). "Botha was mispronounced as a given," Dominique notes, "the middle consonant sliding with no hint of a glottal stop" (Botha, *False River* 72). The most detailed reference that

Dominique makes to the cultural discrepancy is in her description of an Afrikaans policeman who comes to the school to warn the girls about letter bombs. Dominique feels ashamed over his incorrect English grammar, and particularly as the other girls laugh over "[t]hese Dutchmen […] such idiots" (Botha, *False River* 75). At St Anne's, Dominique is among the black and Indian girls as a minority.

Another difference that Dominique experiences at high school, in relation to herself, and also relating to the fictional representation of the child and its transition out of childhood, is in sexual development. I mentioned in the previous chapter on Liebenberg that in the conventional representation of childhood, the mythic stage is built up to a fall where sexual or some other form of innocence is lost. The loss of sexual innocence as a conventional marker of the maturing child reflects what Kerry Robinson recognises in *Innocence, Knowledge and the Construction of Childhood*: *The contradictory nature of sexuality and censorship in children's contemporary lives* (2013) as a humanist discourse, in which the line between childhood and adulthood is drawn at physical sexual maturity. Within this discourse, Robinson notes, the child is considered to possess only a nascent sexuality, which then begins to develop at puberty and matures more completely at adulthood (16). Although the sexual incidents in *The Smell of Apples* and *The Innocence of Roast Chicken*, texts which I have defined within the fictional convention of childhood, affect the narrator indirectly, these texts may be classified according to Robinson's case, as the sexual incident marks the transition from innocence to experience, and from childhood to (developing) adulthood. The South African convention of representing childhood can be defined according to Robinson's explanation of the constructed relationship between childhood and sexuality because, in this literary tradition, "[c]hildhood innocence is […] equated to purity and naiveté, which is positioned in contrast to sexual knowledge" (16).

Exploring what she calls the contradictory nature of the child's sexuality, Robinson argues for a more inclusive perspective of childhood sexuality. From this perspective, sexuality is not defined solely by the sexual act, but encompasses desire and identity, and so is not removed from the child's reality. Robinson cites Freud as the first to deconstruct the humanist view of the asexual child in his argument for children as sexualized. Recognising that the child's sexualisation – its sexual desires and behaviour – differs from that of the adult, Robinson supports the view of children as sexualized beings, and argues that the child's sexuality is as much a part of its subjectivity as other elements of selfhood, such as race and class (16). I will consider Dominique's development from both the perspective in which the child is inducted

into sexuality at puberty, and also through an interpretation of Robinson's argument as it relates to Dominique's growing sense of self.

To address the first perspective, in which sexuality is classified within the realm of the post-pubescent, I return to Botha's representation of Dominique's first menstruation. After arriving home, having fled the pan with blood running down her thigh, Dominique scrubs her underwear to try and remove the indelible stain. She recalls the husband of her mother's friend "who said women's bodies are leaky and complicated," and describes how Mad Magdaleen, one of the family servants, grabs Dominique's pubis, smacks her lips, and says, "Now the man is going to come for this thing" (Botha, *False River* 54). Dominique's grief, suffering, and humiliation at becoming a woman is particularly pronounced as she carries the burden on herself, explaining that "[t]he blood made [her] feel dirty and ashamed" (Botha, *False River* 56). Dominique's reference to being made "dirty" on becoming a woman suggests that her childhood before this was characterised by sexual innocence, and its associated figurative cleanliness and wholesomeness, as opposed to a leaky and complicated sexual body.

I draw attention to the incident of Dominique's induction into womanhood and sexual maturity to illustrate its impact in both depth and scope. Dominique's traumatic experience of losing sexually-innocent childhood is emphasized in itself, and also through its long-lasting effect. This loss and transition is not a smooth rite of passage for Dominique, or a milestone that is easily and immediately overcome. Dominique describes that, in her final year of primary school, "I wore a tight vest under my school dress every day to flatten the swelling of my breasts. Then I pinned my golden head-girl badge so that it would lie straight" (Botha, *False River* 63-64). She also "shaved the hairs growing between [her] legs with one of Pa's razors that [she] stole and hid in [her] shoe cupboard" (Botha, *False River* 63, 64). She says, "Sometimes I wished I could die if growing up was going to be as humiliating as this" (Botha, *False River* 64). This behaviour shows Dominique trying to hide or suppress her transition out of childhood and the sexual development of her body, which she finds embarrassing and exposing. Just as Dominique's representation of becoming a woman suggests that her childhood before her first menstruation was pure, in the conventional sense, so too does her resistance to the development of her sexuality position this childhood as mythically innocent, where Dominique was oblivious of her sexual body. Together then, Dominique's experience of the transitional milestone in her sexual development, coupled with her repression of this sexuality, locate Botha's text in a tradition in which the asexual child is distinguished from the pubescent adolescent.

At St Anne's, Dominique is exposed as the child among her sexually developing and developed peers. Saying goodbye to Dominique, Paul warns her sardonically to watch out for lesbians. "The word made me blush," Dominique reflects. "I knew it was about pornography, which was even worse to think about than periods" (Botha, *False River* 68). In response to the Malawian girl's disclosure that she was going to suck her boyfriend's dick in the back of his car, Dominique "wondered if that meant she was a prostitute" (Botha, *False River* 74). The girl that comes into the dormitory on Dominique's first night at the boarding house, and distinguishes her as "that girl from Viljoens…um…Viljoenskraal or whatever," is identified as "[a] girl with her skirt hitched up" (Botha, *False River* 70). Dominique's school "dress hung lower than everyone else's," and she is alienated and the odd one out in her dormitory, dubbed by the other girls as "the house of ill repute" (Botha, *False River* 69, 72). Where Dominique memorised the periodic table and irregular French verbs, and practiced her piano scales, the other girls' adolescent concerns are represented by Tamara Williams, one of the girls in Mollie Stone, who stands up on the sofa and says, "'I don't give a shit about university or a job, do you think Prince Edward will marry me because I'm a St Anne's girl?' She pushed her breasts together and pouted and the room erupted in laughter" (Botha, *False River* 72). At high school, where her contemporaries are sexually curious and rebellious, Dominique is exposed as chaste, conservative, and sexually naïve.

Dominique's estrangement at St Anne's is twofold, related to her cultural distinction and her sexual immaturity, which can be classified together. Growing up in the rural Free State, Dominique experiences a childhood that is sheltered from the lasciviousness of the city and modern life. The explosion of this sheltered existence, and the exposure of Dominique's sexual naiveté, as she enters St Anne's reinforces her childhood position as one of purity, innocence, and ignorance.

The ultimate representation of Dominique's child-like state, as it extends beyond the onset of puberty, is the loss of her menses at St Anne's. Homesick and lonely at boarding school, Dominique refuses to eat and becomes so underweight that her menstruation ceases. Although Dominique loses her menses through suffering, she is glad of the effect. When Paul comes to visit her from Hilton and is shocked by her weight loss, Dominique thinks to herself, "At least the bleeding had disappeared" (Botha, *False River* 72). Dominique's reaction to the cessation of her menses suggests that she is pleased to return to her child-like state.

This physical and psychological condition is intimately bound up in Dominique's mind with her rural Free State existence, which is the child's home. Returning home in the holidays, Dominique is "suddenly ravenous," and eats three helpings of apple crumble with thick cream at the family tea (Botha, *False River* 82). She describes "want[ing] to go on [her] knees and kiss the floor" when she first arrived home; "[she] never wanted to leave again" (Botha, *False River* 82). Dominique's attachment to the child's home suggests that her alienation from the white community there affects her less than the alienation she feels in relation to the other girls at St Anne's. But it is not so much the comparative estrangement that Dominique experiences in either place, but that she can withdraw and hide within her childhood home.

Attached to the child's home, Dominique resists progressing into adulthood. The return of Dominique's appetite at home reflects a willingness and desire for healthy growth, but she is only able to feed this desire in a protected space. In the world beyond the farm, Dominique recoils into the child. Because Dominique's child-like state is perpetuated beyond her loss of childhood, Botha's representation of the child reflects that of Fuller and Liebenberg, who similarly write the child past its childhood. But where Fuller and Liebenberg's prolongation of childhood is in defence of the self (Bobo and Nyree), Botha represents Dominique as the child in a position of entrapment. Dominique regresses to the child-like state for safety, but her regression is entrapping because, in this way, she can only grow into womanhood under the eyes of her parents, and their tradition. Where Bobo and Nyree indulge in childhood to be free of the responsibilities beyond it, Dominique becomes ambiguously trapped in a childhood that doesn't allow for the expression of herself.

In *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body* (2004), Anna Krugovoy Silver argues that the gender ideology of Victorian culture reflects "an anorexic logic" (27). In this cultural logic, Silver asserts, the slender female body was encouraged and upheld as a sign of self-control, femininity, and social standing, and it was a woman's duty and responsibility to live up to this feminine aesthetic ideal. "The ideal Victorian woman was expected to regulate her food intake and monitor her appetite in order to conform to a slim ideal of beauty," Silver writes, "and, on a deeper and more important level, to normative incorporeal conceptions of femininity that posited the body as in constant conflict with the soul" (48). The corset, an image which appears on the cover of Silver's text, symbolizes the gender archetype of purity and chastity, and suggests also the limitations and restrictions of this ideal. Silver notes that a woman who regulates her food intake to fit into a corset might not be clinically anorexic, but that if this self-

regulation is a means to maintain a stringent ideal of female beauty, it is informed by anorexic logic (50).

Although Dominique is never clinically diagnosed as anorexic in the text, and nor does she ever make direct reference to suffering from the condition, her self-regulated weight loss that precipitates amenorrhea is a strong clinical sign. Adopting Silver's argument here, Dominique pathologically exhibits anorexic logic. Victorian woman following this logic strived to fit into a cultural gender ideal in denying the body. Dominique denies her body to resist fitting into the culture of St Anne's, whose feminine archetype is a sexually-mature and sexually-active woman. Dominique, in her anorexic logic, reflects the Victorian feminine ideal of purity and chastity, and with a preference for intellectual pursuits over corporeal pleasure. Dominique's anorexia can then be read as a defence against fitting into a type of sexually-liberated womanhood. Her return home to the farm sees her settling into a gender ideal prescribed by Ma and Pa, and delimited by the farm context.

Silver credits Leslie Heywood for the phrase "anorexic logic." Heywood uses the term to correlate the pathology of anorexia to the modernist period, reflecting a logic of "mind over body, thin over fat, white over black, masculine over feminine" (qtd. in Silver 180). A modern woman following anorexic logic conforms to a gender ideal of secondariness, the binaries Heywood draws characterising the patriarchal and imperial discourse of the traditional farm novel. Fitting into womanhood at home on the farm is only another type of corset for Dominique.

But Dominique resolves her developmental dilemma more completely than either Bobo or Nyree appear to. If the transition out of asexual childhood is interpreted, in the humanist view, to be signalled by, first the onset of sexual maturation, and ultimately by the loss of virginity and an active sexual life, Botha's representation of Dominique's development adheres to this view more so than the other authors' duality between the child and adolescent/adult does. Where Bobo's transition to a sexualised self is written obscurely by Fuller, and no mention is made at all of Nyree's sexuality as Liebenberg's narrator doesn't appear to reach puberty in the course of the narrative, Dominique's adult sexualisation is represented in relative detail.

Thinking of her first boyfriend, Dominique "put [her] hand between [her] legs where John use[d] to kiss [her]. On [her] sweet, wet, cunt, as he used to say […] John and [she] only did it once. [Her] bloodied sheet anonymous in the drying yard of secrets" (Botha, *False River* 143). Dominique's reference to bleeding here reflects the blood running down her thigh at

menstruation, as her transition to a fully sexualized body is now complete. There are other references to Dominique's later sexual encounters: with the German doctor, although I've discussed this as an abuse; with Adi, whose "back [was] slung with sinew and muscle that heaved him gently over [her] in his want"; with the sportsman living next door to her and Paul in Cape Town, who Dominique "used for his body" (Botha, *False River* 183, 191). Considering Dominique's induction into pubescent sexuality, from what is then intimated to be a childhood of sexual innocence, together with her sexual rite of passage into adulthood, Botha's representation of Dominique's development fits into the conventional polarity between the sexually-naïve child and the sexually-aware adult. Following this convention, Dominique moves from sexual innocence to sexual maturity.

Dominique's transition to sexually-mature womanhood can be read in feminist terms. I have referred to the labyrinth as a metaphorical conduit for a psychological journey or exploration of the self. The labyrinth is also traditionally a metaphor for the female sexual passage. A patriarchal discourse would represent penetration of the labyrinth. But for feminist critic, Camille Paglia, "Woman's body is a labyrinth in which man is lost" (12). In intercourse, man becomes entrapped in the labyrinth as woman closes herself around him. As Kerstin W. Shands observes, "In Paglia's theory, it is thus no longer woman who is imprisoned in/by patriarchy […] but man who is woman's prisoner" (115). If Dominique's progression into sexual maturity is interpreted thus, she breaks both from dependent childhood and from potentially entrapping womanhood, in which a woman's body is subject to man's. Growing out of, and disowning, the ideals of purity and chastity (the corset), Dominique comes to occupy her own sexual body, through which she is liberated and empowered.

However, referring to Dominique's maturation into adulthood and selfhood through a paradigmatic shift in sexuality ignores the complexities of her particular development and struggle for independence. To this end, I will provide an alternate interpretation of Dominique's developing sexuality, which is more inclusive, after Robinson, and that might be read alongside the conventional interpretation. The basis for my argument is what I refer to as an erotic attachment between Dominique and Paul. I take as my point of departure the reference Dominique makes to "no longer [being] instructed to walk thirty metres behind [Paul] in public, like he had made Christiaan and [her] do sometimes when [they] were little, but [she] continued to lag. A credulous Gretel trampling in the undergrowth" (Botha, *False River* 105).

Dominique reflects on her position in relation to Paul after discovering a love poem he had written when he was a teenager. Dominique is home from school with her suspect malady, entrapped in dependent childhood/adolescence, while Paul is at UCT. Dominique's reflection appears almost exactly in the middle of the text, and is a cross-reference to the line from the opening page, where the children play alongside the pan – "Paul walked ahead along the footpath" – and is also echoed in the closing line of Dominique's elegy to her brother – "*you always walked ahead*" (Botha, *False River* 7, 202). I will explore the cyclical nature of Dominique's classification of herself in relation to Paul by considering two theoretical arguments around Hansel and Gretel by the Brothers Grimm, as Dominique describes her position behind Paul to be as a "credulous Gretel."

The first of these is made by U.C. Knoepflmacher in a paper entitled "The Hansel and Gretel Syndrome: Survivorship Fantasies and Parental Desertion" (2005), in which Knoepflmacher discusses various reinterpretations of the Grimm tale of childhood trauma, including poetic revisions by Randall Jarrell and Anne Sexton. The premise of Knoepflmacher's argument is what he calls the Hansel and Gretel Syndrome: the children's repression of the past. Knoepflmacher argues that at the fairy-tale's happy ending, where Hansel and Gretel return joyously to their childhood home, the pair have buried the traumatic experience of parental betrayal and desertion in their unconscious minds (171). Knoepflmacher's argument suggests that there has been no psychological development in the children at the tale's conclusion, as they maintain their childhood naiveté at the expense of suffering a confrontation with the traumatic past.

In a much earlier paper, "A Psychoanalytic Study of Hansel and Gretel" (1972), Elliott Schuman argues that the children return home experientially richer for having suffered, endured, and triumphed over adversity. Schuman suggests a transformation particularly in Gretel, who at the outset of the tale is comforted and guided by her older brother, but who, as the tale progresses, comes into her own. It is Gretel who pushes the witch into the oven, saving Hansel and herself, and it is also she who finds a solution to their problem of crossing the stretch of water on the way home, here in response to Hansel's short-sightedness and insecurity. Schuman cites Gretel's instructing her brother that the pair ride the duck consecutively as the absolute separation between the siblings, which Gretel initiates. I further highlight, as it relates to Dominique's reference to Paul walking ahead even as *False River* closes, that Gretel follows behind Hansel as he crosses the water on the duck first, but it is with her own will and her own

new direction. Schuman suggests that in this wilful separation is Gretel's renouncement of the incest wish, the instinctive sexual desire for the sibling of the opposite sex.

Reading Knoepflmacher's argument for parental betrayal and abandonment into Botha's text, Ma and Pa's involvement in the country's politics results in a physical and emotional desertion of their children. Dominique alludes to the child's feelings of neglect when she compares herself to Gretel. This argument is substantiated by the narrator's juxtaposition of Ma and Pa's perception and treatment of the other with their perception and treatment of the children. It is in the context of Pa beating Paul and Dominique with a leather belt to discipline them for wasting food that Dominique refers to him not hitting his workers like other farmers did. Pa's grousing over Paul's living space and pattern in Johannesburg, when he and Dominique return to the farm after he collects her from Yeoville, is interspersed with the news of Cardow's son, Firi, having received a scholarship to Michaelhouse. When Firi starts crying at the news, Pa says to Boetie, the Bothas' youngest child, "You see […] what appreciation and respect look like?" and then, "bloody hell, Paul is really trying my patience" (Botha, *False River* 162). Pa refers to "this indulgence" when Paul is expelled from university (Botha, *False River* 106). Offset against the less-fortunate and less-privileged other, the Botha children are "[s]poilt. We were often described thus," Dominique reflects. "Like fallen fruit below the apricot tree, the flesh too soft and midges swirling" (Botha, *False River* 106). In this position – "spoilt" – the children are rejected and neglected by their parents.

As I suggested that Nyree and Cia's close attachment results from an absence of parental care, so too then can Dominique be said to attach fiercely to Paul because of her parents' neglect. Visser quotes Botha from an interview: "[a]n older brother is in a way a mythical figure. An exceptionally beautiful, charismatic person. You are in love with the person in a way which is almost hero-worshipping" (*Absence* 9). Botha's reference to Paul as "a mythical figure" evokes Douglas's reference to the mythic stage of idyllic childhood, but if the mythic allusion is Hansel and Gretel then the evocation is of a traumatic childhood. Although I don't apply Knoepflmacher's argument for the untransformed, repressed child to Botha's representation entirely, I do suggest that Dominique represses the trauma of parental betrayal and desertion up to a point. Her transition out of childhood is in coming to terms with this trauma and moving towards independence. I also argue that part of Dominique's independence, as Schuman suggests of Gretel, is in renouncing incestuous desire for her older brother.

If part of Dominique's transformation is overcoming her sexual attraction to Paul, then the love that Botha attributes to the younger sister is an erotic love. This interpretation follows Robinson's argument for the child as sexualised in its desire and identity. Dominique, the child, both desires Paul and identifies herself within this love as his younger sister. She follows Paul because of her attraction to him, and in this attraction is a dependence. Because there is no overt reference to a sexual connection between the siblings in Dominique's account of her childhood, I suggest that Botha's representation of the child be interpreted through a combination of the conventional view of the innocent child and Robinson's inclusive perspective. I hold that there is an incestuous desire by Dominique for Paul, but that this desire is hidden beneath the child's voice and naïve perspective. Reading the conventional and inclusive interpretations together in Botha's representation of the child, the young Dominique's sexual desires remain unconscious, and in her immature awareness, she doesn't express her self completely.

However, as Dominique and Paul mature into their sexual bodies, their interactions appear more eroticised. I will argue that these desires exist in Dominique, although once hidden, in a cross-reference between a later incident, where the erotic subtext between the siblings is less obscured, and an earlier childhood one. The later incident that I refer to is Dominique and Paul's swimming in the False River in flood. This is an echo of the pair's swimming in Rietpan in the opening chapter. Here, in Dominique's innocence, they "undressed and Paul dived in," whereas later, when the siblings are more sexually mature, more is made of their nakedness (Botha, *False River* 12). "Paul took off his clothes," "he walked naked to the water's edge," and as in the earlier scene, he leads his sister in diving in first, and here tells her to "[g]et her kit off" (Botha, *False River* 147). Now aware of her sexual body, and in relation to Paul and his sexuality, Dominique is at first shy and resistant – "I forgot my swimming costume" – but then submits (Botha, *False River* 147). I use the terminology of submission purposefully because I suggest that Dominique is vulnerable to her highly sexualised and provocative older brother.

In the childhood scene, Paul pulls Dominique under the water in a game; in the later one, he "drag[s Dominique] into the water," and "pull[s her] towards him" as she wades deeper into the river (Botha, *False River* 148). Caught up in the river's current, Dominique "closed [her] eyes and clung to him" (Botha, *False River* 148). Afterwards, on the way home in the car, "Paul put his arm around [Dominique's] shoulders and pulled [her] closer to him," and she "stayed sitting up against him" (Botha, *False River* 150). The later scene is far more sexually

suggestive, and I consider it to be an extended expression of Dominique's unconscious desire for Paul, which is present from childhood. Both scenes and chapters conclude with the siblings being reprimanded by their parents, which reinforces their union at parental betrayal and abandonment, and by extension, my support of an incestuous attachment.

Another reference in which Dominique relates to Paul in sexual terms, here much more directly, is as she writes a letter to Adi overseas. "My pen lay limp on the page," Dominique reflects. "It was hard for me to write, not like Paul, whose words and thoughts came like eager whores" (Botha, *False River* 189). Inversing their gendered sexualities metaphorically, Dominique assumes the masculine position of authority, and Paul the prostitute. But even in an imaginatively submissive role, Paul is more virile than his sister, whose assertive phallus is limp. Paul's sexual dominance over Dominique is in virility. Dominique envies this virility as it is expressed with other women and not herself, and also because she understands herself in relation to Paul as passive and sterile.

The sexual allusion in Dominique's reflection is also a metaphor for expression. Dominique seconds herself to Paul because he is more sexually expressive than her, and because he is, in her eyes, more articulate. Dominique has followed Paul's voice from childhood as the poet and writer. Positioning herself as sexually inferior to Paul, Dominique doesn't trust her own expression or have confidence in it. She is credulous because she believes what Paul tells her, and she is trampling in the undergrowth because she is in his shadow. Dominique positions herself as intimately attached to Paul, but under his wing and guided by him, as Gretel is at the outset of the Grimm tale.

Dominique is a credulous Gretel in relation to Paul, and also in relation to her parents, whose voices largely drown out her own – the child's voice. Dominique's progression out of childhood, then, in line with Schuman's argument for a transformation in Gretel through the narrative, is in separating herself from Paul, and implicitly relinquishing her incestuous desire for union, and from Ma and Pa. That is, expressing herself against both. Dominique's most directly antagonistic expression against her brother is when she visits him at his welding workshop in Alexandra, and during the course of their conversation, tells him, "Paul, I don't think you are living the right kind of life" (Botha, *False River* 179). Speaking to and against Paul, rather than from behind him, Dominique defines her own life and self. Like Gretel, who matures into the role of guide and seer, Dominique is able to recognise Paul's failing loss of vision, relative to her own developing insight.

Paul defends himself against Dominique's maturity and perceptiveness in evoking his sexual dominance. "Dom, with all due respect," he replies, "what do you think you know about life? I have fucked more men than you have" (Botha, *False River* 179). But Paul's retort only serves to reinforce the separation in the siblings' sexual identities. Paul might reject Dominique here in expressing lust for a same-sex partner, but she has already just rejected him, and his type of (sexual) life, and separated herself from an incestuous attachment. This passage is also significant as a point of separation between the siblings as Dominique tells Paul that she is "with Adi now" (Botha, *False River* 179). Emotionally and sexually attached to Adi now, who replaces Paul in her adult life, Dominique breaks the childhood bond.

Not the first or the only, but the definitive point at which Dominique stands up to and defends herself against her parents is following Paul's death in England. Ma wants to have Paul's body cremated, to which Dominique is vehemently and outspokenly opposed: "I walked up to Ma and took her by the shoulders. 'No. You will not burn him. You will bring him home'" (Botha, *False River* 194). Dominique opposes Pa similarly when they go to the mortuary: "No, Pa. We're taking him home" (Botha, *False River* 195). It is through Paul's death that Dominique is able to speak out, as herself, against her parents, and so claim independence. Reflecting Kilbourne's argument for psychic splitting, Schuman suggests that Hansel and Gretel's individual and personal development through the tale may represent more than a polarity between siblings, and rather, aspects of the self that are envied, denied, repressed or projected (123). I suggest a similar psychological ambivalence in Dominique, where Paul represents aspects of herself that she desires and/or rejects, so that at his death she moves closer towards a psychic resolution of the self.

At what is then also a symbolic death of her brother, Dominique is able to speak in her own voice, but it is not an exclusive position from which Dominique expresses herself, but rather one into which Paul is subsumed. Insisting that the family bring Paul's body home, to the realm of the child, Dominique repositions herself, keeping the traumatic past and her attachment to Paul in mind. Dominique doesn't deny or repress the traumatised child, but lets go of, or begins to let go of parts of herself that have inhibited her from moving into adulthood. Paul's death represents a liberation for Dominique in that, through her mourning, she allows the child, Paul, and also Ma and Pa to exist within her consciousness, but no longer at the expense of herself.

Conclusion

My objective has been to examine and compare the texts in question in terms of their representation of the self through representations of the African landscape and childhood. To do this, I have explored how each text's representation of the self can be related to other texts in Zimbabwean and South African literary traditions of pastoral writing and writings of childhood.

Fuller's complex aesthetic representation of Africa reflects her conflicted identity and sense of self. Although there is no direct indication of the African landscape productively yielding to the family, Fuller does evoke Africa with romantic and idyllic imagery, after the pastoral tradition outlined by Coetzee. This romanticism is largely offset, however, by the family's traumatic personal history. To this end, the primary representation of the African landscape in Fuller's text is of a harsh and unremitting land, through which the self is displaced. It is Africa that is implicated in the family's poor fortune and itinerancy. Fuller reverts to romantic evocations of the land erratically, and these evocations function to reinforce her place in Africa. Fuller's ambivalent relationship with Africa is self-serving: the land is romanticised as home, but the land is also incriminated for displacing Fuller from home, resulting in a represented-self that is fragmented and desolate.

Bobo's main interaction with the black other in Fuller's narrative is through the artificial intimacy of master-servant. The black other serves the family and is marginalised as such. If the family servants receive more attention from the narrator, it is only to suggest their loyalty to the family, through which the Fullers' selfhood is supported. Fuller's representation of the black other concurs with the African pastoral tradition of representation in which the black other is shadow to the white self, who dominates the story. Further removed from the narrator is the insidious danger of the Zimbabwean terrorists, who threaten her place in the country. There is also a conflation of the category of 'servant' (loyal savage) and 'terrorist' (beastly savage) in the figure of July, who declines in value through his disloyalty to the family. Fuller's representation of this marginalised other breaks down, however, when, after Independence, black children filter into her white-only school. But in this confrontation with the other, Fuller only maintains the distance of absolute otherness, as defined by Mbembe regarding the West's writing of the continent.

In the representation of Bobo's developing womanhood, Mum stands out as the most influential character, and Bobo and Mum together, and in relation to one another, reflect Fuller's position

on women in the pastoral tradition. In Mum's alcoholism and mental instability, she is characteristic of the oppressed white woman on the farm, after the anti-pastoral tradition of Lessing. In her representation of Mum, reactive manic-depressive, Fuller undermines the convention of passive womanhood. But Fuller's focus on Mum's madness is, moreover, a mask to hide Bobo's nascent instability, so that as Fuller's narrator projects her displacement onto Mother Africa, so too does she blame Mum for her suffering. Fuller's destabilization of the pastoral tradition's representation of women through her representation of Mum is a means to justify her self.

The complexity of Liebenberg's aesthetic representation of the African landscape is attributed to her delineation of the spaces of farm and forest. Although, like Fuller, Liebenberg at times romanticises the farmland, particularly when her selfhood is threatened by Ronin, the narrative's primary idyll is the forest. Acknowledging the decay of the farm, which suggests the corruption of mythic white selfhood, Nyree escapes this reality into a fantasy landscape. Through her creation of the forest, Liebenberg only partially, or incompletely, subverts the /pastoral tradition, because the self continues to be supported in an imagined landscape. The loss of Nyree's place in the forest parallels the loss of absolute selfhood at Zimbabwean Independence. But even if Liebenberg constructs the landscape of the forest as an illusion that is ultimately exploded, this illusive landscape provides the grounds for selfhood through the narrative.

Liebenberg's representation of the black other is similar to Fuller's in that Nyree's interaction with the novel's black characters is through the family servants. But where Bobo expresses antagonism towards the Fullers' servants, as an echo of her parents' sentiments, Nyree goes against Oupa and Dad – a white patriarchal authority – showing benevolence, particularly to Jobe. However, in line with Tagwirei's argument for the re-placement of black characters in land-reform narratives, Nyree's ostensible kindness only maintains her superior (white) position. The Terrs and *munts* also feature as an obscure danger in Nyree's narrative of the self, as in Fuller's text, and also mirroring Fuller's experience, the ultimate threat to Liebenberg's self is the introduction of the black other into Nyree's school reality at Independence. But where Fuller, in her a-chronological narrative, introduces this threat early in the text, Nyree denies and holds off this reality of otherness until it finally punctures her illusion of self at the text's conclusion, so that, relative to Bobo, Nyree's narrative of absolute selfhood is extended.

I've argued that the principle other that Nyree portrays in her narrative is Ronin. As Bobo projects her displacement and alienation onto Africa and Mum, Nyree denies the otherness of self through Ronin. Although the girls' engagement with their cousin is Liebenberg's main narrative, at the exposure of the idyll at Cia's death and Zimbabwean Independence, another hidden, subtextual narrative emerges about Mom. In Mom's nervous collapse following Cia's death, she is revealed to suffer from the isolation and repression characterising women in the anti-pastoral tradition. This diagnosis is supported by the dimly-illustrated but fraught relationships between Mom and Dad, and Oupa, the two men maintaining the patriarchy. Although the story of Mom is side-lined in relation to Nyree's story of self, Liebenberg's representation of Mom gestures towards a subversion of the traditional positioning of women on the farm.

Botha's text is seemingly the most subversive of the farm novel tradition of the three texts under examination, although there are inconsistencies in her representation. Representing a farmland that is at times romanticised and at others described as insidious, Botha follows Fuller's representation of Africa in a dual-orientation of the farm, rather than Liebenberg's split between farm and forest. Paul, first-born son of an Afrikaner farm lineage, reflects the land, from his youth of luminous promise to his decline into self-destruction, and the False River breaking and flooding in counterpoint. Representing Paul's demise, and the land's reactive and reflective catastrophe, Botha undermines the traditional representation of white patriarchal selfhood, but suggests also a cul-de-sac for the resolution of this tradition in the post-apartheid dispensation. It is through Dominique's character that the land is renewed and remade. Paul fails at regeneration because he remains attached to the old landscape – the beauty of the farm; Dominique succeeds at moving forward as she lets this landscape and its deceptive beauty go, or moreover, she internalises the loss of Paul and the farm – the landscape of the past.

Botha appears to be the most progressive in her representation of the black other, but, in fact, her narrator engages little more with black characters in the text than either Bobo or Nyree do. The Botha family servants are represented in the same one-dimensional manner as their counterparts in Fuller and Liebenberg's texts, and if Dominique narrates the black other in more detail, it is largely descriptive and circumstantial. *False River* is distinct in its representation of racialized otherness in the Bothas' liberal, anti-apartheid ideology, so that Botha's engagement with the black other is not personal so much as ideological. Dominique's personal experience of the black other is even more removed than Bobo and Nyree's because the country's political transition occurs at the close of the narrative, and black characters are

largely marginalised from Dominique's childhood reality. If Botha can be said to subvert the traditional pastoral representation of the black other, it is through Ma and Pa's moral imperative rather than through a literal engagement with the other.

I have argued that Ma and Pa's ideology alienates and suppresses Paul and Dominique, as they are expected to reflect their parents' anti-nationalist ideals, and at the same time, to fit into their Afrikaner farm heritage. Botha's representation of Dominique's repressive womanhood is her most developed critique of the pastoral tradition. This repression is shown to be part of Dominique's maternal lineage, as Ma and her own mother, Dominique's grandmother, are too stifled in their expression of self. Where Fuller and Liebenberg also reflect a stifling of the mother figure, in Botha's narrative Dominique herself embodies this oppression, which strengthens Botha's criticism of repressive womanhood. Dominique's repression of self is directly related by Botha to her positioning on the farm and within the family, and her escape from this reality is not simply an escape from the farm, which Paul attempts, but rather, an assertion of herself within this space.

Each author thus engages erratically with the pastoral tradition of representing the land, drawing on and diverging from the mythic story in the construction of self. Relating to the authors' representation of the African landscape is their representation of whiteness. I have argued that each author represents a definitively white self. Fuller is the most self-justifying here, claiming her whiteness as part of her victimisation, and therefore using her whiteness in defence of self. Liebenberg is less direct in claiming whiteness for her self, but her text is thinly veiled in its representation of racial exclusivity, even if this position is taken deliberately to illustrate Nyree's sheltering. Botha represents the white self the least defensively of the three authors, but because of the Bothas' moral imperative to educate their children about the country's social reality, Dominique invariably understands herself racially.

I compare the girls' childhood experience of otherness to Tambudzai's in *Nervous Conditions*, and I also draw comparisons between the principal texts and texts by Vera, Mungoshi, and Marechera to suggest a self-representation that is not delineated only by racial distinction and classification. But although the self represented in Fuller, Liebenberg, and Botha's texts is not only, or is more than, a racialized one, I argue that whiteness is an inextricable part of the authors' self-representation. The distinction in the authors' representation of the white self lies in the relative variance of this representation from a tradition of white writing.

The further question is how relevant is traditional criticism of African pastoral literature in contemporary interpretations of white writing? The canonical text here is Coetzee's *White Writing*, in which he delineates the garden myth of representing Africa and the white self. I have used Coetzee's interpretation as the foundation of my analysis to determine if and how far Fuller, Liebenberg, and Botha have moved forward from this traditional writing of the self, and in this variance to assess the type of whiteness that each author represents. I have argued that Coetzee, and the parallel interpretation of Chennells, should not be read uncritically as the voice of authority on self-representation in pastoral white writing, but rather as a foundational reference point from which contemporary representations of self can been seen to have emerged. Reading Coetzee (and Chennells) critically means recognising the context in which these critics were writing and using this recognition to question the extent to which contemporary white writers remain attached to the past and its tradition of self-representation. In making Coetzee my foundational critic, I recognise that I marginalise feminist, black, and other contesting critiques of self-representation. However, my study focus is a literary analysis that is cognizant of a tradition of writing and interpretation, and it is in this sense that I favour Coetzee – not as an authority as such, but as an authoritative reference point on the representation of the white self in Africa, against which I compare Fuller, Liebenberg, and Botha's African childhoods.

The second tradition or convention against which the texts are compared is the representation of the child. Fuller's text is characterized by nostalgic and traumatic remembering. Fuller claims an African identity in writing Africa as her childhood home, an argument made by Harris that I support. It is through Fuller's representation of herself as the child, ignorant of the country's fraught political reality, that she lays claim to belonging. Her nostalgia is for a time in which she belonged because her sense of self was unthreatened. Fuller links her longing for this fantasy past, or sheltered reality, to the memory of her deceased siblings, so that their deaths reinforce her place in, and then displacement from, home. Fuller's trauma is the loss of her place in the family-nation: out of place in the new Zimbabwe and alienated from the sheltering space of the family, who fracture through its losses.

I have argued that is through traumatic remembering, rather than nostalgic, that Fuller asserts her place in the past. More than Fuller's nostalgia for an a-political childhood, it is the expression of her trauma of displacement and loss through which she claims Africa as her home, and justifies her African identity. Fuller's is not a self-conscious expression of nostalgia, in Douglas's terms, in longing for a past that never truly existed. Because she believes in her

place in idyllic childhood, Fuller follows the Zimbabwean convention of representing childhood, in which blame for its loss is positioned outside the self. Fuller's expression of her traumatic past, within the nostalgic frame, is not intended to shatter the illusion of the idyll, but, rather, to reinforce her place in it.

Bobo is displaced from idyllic childhood in her confrontation with the black other at school: the intrusion of a social, political, and racial reality into her defended space. This new reality undermines Bobo's already-tenuous selfhood within the fractured family-home, which I argue is her primary trauma of displacement. Although childhood is resolved at the close of the text in that Fuller reaches adulthood, marries, and leaves home to live with her American husband abroad, I have argued that Fuller's representation of herself as the child dominates the narrative. Fuller's story of the self is the story of the child, as Bobo's child-like nature and immature sexuality extend beyond the frame of childhood into her adolescence. I suggest that Fuller maintains the child in herself, in her memory, not simply to perpetuate an idyll of innocence and ignorance, but to emphasize her vulnerability in this shattered idyll and dystopic space. Fuller doesn't write the child to suggest a false utopia that is ultimately revealed in its falsity, an exculpatory strategy characteristic of the South African confessionary novel; rather, Fuller writes the child into an extended traumatic childhood, excusing herself as the victim of a personal and national dystopia.

Liebenberg follows the South African convention of representing the child more than Fuller. With her chronological narrative, Liebenberg moves through nostalgia to trauma. Nostalgic remembering forms the foundation of Liebenberg's story of the child and self, building to a climactic fall (trauma), where childhood innocence is lost. This is the traditional Western literary pattern of representing childhood as the mythic stage, as explicated by Douglas; a pattern that serves in the South African convention to exculpate the older narrator (and the author) who looks back at the illusive idyll. Liebenberg's nostalgia differs here as there is no mature voice narrating in counterpoint to the child's naïve one. Nyree's older self speaks only in the text's opening frame, and this mature voice is then subsumed in the child's world. Liebenberg's representation of the child is thus less explicit it its refutation of mythic childhood than texts written into the South African convention. But Liebenberg concurs with this convention because nostalgia for the mythic stage significantly outweighs the trauma of its loss. This last argument relates to Medalie's critique of the South African confessional novel, in which the exculpatory counter-narrative is insignificant compared to the authors' representation of nostalgic childhood, which forms the heart of the text. If the mature narrative

voice in the opening frame of *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* warns the reader of the fictitiousness of mythic childhood, the child's voice and the fiction still prevail through Nyree's story of the self.

Although Liebenberg concurs in part with the South African confessional mode of representing childhood, she ultimately follows Fuller and the Zimbabwean convention of representation. Liebenberg diverges from the South African convention of representing the child in that she externalises blame for the loss of innocent childhood. Blaming Ronin and the new Zimbabwean government for her displacement from home, Nyree evades responsibility and laments victimisation as Bobo does. Ronin is positioned as intruder into the girls' forest, their sheltered and sheltering childhood home, and, responsible for Cia's fall from the mountainside, Ronin is charged with puncturing Nyree's mythic stage.

The intrusion of Ronin into Nyree's childhood idyll and the traumatic death of Cia serve in Liebenberg's text as a national allegory, and the loss of Rhodesia and the family farm is grieved over by Nyree in a similar fashion to Bobo, and as the white child-self is alienated from her school-home by the introduction of black schoolchildren. Liebenberg's representation is also similar to Fuller's in that childhood is written beyond its loss. In Liebenberg's text, the child shows a partial, but incomplete, development in selfhood following the exposure of the idyll. I argue that Liebenberg's ultimate preservation of the child past the fall from childhood nullifies her attempts at exposing the mythic stage through her story of the self, so that, finally, Liebenberg diverges from the tradition in which childhood trauma exposes its nostalgia. Although childhood may be lost in Liebenberg's text, it is not resolved, as its nostalgia persists.

Botha's narrator resolves childhood and selfhood the most completely of the three narrators. *False River* is marked by an archetypal juncture between childhood and womanhood: the onset of Dominique's menses. This developmental transition might be classified as traumatic for Dominique because of the extent of her suffering here, and it also marks a change in narrative tone and expression away from the child's voice. However, this point in the text is not the definitive fall from childhood of the Western literary paradigm. This is, in part, because childhood nostalgia before this juncture is not so easily defined. Dominique expresses wistfulness for her childhood home, but there is also a shadow counter-narrative of entrapment and stifling of the self alongside this nostalgic remembering.

Because of this double strand of nostalgia and trauma, Botha's text falls outside of the South African convention of representing the child. Dominique's symbolic transition to womanhood

is not a fall from childhood innocence because the pastoral idyll is ambiguously represented. As such, I compare Botha's text to Coetzee's *Boyhood*, which Heyns identifies as an exception to the confessional narrative. The primary comparison between the texts is their lack of a mature voice to put the child's nostalgia in its place, and therefore to excuse the narrator/author. Botha's mandate is not to be pardoned for her place in history, but Dominique is less self-aware, or is characterized more by the child's naiveté, than Coetzee's John. Although Dominique is not the typically innocent and ignorant child of the mythic stage, she maintains some of the child's characteristics, but this only emphasizes her ultimate growth out of childhood, and in a pattern unlike the traditional.

The symbolic shift from childhood to womanhood at Dominique's menstruation serves as only one stage in her development. This shift is distinct from the conventional fall because, more than the traumatic loss of childhood, Dominique experiences a traumatic induction into a particular type of womanhood. Dominique's progression into selfhood and adulthood involves a redefinition of her expected place in the family. I have argued that, coming into herself, Dominique speaks out in her own voice against Paul and against her parents. This development of the child into a more mature self, with her own developed voice, differs from Fuller and Liebenberg's representation of Bobo and Nyree, where the child *is* the represented self; where the child is the means for defining the self, with the child's unchanging and undeveloped expression of self. Botha's is not so much the story of the child, but the story of outgrowing the child into the self. Because the primary story of the self in *False River* is the resolution of childhood, rather than its loss, Botha's text is distinct from both the South African and the Zimbabwean conventions of representing the child, and is distinct also from the tradition delineated by Douglas. I am not suggesting that Botha's text exists independently of the literary paradigm of childhood, but rather that Botha employs its features (nostalgia, trauma) in a transformative story of the self.

Botha's representation of selfhood is also distinct from Fuller and Liebenberg's representations because it is through the death of Paul that Dominique finally comes into her (adult) self. Where Bobo and Nyree suffer the loss of their siblings as they suffer the loss of childhood and the past, Dominique is liberated from the past and her self-limiting dependence on Paul. Although the texts are linked in that each author's representation of self, within the traumatic past, is marked by the death of a sibling(s), the significance of these losses differs in relation to the authors' narration of self. I have mentioned that Bobo's recollection of her siblings' deaths acts to reinforce her lament of victimisation, and so to reinforce her justification of self in an illusive

past of absolute and unthreatened selfhood. The death of Cia in Liebenberg's text signifies the loss of mythic childhood for Nyree, and Nyree's grief over the loss of her sibling is simultaneously a grief for the loss of the child and its sheltered past. Thus, the sibling deaths in Fuller and Liebenberg's texts bind the narrators to an imagined history of the self, which is in contrast to Dominique's experience of grief, from which she matures, and realises selfhood. Dominique suffers the death of Paul, but rather than lose her self with his passing, she lets go of a tradition of selfhood that is limiting for herself.

The distinction that I make between Fuller and Liebenberg's, and Botha's narration of the self through the story of loss can be extended to the authors' representation of history. Imagining themselves in a fantasy of the past, Bobo and Nyree are removed from their current historical context, and it is because the personal eclipses the political in these texts that Law and Harris call them limited in their representation of history. Because Liebenberg's representation of the fall and its realities are outweighed by her representation of the idyll, her text is even less politically and historically orientated than Fuller's. Where Rhodesia/Zimbabwe's political reality is largely removed from Nyree's consciousness, and incorporated subjectively into Bobo's narrative of the self, the South African political and historical context is inextricably integrated into Dominique's understanding of the farm, the family, and herself. Dominique is present in her dystopic historical reality from the text's outset, without this reality being offset by nostalgia for the past.

Harris recognises the difference between the two national modes of representation. She distinguishes between what I have called the Zimbabwean mode, in which the self is inscribed into the African landscape in denying the country's historical reality, and the South African mode, in which the self is redeemed through the confessional narrative, as explicated by Heyns and Medalie. Harris refers to this distinction in her analysis of white Zimbabwean memoir-autobiography, and I have used her insight in a broader comparison between white Zimbabwean and white South African life-writing to explore the possible locatedness of this self-representation. I have suggested that inter-national divergence in the representation of the self can be related to each country's political history and context. Both Bobo and Nyree lament being the victims of Zimbabwe's land reforms, and in response to this apparent victimisation, the narrators assert the self in the landscape and in childhood. Bobo grieves displacement from her African childhood, inscribing herself into this time and place through her traumas of loss. Nyree represents herself as the victim of Ronin and the new government. Although Liebenberg

is relatively more self-conscious in her representation of the mythic stage than Fuller is, both texts act to reinforce the self's place in the lost childhood.

Dominique's development out of childhood might then be related to South Africa's political transition, in which the white self was less overtly displaced from home. Because of this less aggressive displacement, Botha feels no need to hold onto her mythic place in the country's past, and is secure to move beyond childhood into a more developed self. Although these national comparisons and conjectures may appear simplistic, and neglectful of each author's particular story of self, they can be ratified by the literary trends in each country, with South Africa's history of subversive farm novels, and the proliferation of Zimbabwean texts that reinforce the garden myth and myths of white selfhood in response to the country's land reforms. National divergence in the representation of childhood is less easily demarcated, however, as both the Zimbabwean mode of externalising blame and the South African confessional mode justify the child's home. Where the Zimbabwean convention of representing the child within the national home concurs with white Zimbabwean authors' representation of the landscape to reinforce mythic selfhood, white South African authors' emplacement of the child in the nostalgic past diverges from the literary movement in which the pastoral tradition of selfhood is subverted. And in this regard Botha is the exception to convention as she at once subverts the tradition of white selfhood, albeit inconsistently, and asserts her self beyond childhood.

In my choice of texts, I have thus been able to test the limits of these conventions – which can be seen as distinct national South African and Zimbabwean literary conventions – while also exploring the limits of the traditional criticism of white writing. To further explore and verify these conventions, and exceptions, in contemporary white writing, a wider sample of both Zimbabwean and South African texts representing the self in African childhood would need to be considered.

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