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**Visions of the Rainbow: Constructions of South African Identity in South African  
Literature for Adolescents**

by

Jacqueline Kim Clark HRKJAC002

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy of Education

Department of Education

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2002

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyse how post-apartheid South Africa has been constructed as society and nation in fictional novels that have been written in English, by South Africans in South Africa, which are set in South Africa and have been written specifically for adolescents. Five books that were published before 1994 and five that were published after 1994 were analysed in order to compare the way in which South Africa is depicted in the novels written during and after apartheid. The identity of the main protagonist of each of the books is analysed through the application of a “model”, in order to gain insight into the construction and representations of South Africa in each of the books. The model was created and developed by the author and was based on the assertion that an individual’s identity is defined by the society in which he or she lives. The author concludes that whereas the construction of South African society in the books published before 1994 tends to address issues related to the racism and conflict induced by apartheid, the construction of South Africa in the post-apartheid books actively contributes to a nation-building attempt. And whilst they often seem inauthentic and didactic, the books are nevertheless useful to educators, in that they offer a vision of South African reality that can enable deconstruction and dialogue in the classroom. Thus if educators can use them in order to inspire students to examine and deconstruct their own reality, they may become awakened to possibility and change. In other words, the author argues for the necessity of research, which focuses on literature for adolescents, and the importance of the literature itself.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*The Possible's slow fuse is lit by the imagination*

Emily Dickinson

### 1.1 BACKGROUND, ACTUALITY AND MOTIVATION

South Africans today are experiencing a time of immense change both in local and global terms. Eight years after liberation, the country is still in the process of forging a “new, post-apartheid identity as a nation” (Druker, 1996: 2). This complex process has many implications, not least of which for individual South Africans as they attempt to define themselves personally within the context of this “New” South Africa. The “post-election honeymoon period” is now over and as South Africans attempt to renegotiate their identities they do so with the awareness that the stakes are very high (Steyn, 1996: 142). Apartheid bequeathed a legacy of severe division in all spheres of society; culturally, socially, economically and politically; the repercussions of which have not yet found a resolution. A common sentiment appears to suggest that “the survival of the country” depends on the way these divisions and differences are overcome through the way in which South Africans forge this new identity as a “nation”; as one that is free of racism and one in which the different cultures are successfully interdependent (Pahlahle, 2001: 5; Steyn, 1996: 142). This nation-building attempt is evident in the way concepts of South Africa as a united, harmonious nation pervade popular discourse and current cultural forms.

The task of education in this time of change and renegotiation in South Africa becomes more difficult as teachers face the challenge of comprehending the meaning of this change for themselves, and attempting to mediate it to their students (Soudien, 1995: 2). In addition, the sense of identity in South Africa seems to be undergoing constant change and negotiation (Druker, 1996). This is of particular significance when considering education, because the adolescents who fill our South African classrooms are simultaneously going through a time of individual and personal change. The negotiation of their identities becomes their most central task at this time in their lives (Druker, 1996; Erikson, 1968). Soudien claims that a primary objective of teachers should be to explore and test the meaning of this common citizenship against the many claims that other aspects of individual identity (such as class, language, race, age, gender, sexuality, ability and political persuasion) will

undoubtedly make on it (1995: 2). Davis et al highlight the importance of issues related to the self and identity to education: “Self-concept and self-esteem are among the most prominent topics in current discussions of formal education. The assumption underlying these and related concerns is that a primary purpose of schooling is to nurture the individual—in particular, to support the development of personal senses and agency” (2000: 157).

Flockemann notes that often attempts to redefine identities in societies undergoing transition are reflected in fictions of childhood development (2000: 179). Although this literature for adolescents has traditionally not received much serious attention academically or critically (Flockemann, 2000: 181), I believe that research of South African literature for adolescents specifically would not only make a much needed contribution to the field, but would also reveal much about the society in which it is written, and as such could be valuable when considering the use and role of literature in education in the country at this time

Maxine Greene places emphasis on the importance of the aesthetic (that is, the arts and specifically literature) in a curriculum that promotes progressive education and equity (1993). She highlights the need for the promotion of the imaginative in education, quoting Dewey, who states that the function of literature is “to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness” (Dewey, 1934: 35-37), meaning that imagination can enable people to break through some of the ordinary and familiar “cotton wool of daily life” (Woolf, 1976: 72) and to perceive things “as if they could be otherwise” (Greene, 1993: 14). In other words, when children are presented with the aesthetic arts, such as imaginative literature, they gain understanding and insight into things that the routines and habits of their ordinary lives obscure, and are thus hopefully awakened to action through becoming able to “create their own visions of experiential possibility” (Greene, 1993: 15):

Perhaps, as Jean-Paul Sartre said with respect to literature, a work may appeal to a reader’s or perceiver’s freedom. It may move her or him to choose in some unpredicted fashion, to take action in a realm of possibilities, to try to repair... In classrooms thought to be progressive, thought to be educative, we need to open spaces of possibility. It is with the consciousness of possibility that persons experience their freedom. (Greene, 15).

Marcuse (1978) agrees with this assertion that the aesthetic arts can demystify social reality and expand the horizons of change toward liberation. Mason explains this clearly, “art enables us to come to a realization that things need not be as they are” (1987: 4). This sentiment is what motivates my research; it is based on the hope that an examination of these books and a call for their use in education will lead to South African youth to realize that their reality “need not be as it is”.

This research provides an examination of the fictional literature that is directly relevant to the experience of South African adolescents living in South Africa through analyzing the way in which their society is constructed and represented. Hopefully an analysis of this kind will provide a platform for educators to promote discussion and awaken perception and realization of the possible in their South African classrooms. Because a conscious deconstruction of representations of South Africa in literature will highlight the need for learners to be able to personally deconstruct and examine their perceptions of South Africa, they may be personally awakened and spurred to action and transformation on an individual level. In short, a focus on these books will highlight the role and importance of South African literature for adolescents in education because of their relevance and consequent potential to enable South African adolescents to “become reflective citizens able to reach toward a vision of the possible and in time, meaningful change” (Cassidy, 1998: 38).

## **1.2 AIM**

The focus of this study is the way in which post-apartheid South Africa, in terms of society and nation, has been constructed and represented in the English South African literature for adolescents of this time (specifically: fictional novels that have been written in English, by South Africans in South Africa, that are set in South Africa and have been written specifically for adolescents). Five books of this description that were published before 1994 were examined in comparison with five that were published after 1994, in an attempt to gain an understanding of the ways in which representations and constructions of South African society before and after the official political end of apartheid may possibly have changed, so as to provide deeper insight into the nature of the construction of post-apartheid South African society. The research aimed to analyse the protagonist’s identity with the intention that it would

provide access into the nature of the society in which this identity is located. It was hoped that the representation and construction of South African society would be revealed through this analysis.

### 1.3 METHOD

I chose to analyse ten books in total; five of which were published before 1994 and five that were published during and after 1994. The names of the books are:

#### Published before 1994:

- Beake, L. (1987) *The Strollers*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
Geraghty, P. (1988) *Pig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
Bregin, E. (1989) *The Kayaboeties*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
Hofmeyr, D. (1990) *Red Kite In A Pale Sky*. Cape Town: Tafelberg  
Case, D. (1991) *92 Queens Road*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman

#### Published after 1994:

- Bailey, D. (1994) *Thatha*. Cape Town: Heinemann  
Robson, J. (1994) *Don't Panic Mechanic*. Cape Town: Tafelberg  
Smith, G. (1996) *Wheels*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.  
Saunders, M. (1998) *Dear Ludwig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
Britten, S. (2000) *The Worst Year of My Life So Far*. Cape Town: Tafelberg

Reasons for the specific choices of the books are detailed in Chapter 3. I have also included as Appendix 1 a complete list of books that I have read that correspond to the same criteria as the books under study, i.e. fictional novels that have been written in English, by South Africans in South Africa, which are set in South Africa and have been written specifically for adolescents. This has been done in order to ensure that the books that I chose were representative of those corresponding to the above criteria and were not particularly unusual in comparison.

The starting point for analysis was to examine the identity of the protagonists, and this was done through the development and application of a "model". I conceptualized and developed this model in order to enable a relatively in-depth study of the protagonists' identities in terms of their conception of self in various contexts, namely, social, geographical, cultural and political. The model was based on the definition of identity

in terms of the specific groups to which the protagonist may belong and/or identify with in these various contexts (namely: ethnic, racial, occupational, socio-economic, sexual, gendered, relational, regional, national and personal). It was hoped that this analysis of identity would enable an understanding of the context in which it was located, and allow for an analysis of the way in which South African society is constructed in the novels.

#### **1.4 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

There are six chapters in total:

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Four: Books Published Before 1994

Chapter Five: Books Published During and After 1994

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature that relates to the research, drawing together a number of theoretical fields in order to do so. The meaning, representation and construction of identity is examined, drawing on developmental and social psychology as well as intercultural communication theory. I next examine how South African identities in particular have been constructed, providing a brief historical overview that concludes with an explanation of the current nation-building attempt, focusing largely on Reddy's work which is based on Liberal and Marxist historiography, as well as discourse analysis. I finally focus on how identities are constructed through literature, by first problematizing the analysis of literature itself and then giving examples of how South African identities have been represented in literature. Literary theory forms the general basis for this discussion.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology that was employed in terms of the analysis of the novels.

Chapter Four discusses the books that were published before 1994. The books are first analysed and then this information is interpreted. In the analysis, the books are

discussed under the nine headings that the model specifies. Appendix 2 tabulates all the detailed information presented in the books regarding the identity of the protagonists. It provides direct quotations and page references. The interpretation discusses the information gained in the analysis, particularly in light of the issues raised in the literature review in terms of the construction of South Africa as a nation and society.

Chapter Five discusses the books that were published during and after 1994. It follows the same format as Chapter Four: the books are first analysed and then an interpretation of this analysis is provided.

Chapter Six concludes and summarises the research and discusses the implications of the way in which South Africa has been constructed in the books, especially with respect to education.

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## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

*Renegotiating social identities in the New South Africa is one of the most profound collective psychological experiences occurring in the contemporary world, and the adjustment of intercultural relationships within the country is a dramatic test of the human capacity to change social reality.*

Steyn, 1996: 111.

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

My focus in this literature review is first and foremost the construction of identities, and how this reflects and impacts on the construction of the concept of nation in the “new” post-apartheid South Africa. Because in South Africa identities are inextricably linked to race, I give attention to the way in which racial identities in particular have been constructed in this country. I intend to analyse these identities as expressed through literature, therefore literature itself is also under examination. Whilst identity is a key concept in my work, the actual focus of my research is the construction of South Africa in literature. Therefore my discussions of identity all aim to relate ultimately to South African constructions.

I have drawn on a number of theoretical fields in order to elucidate and explore the different concepts with which I am working in an attempt to draw them together into a coherent whole for the purposes of this research. My starting point is a brief examination of identity, and although elaborations of the meaning and implications of identity are largely located within the fields of developmental and social psychology, I have also drawn from a number of intercultural communication theorists. My discussion of adolescent identity is brief, because as mentioned whilst I do make use of the identity of the adolescent protagonists in my analysis, what interests me is not the fact of their adolescence as such, but what the representation and construction of their identity reveals.

Thus, as the focus on identity is linked primarily to how it is represented in South African literature, I next undertake to provide a brief overview of South Africa’s history in order to explore how identities were historically constructed and construed. This too is largely done from an intercultural communication perspective, yet I also draw extensively on work by Reddy, who has drawn from Marxist and Liberal

historiography, but whose primary approach to South Africa's development to apartheid and racism is in the form of discourse analysis. It is important to note that there is not however, a particularly large amount of work to draw from when considering the construct of South African identities.

I then undertake to focus on these identities as expressed in literature, but first problematize literature itself, arguing that it is a construct and social product. This argument is formed on the basis of theories from literary studies.

Finally in an attempt to draw together all these aspects, I look at actual examples of the reframing of identities as found in South African fiction, and in conclusion emphasize these issues as they relate to South African literature for young adults, as well as the relevance of this area of fiction.

## 2.2 IDENTITY

Whilst my intention is to examine the construct of South African society as represented in literature, I am aware that identity itself is in fact a construct, one that is highly contested and debated. As is claimed by Archer (1992: 32), "there is no one definitive definition of identity." Therefore different definitions of identity will have different concerns and emphases in accordance with their different preoccupations and goals. It seems that what most researchers do agree on is the fact that identity is multifaceted and multidimensional, and that it cannot be simply defined (Druker, 1996: 13). Indeed, the very nature of identity is amorphous, "jelly-like" (Christian, 2000: 2); it is not fixed and static, but fluid and dynamic and ever-changing, ever-growing; it is a construction that is co-created and re-created daily (Yep, 1998; Martin and Nakayama, 1997). And to add to this, when exploring identity as it relates to South Africa, one has to rely primarily on international work due to the fact that there is no overarching tradition of work in this area (Soudien, 1996; Druker, 1996). This is in itself problematic as the theory cannot simply and immediately be applied to the South African situation.

Nevertheless, I choose to define identity in accordance with Christian's simple assertion: "Identity as a sociological concept has been defined as the search for 'self'

and how one relates to the broader social context.” (2000:1). Yep also defines identity broadly as an individual’s conception of self in various contexts, namely, social, geographical, cultural and political (1998). One’s identity develops therefore, in relation to group membership and because we may belong to and identify with various groups, we have multiple identities, such as ethnic, racial, occupational, socio-economic, sexual, gendered, relational, regional, national and personal (Martin and Nakayama, 1996; Yep, 1998). Social identity theorists distinguish between “personal identity” and “social identity.” Personal identity is what distinguishes one distinct individual from all others as a unique entity, it is all those aspects of self that categorize one in terms of personality, likes and dislikes, temperament, habits and abilities (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Social identity is defined by one’s identification with and sense of belonging to social categories and groups, a perceived commonality with others in similar social positions (Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

It is important to note however, particularly in the light of the South African experience, which is, as Christian, notes “a profoundly and rigidly racialized society” (2000: 90), that race is often the one factor on which most emphasis is placed in dealings with others and in a sense it becomes a filter through which all other aspects of one’s identity must pass. Martin and Nakayama (1997) discuss how, in communication with others, different identities are emphasized depending on the person with whom we are communicating and the topic and mode of conversation. Yet, as perhaps a person belonging to a marginalized group may most ably testify, race is the most influencing determinant in the way in which we communicate with others. In other words, social identity may take precedence over personal identity, and in South Africa, social identity has historically been linked to skin colour (Steyn, 1996: 105).

### 2.2.1 ADOLESCENT IDENTITY

The period of adolescence is seen as vital in identity development, and it is assumed that adolescent identity has a significant influence and impact on an individual’s later life (Druker, 1996). Adolescents are also commonly termed “young adults;” referring to the period in one’s life that begins with the onset of puberty (occurring at usually approximately twelve and a half years of age for girls and fourteen and a half for

boys) and ends with acceptance and entry into the adult world, a point which is determined and defined by one's social and cultural group (Druker, 1996: 8; Atkinson et al 1994). There has been much work theorizing exactly how adolescent identity development occurs, with early seminal contributions by theorists such as Erikson and Marcia. Erikson developed a personality theory that outlined the development of identity throughout life in eight stages. Each stage has a task or crises which must be successfully negotiated in order for the next stage to be successful for the individual. Stage five is adolescence, and the task to be negotiated during this stage is to achieve ego identity and avoid role confusion. Ego identity primarily involves self-knowledge and an awareness of one's role and place in society. In order to achieve this, certain things are deemed necessary, such the rites of passage determined by society. If these are not provided and the stage is not successfully negotiated, role confusion results. Erikson states that when an adolescent confronts role-confusion, a so-called identity crisis occurs, hence the question often asked during adolescence: "Who am I?". If this stage is successfully negotiated, the virtue of "fidelity" is gained. This virtue implies loyalty and the ability to adhere to the standards set by society.

In other words, identity development (and notably, adolescence particularly) is a socially embedded process. It is important to note however, that it can be argued that what is generally recognized as the period of adolescence as described above is itself a construction. "Adolescence," as a distinct stage of identity development, has not historically always been recognised as such, nor is it common to all societies and cultures.

### 2.2.2 THE CONSTRUCTION AND REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY

All identities are in fact a representation. Just as the child who stands before the mirror perceives neither his will nor his body, but a representation of each of these (Norton, 1998:14), so too are all our perceptions of ourselves and others equally representations. These representations are negotiated and constructed through language.

As all thought is cast in language, therefore identity too, is set within and through language; "individuals make themselves out of the matter and according to the patterns that language provides" (Norton, 47).

Yep argues that identities are co-created and re-created through dialogue. Co-creation refers to the creation of identities with those people with whom we interact, and re-creation occurs in the context of specific communication encounters (Yep, 81). He quotes Freire, who describes dialogue as “the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (Freire, 1970: 69). What should be fundamental to this process of the “creation” of identities are equal power relations and co-operation, which can only be achieved through communication.

The implications of the representation of identity through language will be explored further in the examination of the creation of a new South African society through the negotiation of identities.

## **2.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN IDENTITIES**

South Africa provides a useful and enlightening case study in the social construction of identities, which are fixed in terms of race. South Africa’s historical legacy has ensured a nation of people who are, as Reddy comments, “so certain of their identity as ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘Coloured’, ‘Indian’, or ‘African’” (2000: 5)<sup>1</sup>. And so in an attempt to understand this legacy, the question is posed “Could it be coincidental that the dominant discourses have supported dividing its citizens into these same categories?” (Reddy, 2000: 5). It is acknowledged that any attempt to answer this question in such a limited space will not adequately take into account the myriad of complexities involved and will undoubtedly contain oversimplifications (Steyn, 1998: 105). Nevertheless a brief historical overview is provided with a view to providing context and understanding of South Africa as referred to in the literature that is the focus of this research.

### **2.3.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE “OTHER”**

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter, and indeed this entire dissertation, descriptions denoting racial identity, such as “white”, “black” and “coloured” are not written in quotation marks. This has been done purely in order to enable a smooth reading of the text, and in no way denies the controversial nature of these labels. These words were chosen because of their common usage in South African society at present, although it is acknowledged that racial terms are incredibly contentious and constantly open to debate and negotiation.

The Cape of Good Hope situated at Southernmost Africa was strategically placed for the colonial powers of Europe; midway between Europe and the East, it hinted of potential wealth and power provided by trade and expansion (Steyn, 1998). Therefore it was at this halfway post that the Dutch East India Company established a “refreshing station” in 1652, from which the first white settlers from Holland provided food and water for Asian bound ships (Christian, 2000: 88). The Cape was to become a point of rivalry between the British and the Dutch, however, with the British finally establishing their supremacy. South Africa was an important piece of territory in the British Empire, and the white English-speaking settlers retained strong political, economic, cultural and intellectual ties with the imperial center. In contrast to this, the descendents of the Dutch, the Afrikaners, strove to become independent of ties with Europe (particularly the British) and fought strongly for what they saw as their right to occupy the land and maintain their way of life in Africa, after which they named their language (Afrikaans) and themselves (Steyn, 1998: 104). There were however, indigenous peoples that had been living along the Cape coastal region for a number of centuries, the Stone Age Khoikhoi and the San, who were hunters, gatherers and stockbreeders (Davidson, 1995). Further inland, since approximately A.D. 300, the Iron Age (or as they were later known, Bantu) people had lived as cattle farmers and agriculturalists. They also forged metalwork and were highly organized socially at the time of European settlement (Steyn; Unterhalter, 1995). The settlement and expansion of the Europeans into Southern Africa resulted in conflicting interests and a contestation of realities which led not only to conflict, but also, as Steyn (1998: 105) claims, is still unresolved in present day South Africa and has informed South Africa’s history until this time.

The Europeans constructed a view of Africa that was consistent with their worldview of Europe as the centre of the world and the rest of the world as periphery, as “Other” (Steyn). Reddy discusses the meaning of this notion of “the Other” and highlights its essential features:

- 1) the differences (geographic, cultural, economic, political) are constructed; 2) it involves relations of unequal power; 3) the dominant group establishes the standard of evaluation for both groups and in this way privileges itself, and 4) the differences are “naturalized” in discourse. The notion of “the Other” most importantly suggests that collective identity is constructed, that it is relational and that it allows the group in power to define its own identity by imputing its “Others” what it does not desire to see in itself. (2000: 5).

Thus the settlers engaged in this “othering” process through employing a number of discourses that changed and evolved over time. Reddy uses the term subaltern to refer primarily to those who were black (“non-white”), poor and working class, and who were constructed in the dominant discourses as generalized and essentialized “objects” over the four centuries of white domination. He identifies three primary discourses that evolved and were eventually formalized and entrenched in apartheid, as they “pervaded the thinking, practices and institutions of South African society, structuring the state and civil society” (Reddy, 2000: 1). The first of these relates to the conception of the dominant as “civilized”, as all non-Europeans, including the indigenous people of Southern Africa, are constructed as “savages”, or “human minus culture”(Steyn, 1998:106).

The second discourse Reddy identifies is that of “ethnic/tribal other”, which developed with the notion of the “frontier”. The “frontier” is a metaphor that developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the antagonism and conflict between the white (Afrikaner) and black agricultural societies grew. The notion of frontier constructs the indigenous people through the eyes of the trekboer and establishes a fixed boundary line between white and uncivilized black other. It is often believed that the “frontier” notion led to the racial organization of South African state and society in the twentieth century (Reddy; Legassick, 1980). Finally, the construct of “labouring other” emerged as gold and diamonds were discovered in the nineteenth century and capitalist relations of production were developed. The black African people were seen as only being capable of and fit for manual and menial labour. Unfair labour practice was characteristic of South Africa’s history and in fact one of the primary assumptions of Afrikaner society was that a “good” government would protect the interests of white capital through restrictive labour laws, which were eventually entrenched in apartheid legislation (Steyn; Frederickson, 1981).

An example of how this discourse of “labouring other” was fixed and consolidated through apartheid is specifically evident in the separate education system formulated by the chief architect of Apartheid, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd. It was designed to enforce the apartheid arrangement of society and in so doing teach black youths that their

“otherness” (and subsequent inferiority) because of their race was natural. Verwoerd outlined this philosophy in 1954:

When I have control of Native Education I will reform it so that the natives will be taught from childhood to realize that equality with the Europeans is not for them... People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for Natives... When my department controls native education it will know for what class of higher education a Native is fitted, and whether he will have a chance in life to use his knowledge... What is the use of teaching the Bantu mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. (as quoted in Reddy, 124)

Verwoerd’s educational design clearly demonstrates the belief that black people were only suited to labour and therefore their education should merely enable and specifically comply with this requirement.

I have outlined three examples of dominant discourses as viewed by Reddy. However there were several others which characterized relations in South Africa, as the indigenous Africans were constructed as the extreme opposite in every way to the Europeans. This was emphasized by the fact that because of the unequal power situation, the white settlers were never forced to humanize these images and constructs or allow them to be challenged, and they were able to persist. In addition, this ideology of extreme racism was clung to fanatically as it was fuelled by the fears of the white numerical minority; fears of majority revenge, takeover and annihilation (Steyn, 1998: 109).

As mentioned and briefly demonstrated, these discourses were institutionalized and politically entrenched in the system of apartheid, a system that ensured the supremacy and domination of whites, as it made one’s “racial group” the primary factor and determinant of one’s actions and very existence in all spheres of society. This was achieved through the Population and Registration Act (No. 30 of 1950) (repealed) which, in the words of Nelson Mandela “labelled all South Africans by race, making colour the single most important arbiter of an individual.” (1994: 130). Where and with whom one could live, work, worship, attend school, have sex, marry, play sport, enjoy recreation or entertainment and receive basic services was determined and defined by one’s racial group, which was assigned and decided by the state upon birth and through a series of “tests.” It was thus that the state assigned and imposed upon each individual their identity, subordinating all other aspects of identity and identities to this political categorization. In this way, collective identity was effectively

politicized (Reddy, 2000: 137). Even the aspects of interaction that the state could not control, such as informal social gatherings and interactions on public roads for example, were satisfactorily secured by individual and social prejudice that was fostered and encouraged by this system.

The constructed nature of these racial categories based on the racist discourses of the past is evidenced when one considers the category of “Indian,” for example. Under apartheid legislation it was assumed that there was a particular essence or certain characteristics that constituted being “Indian,” that some people possessed that others did not. Ancestry was assumed to be a factor that determined this and was traced to the importation of “Indians” from India in the nineteenth century. This idea is problematic in that class divisions, gender, religious, language and caste differences were all undermined; there was no investigation into or consideration of the politics in India at the time or of the way in which Indian colonial authorities chose people for the journey to South Africa and no consideration of (sexual) relations on board and along the way at ports in Indonesia, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles; an unbroken ahistorical journey from India to South Africa is merely assumed. By claiming an impossible pure “blood line” of “Indianess” is to constitute a social construction (Reddy, 2000: 138).

Resistance to apartheid therefore involved the establishment and propagation of counter discourses that challenged the fixed identities assigned to the oppressed by the state. Indeed, “without identity there is no consciousness or struggle,” claims Santos, in reference to the Black Movement in Brazil, created by black Brazilians who “have gone through this process of destruction of racial identity” (Santos, 1993:23). An example of redefinition of identity is evident in the definition of “black” by the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa, which emphasized not so much skin colour as “political usefulness” (Reddy, 2000: 213). According to Biko (one of the founders and leaders of the movement):

Being black is not a matter of pigmentation—being black is a reflection of mental attitude: merely describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being. (1978: 48)

But it was only to be in 1994 when dignity and identity for the colonized and oppressed of South Africa was finally re-established, when the first democratic election and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president heralded the advent of a New South Africa (Steyn, 1998; Adam, 1996). Now the constitution and legislation of the country secures the dignity, equality and freedom of all South Africans, representing a dramatic revision of the legacy and dynamics of early colonization and apartheid. That this dramatic political change occurred peacefully left the country in a state of great optimism and excitement for the future. However, the social reality of inequalities and perceptions of identities that was inherited required renegotiation and reworking, a process that is still being undertaken. As Steyn (1998: 111) comments, the minds of all South Africans still require decolonization, and “decolonization...requires...an imaginative creation of a new form of consciousness and way of life”. It is to this creation of consciousness that we now turn.

### 2.3.2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA: NATION BUILDING ATTEMPTS

That South Africa is engaged in a quest for a new national identity, one that emphasizes a shared cultural identity and seeks to create a sense of belonging to the country as opposed to separate ethnic or racial communities, is symbolized in the image of the new South Africa as the “rainbow nation” (Baines, 1997; Eyber, 1996). This image has pervaded all spheres of society and represents the construction of an imaginary nation in the post-apartheid era. The different cultural groups of South Africa are represented by the different colours of the rainbow, and although each is separate and essential, they nevertheless blur into each other, co-existing and co-dependent as they are subsumed under the greater unitary and beautiful whole (Baines, 1997; Eyber 1997). Thought differs as to who originally coined the phrase, ranging from the South African media in describing the multiracial Rivonia trialists (Eyber, 1997: 79) to Albie Sachs (Baines, 1997). Yet it is generally agreed that the term was made popular by Desmond Tutu (Baines, 1997; Steyn, 1997) who, as the chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, is largely associated in South African consciousness with the process of nation building. In this section I shall undertake later to explore further the concept of the “rainbow nation” as I attempt to explain this process of “nation” building, and then to examine a number of ways in which this process has been made manifest in post-apartheid South Africa.

Hall et al note that a nation “produces meanings – a system of cultural representation”, and by being a symbol, the concept of “nation” as such has power to create and elicit a notion of identity and allegiance (1992: 292-3). By producing meanings about the nation, national cultures construct identities. Thus difference can be represented as unity or identity. In fact, it is even claimed that the only reason pluralistic societies are held together at all is because their different identities can (under certain circumstances) be articulated together, and not necessarily because they are unified. Adam states that nationalism “promises to restore dignity and extinguish humiliation” (1996: 127), serving not only symbolic (psychological) but also instrumental (economic) needs. He argues that South Africa is pragmatically united, and that the ethnoracial differences have actually facilitated the emergence of a common state. He explains this by claiming that because racial identities were so entrenched by apartheid, self-definitions were not threatened or endangered. He discusses various reasons that in his view accounted for the marked lack of severe strife in the creation of the “new” South Africa. In brief these are: economic interdependence of black and white groups, lack of fundamentalist religious fervour as religious absolutes were never at stake, the accommodating leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) elite and a relatively politically educated populace who embraced reconciliation. He does comment however that without the patriotism induced by the ANC, reconciliation would not have succeeded in South Africa (Adam, 142).

A survey of Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) shop stewards who refused to separate their class from their national identities revealed that:

Overwhelmingly, respondents expressed a deep-seated commitment to the nation-building politics of the Tripartite Alliance, in which their interests as workers would either be given only parity with—62 percent—or would be subordinated to—32 percent—the interests of other classes or the nation as a whole.

(Ginsberg and Webster, 1995: 55)

In other words, business interests as well as the multi-class ANC (who emphasized cooperation and economic concessions) favour the “false consciousness” of the nation building attempt, fearing the disruptive potential of black working class militancy and destabilization (Adam, 1996: 142). For, “authority depends upon the citizens’ identification with the nation” (Norton, 1998: 47).

In fact many analysts are critical of the emphasis on national identity due to the subordination of ethnic and regional identities this process potentially implies (Baines, 2; Adam, 142). Van den Berghe even warns that nation-building usually amounts to nation destroying (1990). In addition, despite the emphasis on “unity” and “equality”, the reality of grossly unequal life chances in South Africa still remains, manifesting in one way as rocketing crime rates (Steyn, 1996: 112). Yet, as Steyn remarks, the reason so much is directed at reconciliation and the reconstruction of society is that South Africans are aware that the stakes are extremely high: “the survival of the country depends on the successful interdependence of the different cultures” (1996: 142). And in this context the culture of communities remains secondary;

Members of privileged cultural minorities can always opt in or out of their groups according to individual preferences of circumstances. The unemployed in the squatter camps do not face such choices. In order to keep these racially homogeneous outsiders in line, the multi-ethnic insiders cannot afford to quarrel among themselves about cultural symbolism. They have to manufacture common national identities. (Adam, 143)

Yet, whether or not this is successful, will largely depend on *how* the narratives that have historically shaped South Africa’s society are reframed (Steyn, 112). Nation building attempts have taken various forms, the rainbow nation for example being a major symbol for many of these. I shall briefly attempt to elaborate a few ways in which South Africans have responded to their own identities and those of others as they attempt to work towards racial integration and claim their place as part of this nation, before discussing the ways in which these concepts and beliefs are made accessible to the South African public and transmitted and carried through cultural forms.

As mentioned repeatedly, due to apartheid’s classification, South Africans are highly aware of their identities in racial terms, and therefore a common way in which to present oneself as advocating “harmony” and racial-integration is to embrace the notions of “colour-blindness” and non-racialism (Eyber, 1997:76). The central notion of colour-blindness is, as it implies, being “blind” to the colours that constitute race. Race is viewed as merely an outwardly physical characteristic of a person and as such is “morally irrelevant category” and an invalid means of differentiating between people (Eyber, 1997; Goldberg, 1993). Goldberg explains that a morally irrelevant category is one that defines people in terms for which they are not responsible and

cannot help, and in contrast, a morally relevant category allows people to have had a “fair” opportunity to avoid or acquire a property or capacity by which they are being judged and evaluated (1993: 6). Colour-blindness has a long and prosperous history in western liberalism and there is widespread commitment to the notion (Goldberg, 1993; Eyber, 1997), probably because the implication of adhering to the concept is a defence against accusations of racism: how can I be considered racist or discriminatory if I am above categorising people in such a superficial way and do not even *see* colour? As mentioned when discussing identity, however, it is likely that it is perhaps easier for members of the dominant (i.e. white) group to adhere to this notion, as often one’s membership to a privileged group entails being ignorant of these privileges and a relative lack of awareness as to how race-oriented their lives really are (Steyn, 1997: 6; Hyde, 1995). Similarly, it may be harder for someone whose life has been overtly dominated and constrained by his or her race to become “blind” to it.

Similar to the colour-blindness discourse is that of non-racialism. Both appeal to racial harmony by de-emphasizing race in the face of the hegemonic racist ideology of the National Party government of South Africa. Non-racialism is a stance that was adopted by resistance movements in the apartheid era, as both academics and activists advocated that there was “no such thing as race” (Boonzaier and Sharp, 1988; Cape Action League, 1987). They argued that racial categorization was based on a false premise and was a result of a racist and discriminatory world view, and in so doing expressed the vision of a united South Africa where common citizenship, rights and opportunities were granted regardless of race, culture or gender (Eyber, 1997; Kottler, 1996; Tikle, 1994). This was a progressive viewpoint, one that has arguably become a commonplace value in South Africa, as non-racialism is emphasized in the major endeavour of the government to promote harmony and unity. Eyber comments that “national discourses of reconciliation and nation-building are at work” (1997: 78).

It is important to note, however, that as Eyber points out, non-racialism was certainly never the only counter-argument to apartheid. There were strong objections to this “colour-blindness” within the anti-apartheid resistance movements, which to a certain extent still remain today. The Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the Black Consciousness Movement and the Azanian Peoples’ Organization (AZAPO), for example, have argued instead that it is vital, politically and otherwise, for black

people to identify themselves as African and/or black (Eyber, 1997: 79; Biko, 1978). Steyn argues that moving towards the goal of a non-racist society requires constant and rigorous attention to the constructions of race in South Africa, and how these constructions have influenced and continue to influence our society. Identities, such as what it means to be “white” in present day South Africa (which may entail negotiating the sudden loss of privilege, being faced with feelings of guilt or resentment, for example) are under fierce examination in a society that is coping with its rigidly racist past (Steyn, 4). Although it may be argued that focus on race appears to be retrogressive in the light of this past, critical race theory does in fact argue in favour of race cognizance (Steyn, 1997). For, as Eyber notes, the construction of non-racialism in colour-blind terms may defuse the possible progressive effects of the concept through over simplification of the nature of non-racialism, resulting in a lack of commitment to ensure equal status amongst all South Africans. In other words black experiences may be disregarded and devalued, as colour-blindness provides a justification for current unjust social and educational practices (for example) to continue without due consideration of the implications of desegregation and thorough scrutiny of the effects of South Africans’ identities which are so dominated by race (Eyber, 1997).

That the notion of “colour-blindness” and non-racism is a contentious issue in that it represents the ways in which South Africans are attempting to come to terms with their identities in the “new” South Africa as well as the societal problems that confront the country as it progresses into the second millennium, was demonstrated recently in South African parliament in the debate provoked by President Thabo Mbeki’s Budget Vote speech (21 June 2001), in which he asserted that the poverty that South Africa faces is “part of its racist legacy”. The opposition accused Mbeki of resorting to the “race card” in order to defend itself, and that the inequalities that exist in South Africa are simply between social classes and not because of the legacy of the apartheid past. It was argued that there is a need to talk of “colour-blind national reconciliation, colour-blind self-determination for the Afrikaners, colour-blind poverty and colour-blind economic growth”. Mbeki affirmed his belief that “...it would be eminently dishonest to pretend and assert that the legacy of centuries of colonialism and apartheid has been wiped out in a period of seven years, since our liberation.” The opposition responded by urging the House to resolve that it would not

deal with racism by “putting more doses of it into the system of a non-racial South Africa” and by asserting that the success or failure of the country depended on the way the government dealt with racism (Phlahlane, 2001: *Cape Argus*, p. 5). This debate reveals much about the tensions inherent in the process of nation building, made manifest through the discourses (such as colour-blindness and non-racialism) that characterize it.

Nonetheless, whilst colour-blindness denies the importance of “colour” and racial difference, the rainbow nation discourse draws attention to difference and in effect celebrates it as beautiful and necessary. Although, the rainbow discourse is complex in that in its notions of race and culture overlap and it would appear that it has evolved to symbolize the acknowledgement of cultural rather than racial differences.

Nevertheless, both concepts appeal to the notion of harmony in the building and creation of a new South Africa, free of prejudice and discrimination.

This message of a harmonious, unified country has pervaded South African consciousness, and has been made manifest and transmitted in several ways. One of the stated objectives of the ruling African National Congress’s 1994 draft document on National Cultural Policy was to “promote the development of a unifying national culture, representing the aspirations of all of South Africa’s people,” revealing its conceptualization of culture as integral to development and nation building (in Baines, 1997). As the deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Ms B Mabandle, stated in 1996: “The ambit of arts and culture policy will always be highly charged and emotional because the arts, culture and heritage are concerned with the most central aspect of humanity, the formation of identity.” (as quoted in Baines, 1).

The media, as cultural carriers, have had a significant role to play in this nation-building attempt. Desmond Tutu appeared several times on television discussing the “rainbow people of God,” as did President Nelson Mandela, who addressed a multiracial audience of children on a talk-show: “I don’t see colour. For me they are all children” (SABC 1<sup>2</sup>, Felicia Mabusa-Suttle Show, 17 March 1997). A newspaper report of Mbeki’s recent Budget Vote speech (21 June 2001) recording him as stating that the central challenge of the present government was that of “implementation”:

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<sup>2</sup> South African Broadcasting Corporation, Channel One

“Let us get down to the serious business of work—*working together to create a new South Africa*; working together to build a country free of racism and sexism; working together to end poverty, unemployment and the social marginalisation of any of our people...” [Emphasis mine](Phahlane, 2001: 5). In fact, various radio and television programmes convey a message of national unity, illustrated in the public broadcaster SABC’s musical jingle, which is repeatedly broadcast on SABC 1-TV: “Simunye—We are one”. Other private sector advertisements, such as Castle Lager’s “One Beer, One Nation,” also support this sentiment (Baines, 1997: 1).

Maake (1996) discusses the national symbols of South Africa (flags, national anthems and place names) and states that they are an inscription of identity onto the landscape, and represent not the past, but a distortion of it. The new myth of South African unity, he claims, is represented in the unfurling of the new flag, and was evident for example, in its being waved as a banner of National Unity after South Africa’s victory in 1995 at the Rugby World Cup.

Language also has implications when considering the creation of post-apartheid South Africa for, as Younis (239) argues, as the bearer and carrier of culture and values, it determines and creates the process of the evolution of culture. Therefore whilst the above are but a few examples of how the creation of new identities are being attempted and negotiated through forms of culture, I would like to focus more particularly on the specific subject of my own research, namely language as expressed through literature, and its relevance regarding the construction and representation of this New South Africa.

## **2.4 LITERATURE**

Younis argues that language is crucial in the “creation” of societies (1996: 233). He discusses how in terms of colonization, language was the most significant vehicle and potent influence through which power and control was both gained and exercised, and that whilst the bullet was able to subjugate people physically, it was ultimately words that subjugated them spiritually. In South Africa, identities were assigned and created through the language and texts of apartheid and domination of the white identity was achieved. Eventually it became difficult to separate world from text (Reddy, 131). But

just as language was used to subjugate and divide in South Africa's past, so too has it been used and harnessed in order to construct a sense of "unity" and nation. Lyons and Moore state that literature, as an ideological and cultural representation of reality, has been indispensable to many movements which led to political and national independence in several African countries (1996: 445). In resistance against colonialism and in the promotion of nationalism in Africa, "the act of writing itself was a weapon" (Ngara, 1982: 129).

Language as fiction or literature then, becomes key in attempting to understand and analyse the process of nation building. Lyons and Moore claim that through an analysis of the literature that was produced before, during and after the war in Zimbabwe, great insight into the construction, formation, representation and success of the Zimbabwean National Liberation War can be gained. Similarly, Flockemann suggests that attempts to redefine "new" or reclaim suppressed identities as is outlined as occurring in South Africa at this time, are often reflected in fictions of childhood that are produced in the society undergoing transition (1999: 179). Flockemann discusses Lima's (1993) assertion that "the equation between the developing self and the developing nation in the traditional novel of education, or *Bildungsroman*, is one of the ways in which cultural practices are transformed in countries undergoing a process of decolonisation." (1999: 178).

This brings into direct focus the subject of my own research, the literature for adolescents published in this South African society that appears to be undergoing a conscious construction and process of creation. Potter et al (1984) discuss the relation between social psychology and literature, and in this discussion question whether or not literature can actually be used as informative, literal representations of experience and whether literature should be seen as "reflecting" social life. The implications and suggestions in answer to this question are to follow.

#### 2.4.1 THE CONSTRUCTION OF LITERATURE

The way in which literary critics have approached texts is crucial in illuminating how literature has been viewed in the past. New Criticism was a critical approach which emphasized the unitary meaning of a particular text, which could be interpreted

through “close reading” on the part of the reader (Potter et al 1984: 77; Rosenblatt, 1938: 29). This approach traditionally emphasized the impersonality of the critic, and whilst the production of interpretation of texts was revealed through the reader’s experience of the text, all meaning was seen to reside in the text. This view of criticism corresponds with the expressive realist model of literature, which states that the importance of literature lies in its true and accurate depiction of reality (Potter et al, 76).

More recently there has been a shift away from this view, which has centred on the way meaning is assigned to texts. Instead of critics now asking “What is the meaning of the text?” or “What is the correct interpretation?” the central question now becomes “How is the meaning of the text produced” or “What is the process by which readers assign specific meanings to particular texts?” (Potter et al, 77). The implications of this shift is that no longer is the end point of analysis seen to be the critics’ “correct” interpretation of the meaning of a specific text, but to “to elucidate the semiological processes through which the texts acquire meaning.”(Potter et al, 77).

Literature is now generally not seen to have a single, enduring unitary meaning, rather meaning is seen to be a result of context dependant readings. The aim of criticism now becomes to analyse the way particular versions of the text’s meaning are constructed for specific reasons and purposes. This approach has influenced the way in which literature has been viewed too; “literary work, like language itself, is a social product” (Rosenblatt, 1938:28), “texts, like people, are not islands divorced from their social contexts...” (Potter et al, 1984: 76). Literature is seen as being a social construct, which gains its significance from the way in which readers, from their own cultural contexts and stances, “transact” with it and assign meaning to it (Rosenblatt, 1983). In terms of response to literature, Galda and Beach comment:

Literary response researchers in the 1990’s have focused increasingly on response not simply as a transaction between texts and readers but as a construction of text meaning and readers stances and identities within larger sociocultural contexts. Readers, texts, and contexts are studied as constituted by culture and history. (2001:66).

When considering literature in terms of being a social product, therefore, the task of the analyst becomes to expose the varied ways in which versions of social reality are

constructed and naturalized in the literature (Potter et al, 81). The implication of this in terms of my own research is that the literature chosen for analysis is viewed as being a construct of its own sociocultural context, and my task then will be to study and criticize these constructs as evident in terms of social identity. Finally, I shall concentrate on post-apartheid South African fiction, by discussing briefly how identity is constructed and renegotiated in literature, concluding with specific emphasis on children's literature.

#### 2.4.2 CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN FICTION

*"The proposition of art for the sake of art finds no foothold in the atmosphere of racism, violence and crude exploitation which is the day-to day experience of South African people."* (Alex la Guma as quoted in Balutansky, 1990)

These are the words of writer Alex la Guma, well known for his anti-apartheid fiction. His comment, whilst contentious, is apt, I feel, in that it highlights the belief in the social responsibility of the writer (particularly during apartheid times) that has persisted until today. Of course, this belief is not universal and has definite limitations concerning the "functions" of literature, but nevertheless is of particular relevance when considering the literature of authors in the specific post-apartheid context of South Africa. For, many authors seem to agree with La Guma's assertion, and their work reflects a clear attempt at renegotiating identities and nation building. La Guma's sentiment is also reflected by Nigerian writer, literary critic and Nobel prize winner, Soyinka: "The artist has always functioned in South African society as the record of the mores and experiences of his [sic] society and as the voice of vision in his own time." (1967: 21). This too, is a biased generalization, but Soyinka's comment demonstrates a belief that seems to dominate in post-apartheid fiction.

Arguably, eight years after the official end of apartheid may not be sufficient time for a significant post-apartheid canon to be established. Roux in fact critiques the "post-apartheid canon" (whether or not one even exists), in *South African Fiction After Apartheid, Modern Fiction Studies* 46(1) (2000). The focus on such "post-apartheid" fiction is, he states, a relatively new field of study, to which contributions are necessary (Roux, 246). Roux begins his analysis with an observation regarding the many frequent references to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which he

considers to be unsurprising, as “The TRC demonstrates the ethical, legal and literary problematics of narrative encounters between the present and the past...” (Roux, 43). Of particular interest is his discussion of the focus on the “confessional” nature of white fiction; as what he terms the “beneficiaries” of apartheid attempt to represent themselves as victims, hoping for exoneration through this act of confessing. He also comments on the discussion regarding the role of land narratives that revisit the past in the development of Afrikaner identity. In other words, several texts that he critiques appear to be concentrating on the negotiation of different identities and engaging in the attempt to redefine what it means to live and exist in this new South Africa. Roux does also comment on the proliferation of focus on “white” writers, suggesting that “post-apartheid” writing seems to consist primarily of the “rupture and reappraisal” of the white voice, the dominance of which could signify a reinscription of literary apartheid (246). In other words, the large number of white authors who write from their perspectives only and attempt to reframe their identity and experiences from within their own constructed framework denies the experience of other South Africans, as black authors still have virtually no voice in this context.

In a similar vein, Kossew discusses Andre Brink’s concern with Afrikaner identity in his writing and his attempt to find a space for the Afrikaner in Africa. She notes, “‘Reclaiming’ and ‘rewriting’ Afrikaner identity have been at the heart of Brink’s representation of the Afrikaner in his work” (Kossew, 1996: 224). Brink attempts to do this by repositioning the Afrikaner heritage by separating it from its association with apartheid, and instead situating it terms of resistance against colonial authority (Kossew, 221). Kossew does find the reframing of the Afrikaner identity problematic however, and comments that “it could be seen as being complicit in a process of a national loss of memory which, while lauding as part of the reconciliation process, could also be seen not just as a reclaiming of history, but also a revising of it.” (223).

According to Flockemann, an important feature of South African literature that has been produced over the last decade is: “Fictions of childhood which use the narrative perspective of a child or adolescent to trace a coming to consciousness either in works that revisit childhood and youth as a way of reading adult identity, or as marketed for a young adult audience...” (1999: 177). Roberts also makes reference to “a new rash of writing [that has] broken out as white South African novelists recall their past

through the eyes of the children whom they say they were.” (1996: 22) Flockemann considers these fictions to be of interest because of the way they represent how identity is learned and rehearsed in light of the “current repositionings of identity politics in the postelection period.” (Flockemann, 1999: 177). However, there appears to be a trend that views adolescent literature as lacking significance in comparison with adult texts, and as such it has not received much attention from academics. Flockemann suggests however that far from being trivial, fiction concerned with childhood and the use of the adolescent subject:

seems appropriate to the cross-cultural situations in which the protagonists attempt to negotiate the meanings of their personal experiences and their developing gendered and racialized identities. In other words, puberty itself becomes a metonymic of a developing political and feminist consciousness (183).

I feel that this comment is apt in that it could be applied to the process of re/presentation of identity that appears to be occurring generally in South Africa at present, as appears to be evident not only in post-apartheid fiction as discussed above but in several other cultural forms as well. The implications of this have yet to be realized.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

*Identity represents the intersection of individual and society*

Josselson, 1994:12.

*We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made...Self-knowledge—always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery—is never altogether separable from claims to be made known in specific ways by others.*

Calhoun, 1994: 9-10.

In this chapter I outline my method of analysis. I explain how I chose the books that are the subject of analysis; the method by which I analyse them and finally, discuss issues that arise out of the analysis. As detailed in Chapter Two, the focus of my analysis is to examine how South African society has been constructed as “nation” in literature for adolescents through an analysis of the identity of the adolescent protagonist. I have designed and employed a model in order to analyse the identity of the protagonists of the books. Therefore, although I had to create my own methodological tool for this research (the model), I have drawn from the methodological principles of Wetherall and Potter (1992). Whilst they operate largely from a discourse analysis framework and I do not use discourse analysis in this research, I found many of their insights regarding their own research to be helpful and applicable to mine.

### 3.1 DATA: THE CHOICE OF BOOKS

I have chosen to define South African literature for adolescents as books that are published by South Africans in South Africa, that have been set in South Africa and that are written specifically for adolescents (young adults). For the purposes of this study I have chosen to study only books written in English. The books also have to explicitly state that they have been written for adolescents or young adults.

The number of books that fit these criteria is not significantly large, but I did read a large number of the books in this category that have been published over the past fifteen years in order to gain insight into the general nature and content of these books. However, for this research, I decided to choose books that had won prizes in the young adult category. I based this decision on the hope that prize-winning books would be representative of all the books in this category. Primarily, I hoped to avoid a biased choice on my part.

However, this in itself proved to be complex owing to the nature in which prizes for young adult literature are awarded. It appears that fiction for young adults is a relatively new and largely unexamined area in many respects; most focus is given (in the form of prizes or academic criticism, for example) to literature for children and adults (Flockemann, 1999: 182). In addition, it appears that more attention is also paid to works in Afrikaans for young adults in relation to English. Nevertheless, there are two prizes that are awarded nationally to books for adolescents that are already in circulation, the M-NET and the Sir Percy Fitzpatrick awards. Otherwise, the publishers themselves award prizes to unseen manuscripts: the SANLAM award is given every two years to unseen manuscripts that are then published through Tafelberg publishers, and Maskew Miller Longman also awards books for youth literature that they subsequently publish (Young Africa Series)<sup>2</sup>. There appear to be three publishers that dominate the publication of literature for adolescents, namely Heinemann, Tafelberg and Maskew Miller Longman. Whilst there are other publishers who publish books for young adults, for example Kwela books, these three are prolific and seem to dominate due to the sheer volume of books of this nature that they publish. Thus in the light of the above information regarding the awarding of prizes, I have chosen books that have won prizes within their publishing houses (i.e. Tafelberg and Maskew Miller Longman). However, because Heinemann does not award such a prize, I included Heinemann books that are published in a series that is explicitly for young adults, the “GAP” books: “novels for young adults, offering readers stories by the best of a new generation of writers from South Africa and beyond” (as stated on their books). In other words, I have chosen books from these three publishing houses because of their dominance in the area, and I have then selected books within these publications that have won prizes or are specific examples of books for young adults (in the case of Heinemann books that do not award a prize).

The books were also chosen because of *when* they were published. I have chosen books that represent the period in South Africa’s recent history that spans approximately fifteen years, from during apartheid (the late 1980’s), the time leading up to the election (early 1990’s) and the actual time of and after the first South

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<sup>1</sup> Information regarding prizes was obtained through conversations with Audrey Hitchcock of “Hedgehog Books” (18 May 2001), and Marianne Serfontein of EDULIS (23 May 2001).

African democratic election which signals the end of apartheid (1994 onwards). I did this in order to gain an understanding of how post apartheid South Africa is being represented and constructed in comparison to literature published during apartheid. But because there are not many adolescent books published in the early to mid 1980's, I was forced to analyse only the books that were written in the later years of apartheid. In addition, the time of publication does not necessarily correlate with *when* the book was actually written; the entire writing process from conception to publication could take any number of years. Therefore, whilst apartheid did have an official end in 1994, the distinction in terms of post apartheid fiction is not as clear when considering books that were published during 1994, for example. Thus it was necessary to analyse books from a number of different years in order to gain a more holistic and informed perspective.

I have not taken the authors of the chosen literature into account in my analysis at all. My analysis is confined to the identity of the protagonist and the construction of South Africa, and whilst this is, to some extent, determined by the author, the identity of the author and the effect of this identity on the nature of the work is not my concern in this research. It is acknowledged, however, that this may be a valuable and illuminating study in its own right.

The books chosen for analysis are listed below: The prizes they have won have been specified and are written as they appear on the actual books:

Published before 1994:

1. Beake, L. (1987) *The Strollers*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
-1987 MML Young Africa Award
2. Geraghty, P. (1988) *Pig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
-1988 MML Young Africa Award
3. Bregin, E. (1989) *The Kayaboeties*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
-1989 MML Young Africa Series Winner
4. Hofmeyr, D. (1990) *Red Kite In A Pale Sky*. Cape Town: Tafelberg  
-1990 Sanlam Prize for Youth Literature (Gold) Winner
5. Case, D. (1991) *92 Queens Road*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
-1991 MML Young Africa Series Winner, 1992 Sir Percy Fitzpatrick prize for literature Winner

Published after 1994:

1. Bailey, D. (1994) *Thatha*. Cape Town: Heinemann  
-GAP series 1994
2. Robson, J. (1994) *Don't Panic Mechanic*. Cape Town: Tafelberg  
- 1994 Sanlam Prize Winner
3. Smith, G. (1996) *Wheels*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.  
-1996 Sanlam Prize Winner
4. Saunders, M. (1998) *Dear Ludwig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman  
- 1998 MML Young Africa Series Winner
5. Britten, S. (2000) *The Worst Year of my Life So Far*. Cape Town: Tafelberg  
-2000 Sanlam Prize Winner

### **3.2 METHOD OF ANALYSIS: THE MODEL**

I will not at any stage be involved in an evaluative critical analysis of the books, in other words, I will not be engaged in determining the quality and merit of any book, nor will I be involved in an attempt to consider the “meaning” of the book as a whole. Instead, I will be analyzing the books purely in an attempt to gain an understanding of the development of the protagonist’s identity, in order ultimately to draw conclusions from this as to how South Africa is being constructed. Thus, I will ultimately be looking for a parallel between the protagonist’s identity and South Africa’s “identity,” in terms of nation and society.

Wetherell and Potter (1992) attempt to “map” the language of racism in New Zealand by “chartering themes and ideologies, exploring the heterogeneous and layered textures and practices, arguments and representations which make up the taken for granted in a particular society” (1). I feel some of Wetherell and Potter’s (1992) comments about analysis have relevance to my own method of analysis. They state that the concept of “method” originates out of a positivist, quantitative methodological discourse, which emphasizes scientifically valid and reliable results through the application of certain statistical and other procedures, but in fact, there is no such mechanical procedure that can be applied to texts in order to obtain analytic results (Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Eyber, 1997). Rather, repeated close readings of texts will enable one to identify organizational features, and fragmentary or

contradictory details. In other words, as Eyber states, “the analysis is guided by the text” (Eyber, 1997: 57). Eyber describes two phases of analysis: in the first, the researcher identifies patterns that emerge in the text; in the second phase the researcher examines the ways in which events, facts and versions of the world are used in order to achieve certain effects and draws conclusions and forms hypotheses regarding the functions and consequences of this use (1997: 67).

It is with this in mind that I developed a method that would effectively reveal the constructions of identity and South Africa in the texts. I choose to apply a model in order to analyse the identity of the fictional protagonists. This model facilitates Eyber’s two phases of analysis: firstly, it enables me to identify patterns in the texts regarding the identities of the protagonists, and secondly, I can then examine the way in which this information creates and constructs an image of South African society. I conceptualized this model in accordance with the understanding of identity as outlined in Chapter Two. Although the model is based on established theory, it is entirely my own conception. The reason I chose and developed this model is because I am well aware (as the theory constantly points out) that identity is complex, dynamic and multidimensional, and as Archer comments, “the construct is so complex that it would be wrong to develop a single operationalization of this overarching entity.” (1994: 3). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, I have chosen to emphasize the particular definition of identity that allows me to explore the relationship between self and others, between the protagonist and South African society. The model was developed primarily on the basis of the assertion that “Identity represents the intersection of individual and society” (Josselson, 1994:12). By highlighting aspects of the protagonist’s life and identity that are moulded by the society in which they live, the essence and nature of that society itself will be highlighted.

Identity may be broadly defined as an individual’s conception of self in various contexts, namely, social, geographical, cultural and political. Identity is multidimensional and people have multiple identities in terms of these contexts, such as: ethnic, racial, occupational, socio-economic, sexual, gendered, relational, regional, national and personal. The model is based on these different groups. The model has reduced the protagonist’s life into its component parts, providing easy access into the complexities of an individual’s identity and making the implications of the

representation of this identity accessible. Although Yep asserts that identity is non-summative; that a person is more than the sum of the component parts that constitute his or her identity as a whole (1996: 81), the model as such is not intended to provide an in-depth psychological analysis of the entire complexity that constitutes the protagonist's identity. Rather, it provides brief insight and understanding into the protagonist through an analysis of the component parts of his or her life.

The model is a set of questions that are organized under headings in accordance with the groups to which they may belong and identify with. For clarity's sake I have provided a definition for each numbered heading. The protagonist is referred to as the "subject" in these definitions, as it is hoped that the use of this model may not be limited to this particular study of the protagonists' identities.

**THE IDENTITY MODEL:**

<p><b>1.Gendered:</b></p>	<p><b>The sex of the subjects and the way in which this is expressed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Male or female?</li> <li>-What are their notions of what constitutes masculine or feminine?</li> <li>-Do they seek to realize or communicate themselves in terms of notions of masculinity or femininity?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.Relational:</b></p>	<p><b>The people with whom the subjects relates closely:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-With whom are they friends?</li> <li>-Male/female?</li> <li>-Age?</li> <li>-Race/ethnicity?</li> <li>-Culture/religion?</li> <li>-Socio-economic background?</li> <li>-What is their family like?</li> <li>-Are their parents their primary care-givers? (e.g. divorced, single parent, foster family, etc.)</li> <li>-Who are their siblings? What is this relationship like?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What constitutes their notion of family, e.g. how is the “extended” family viewed?</li> <li>-How do they relate to their family members?</li> <li>-Are there strong codes or rules of conduct that govern these relations?</li> <li>-What value is placed on family/family members?</li> </ul>
<b>3. Sexual</b>	<p><b>The sexual expression and orientation of the subjects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What is their sexuality? Is it realized?</li> <li>-Are they involved in any sexual or romantic relationships (or would they like to be)?</li> <li>-With whom?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Geographical</b>	<p><b>The definition of the subjects in terms of region and country:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-In what province/city/suburb do they live?</li> <li>-Do they define themselves in terms of nation?</li> <li>-If so, how and in what terms?</li> <li>-What are the references to South Africa?</li> </ul>
<b>5. Socioeconomic</b>	<p><b>The subjects’ social status and economic position:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Where do they live?</li> <li>-What is their home like?</li> <li>-What is their parents/caregivers’ occupation?</li> <li>-What school do they go to?</li> <li>-What is it like? What is the ethos/work ethic?</li> <li>-What is their lifestyle like?</li> <li>-What are their interests/hobbies?</li> <li>-What is the description of South African society (economic, political etc)?</li> </ul>
<b>6. Racial/ Ethnic</b>	<p><b>The subjects’ race (broadly defined in terms of “colour”, culture and language):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Do they define themselves in terms of a racial category? (Or do others define them in these terms e.g. the government?)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What is the importance of this racial category to them?</li> <li>-Do they engage in specific cultural activities as a family or community?</li> <li>-What language(s) do they speak?</li> </ul>
<b>7. Religious</b>	<p><b>The religious belief to which the subjects adhere:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Is there a distinct or vague adherence to a religion or set of beliefs? (Or none at all?)</li> <li>-What role do their beliefs play in their lives?</li> </ul>
<b>8. Occupational</b>	<p><b>The subjects' job (means of earning money):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What is their occupation (if relevant)?</li> <li>-What is their desired occupation (if any)?</li> </ul>
<b>9. Personal</b>	<p><b>The way in which the subjects see and understand themselves; degree of self-awareness and self-realization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What is their health (i.e. do they have any distinct affliction, disability or disease)?</li> <li>-Do they view themselves as a distinct individual, with individual desires, fears etc.?</li> <li>-Or do they see themselves as part of a collective community in relation to others?</li> <li>-Do they identify themselves in terms of the opinions of others?</li> <li>-Or do they have separate and distinct notions of who they are?</li> <li>-Have they conceptualized themselves in terms of identity at all?</li> <li>-What is the nature of this conception of themselves?</li> <li>-What is their attitude towards the future? How do they view the future circumstances that they face?</li> </ul>

### 3. 3 ISSUES ARISING OUT OF THE ANALYSIS

The main issue that I am concerned with involves what Wetherell and Potter (1992) term the ethnographic understanding of the researcher. This refers to the set of cultural assumptions and expectations that an analyst brings to the text in the process and techniques of sense making. These may be taken for granted and unexamined, in which case they need to be problematised and critically interrogated in order to avoid the imposition of a reading and interpretation on a text, which will simply replace one discourse with another. Yet, this ethnographic understanding may also be seen as a resource, in that the researcher may bring knowledge of a culture or society, for example, which could provide vital and additional insight into discursive constructions and serve to contextualize the analysis. Eyber writes that, "My being a white, middle class South African has thus contributed to an understanding of past and current cultural trends. This knowledge was drawn upon in the analysis. It does not imply a lack of analytic rigour..."(1997: 70). I echo this exact sentiment. For I too acknowledge that as a female white South African I may impose a biased analysis on the texts. However, my identity simultaneously places me in an advantageous position in that I may be able to gain insights and understandings that could be closed to someone of a different gender, nationality and race. In addition, the fact that I am aware of my potential bias has ensured a more thorough and rigorous analysis.

In other words, it is somewhat inevitable that analysts do impose a certain reading and sense of meaning onto a text, as they are also producers of discourse (Parker and Burman, 1993; Eyber, 1997; Carter, 1996). The analyst therefore, needs to be constantly reflexive and attention needs to be drawn to the constructed nature of the analysis. This is vital in order to ensure the analyst's awareness that he or she is responsible for reproducing or transforming the text through offering a reading of it (Parker and Burman, 1993: 159, Carter, 1996: xv) and to guard against the temptation to close the text off to alternative readings (Eyber, 1997: 70).

This then, is another reason for the application of the (somewhat rigid) structure that the model provides in my analysis of identity. It is hoped that through the application of these fixed and generic questions I will be able to ensure that I remain ethical, even merely through the awareness that despite this framework that the model provides, I

know that “no framework for analysis can offer a neutral, value-free description of language data for the choice of framework, its application and the analytical decisions which accompany it are also influenced by social and cultural discourses” (Carter, 1996: xv).

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## CHAPTER FOUR: BOOKS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1994

In this chapter I will first provide an analysis of the books that were published before 1994 and then provide an interpretation of that analysis. The analysis summarizes the information regarding the identity of the protagonists, which is presented under the nine headings of the identity model. For more detailed information about the specific protagonists, please refer to Appendix 2, which provides a table of all the relevant information, with direct quotations and page references. The interpretation comprises two areas of focus: the authenticity of the protagonists, and the construction of South African society. I therefore examine the presentation of the identities of the protagonists in the books in an attempt to establish their authenticity. I then examine how this authenticity constructs an image of South African society and I attempt to critique the nature of this construction.

For ease of reference, here is the list of books studied that were published before 1994:

### Published before 1994:

Beake, L. (1987) *The Strollers*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Geraghty, P. (1988) *Pig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Bregin, E. (1989) *The Kayaboeties*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Hofmeyr, D. (1990) *Red Kite In A Pale Sky*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Case, D. (1991) *92 Queens Road*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

## 4.1 ANALYSIS

### 4.1.1 GENDER

Three of the protagonists in the books published before 1994 are male and two are female. The issue of gender as such is not specifically interrogated in any of the books. In all cases the protagonists' context is fairly male-dominated and patriarchal and this is never questioned or challenged to any significant degree. The protagonists never question their own gender roles or those of others; they all seem to correspond with

what could be considered “traditional” gender roles in the context of the setting of the books. Only Charlie (*The Kayaboeties*) seems superficially to negotiate her gender identity by demonstrating a desire to be considered male; however, this desire never extends beyond what would be considered socially acceptable in her context and is never seriously negotiated or investigated in any sense.

#### 4.1.2.1 RELATIONAL: FRIENDS

The protagonists in all five books are friends or desire to be friends with children in their own socio-economic and racial group. Tension arises in two of the books (*Pig* and *The Kayaboeties*) when the white protagonists attempt to cross racial boundaries erected by apartheid and attempt to befriend black people. In both cases the white protagonists must endure the racist attitudes of other white people because of their inter-racial friendships. In *Pig* the protagonist does so at great personal cost; he is the subject of teasing and rejection by his peers. Through this experience he grows to identify with and understand the persecution that black people in South Africa suffer at the time. In *The Kayaboeties* the protagonist observes her white friend being forced to confront and overcome racist attitudes in himself (which are supposedly induced by his family) when their friends include a black teenager in their musical group. The story is resolved when both the protagonist’s racist friend and his family grow to accept the friendship. In other words, these two books represent the need for white people to overcome racism and prejudice in the context of apartheid.

#### 4.1.2.2 RELATIONAL: FAMILY

In only one of the books (*The Kayaboeties*) is the protagonist’s family presented as being unproblematic. The other four books detail the protagonists’ pain caused by their family situation—in all cases the protagonists’ biological father is absent for some reason. In *The Strollers* the protagonist’s father is deceased and because of his stepfather’s abuse he has to run away from home to live a life on the streets. In *Pig* the protagonist is depicted as coming to terms with his father’s sudden tragic death. In *Red Kite In A Pale Sky (Red Kite)* the protagonist’s father is a fisherman and seldom home. The protagonist of *92 Queen’s Road* does not know who her father is as her mother is unmarried.

#### 4.1.3 SEXUAL

There is no mention of sexuality at all in the books. The sexual identity of the protagonists is never discussed.

#### 4.1.4 GEOGRAPHICAL

Three of the books are set in the Cape Province and two in Natal. Four of the protagonists in the books do not define themselves specifically as South African. The protagonist of *92 Queen's Road* is told actively to reject defining herself as South African: "this is not our country. We don't belong here" (Case, 1991: 32). Yet in all the books reference is made to actual places within South Africa and it is made clear that the setting of all the books is South Africa.

#### 4.1.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Three of the protagonists belong to the working class; one of these three is in fact severely poverty stricken. The other two are middle class.

The books published before 1994 seem to be primarily concerned with the experiences of their protagonists living in apartheid South Africa. The apartheid society is depicted in very restricted ways, however, and apartheid is only ever explicitly mentioned in *92 Queen's Road*. The apartheid setting of the other books is evident only through fairly vague allusions and suggestions, with the exception of *Red Kite*, where there is no mention or suggestion of apartheid or any political context at all. Both *The Strollers* and *Red Kite* document the extreme hardships that the protagonists must endure because of their socio-economic circumstances. Although the disaster the protagonist of *Red Kite* faces is natural in origin, it is amplified because of his dire socio-economic situation. Beake is able to critique apartheid in *The Strollers* by emphasizing that the protagonist Johnny's situation is directly due to apartheid. Although she does not overtly criticize the government, she is still able to convey the disastrous implications and effects that apartheid has on the lives of children such as Johnny. The author of *Red Kite*, seems to want to avoid all mention of race and politics entirely; the South African situation is never a subject or concern of hers. Instead she focuses on the plot and development of the character of the protagonist alone without overtly drawing attention to the context in which these occur.

Both *Pig* and *The Kayaboeties* illustrate the social situation at the time through the attempts of their white protagonists to befriend black people and the resistance they face because of this. Both protagonists become symbols for crossing racial boundaries erected by apartheid and overcoming racism in their personal contexts. In *Pig* the protagonist's black friend and peer, Pocho, has to resist apartheid in the larger political context: "he'll have to join the struggle as soon as he's old enough" because of the "fighting, shooting, arrests" in his area (Geraghty, 1988: 137).

*92 Queens Road* is the only book studied that was published before 1994 that overtly criticizes the apartheid past of South Africa. The book examines the hardships experienced by a family oppressed by apartheid from their personal perspective and expresses the extreme hostility they feel towards white people and the political system of the country as a whole. Although the pain caused by apartheid is focused on, it is nevertheless always pitted against the characters' hope and desires for the future. The ideal future envisioned by the characters in the book is one of hope, unity, democracy and "one nation", which are contrasted with the division and destruction caused by apartheid. One character states "...if there is a way to put things straight... we will suffer as a nation—black and white together—side by side. Maybe then we will turn to each other... True democracy demands equal rights... Equal opportunities – one nation – from the people for the people." (Case, 1991: 97-98). This ideal is more reflective of the time when the book was actually written, in the early 1990's, when the issues of democracy and one nation were perhaps more salient than in the 1960's.

#### 4.1.6 RACIAL/ETHNIC

The race of the protagonists is explicitly stated or implied in all the books with the exception of *Red Kite*; where race is never mentioned in reference to any of the characters. That the protagonists of *Pig* and *The Kayaboeties* are white is highlighted through their interaction with other black characters and the resistance they face because of these inter-racial interactions. Both the protagonists of *The Strollers* and *92 Queen's Road* are coloured, a fact which is undoubtedly problematic for them. In the case of Johnny, this is evident primarily through his socio-economic situation. Attention is drawn to racial inequality in his context through the emphasis placed on the fact that the people his mother works for and the people he begs from are white,

and that white people often display aggressive and negative attitudes towards him and his friends. Kathy (of 92 *Queen's Road*) becomes aware of her identity in terms of race when she is forbidden to play with white children on a beach that has been declared "white". Her response to her being defined as "coloured" is confusion and repulsion: "I was trapped—there was no escaping it... I ran my finger in a daze up and down my arm, as if I could erase that terrible feeling of being coloured." (Case, 1991: 47). The book deals with Kathy's attempt to come to terms with her classification as coloured. It also highlights the attitudes of her family towards apartheid, and more specifically their negative and angry reactions to the behaviour of other white people.

In a more general sense, the authors of the books published before 1994 are very accurate and explicit in their depictions of racism. The use of words like "coon" and "kaffir" for example, signify a realistic portrayal of the derogatory and superior attitude of many white South Africans towards black people. Yet on the other hand, despite this verbal expression, the racism never takes a more severe and destructive form; such as violence for example. The racism is always simplistic in its manifestation and in the way in which it is overcome. Characters seem to realize the error of their ways very quickly and after not much provocation.

The two coloured children speak what is described as a "mixture of English and Afrikaans" and one white child can speak Zulu and English. All the protagonists speak English.

#### 4.1.7 RELIGIOUS

There is no specific mention of or adherence to spiritual beliefs in the lives of three of the protagonists, there is vague adherence to Christianity in the lives of the remaining two. Religion as such does not play an influential role in the lives of any of the protagonists.

#### 4.1.8 OCCUPATIONAL

None of the protagonists is employed. Only two of the protagonists mention the desire to have a job. In both cases this represents freedom from their present circumstances: in *The Strollers* Johnny desires to be a pilot because he would like to float freely in the clouds like an airplane; in *Red Kite* Lawrence decides out of necessity to support

his family after their home was destroyed by a flood.

#### 4.1.9.1 PERSONAL: DISABILITY, AFFLICTION, DISEASE

None of the protagonists has any severe disability or disease. Three of the protagonists suffer some form of affliction: one of the protagonists was physically and verbally abused (by his stepfather) and runs away from home, he sniffs thinners and begs to survive living on the streets; one protagonist is neglected by his family and has to fend for himself after his home is destroyed by a flood; one protagonist has to leave his home after the death of his father and is bullied at his new school and teased for having a black friend.

#### 4.1.9.2. PERSONAL: CONCEPTION OF OWN IDENTITY

Three of the protagonists have distinct notions of who they are as individuals and are able to conceptualize themselves and their life situations separately, showing clear development of self-awareness. The other two define themselves primarily in accordance with others' definitions of who they are.

All the protagonists have an optimistic and positive attitude towards the future. The future is portrayed as containing hope and an improvement in circumstance in all five books. Johnny, in *The Strollers*, emerges from his experience of living on the streets relatively unscathed and remarkably insightful for a child of his age. Although described as "sad", he is nevertheless hopeful, despite his hopeless circumstances. He claims, "you can only be sad for a certain time. After a while, something good *has* to happen. Doesn't it?" (Beake, 1987: 64). And despite his desperate circumstances he is never depicted as even contemplating breaking the law or doing anything remotely harmful or wrong (other than sniffing thinners). His hope for the future is also symbolized in his decision to return home to his mother. Michael, in *Pig*, learns to accept that "life never gets any easier" (Geraghty 1988: 137), but hopes for "peace" in the future. Through his experiences in *Red Kite*, Lawrence finds the strength within himself to persevere and becomes completely self-reliant. He learns compassion for his family members and that "life is not... simple and easy" (Hofmeyer, 1990: 98). He assumes responsibility for his future and the well being of his family. Similarly, both *The Kayaboeties* and *92 Queen's Road* end with an improvement in circumstances for the protagonists and have an optimistic tone regarding the future.

## 4.2 INTERPRETATION

### 4.2.1 AUTHENTICITY OF THE PROTAGONISTS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the period of adolescence is seen as vital in identity development, in that during this time individuals grapple with issues and attempt to come to terms with conceptions of themselves in relation to society. As Erikson said of identity development, it is a socially embedded process, and during adolescence particularly, individuals are in a time of transition (1968). Thus often previously unexamined issues come to the fore and are subject to interrogation as adolescents attempt to understand themselves and their contexts. Sexuality, for example, can become vitally important to adolescents as they attempt to define themselves in relation to others. It is interesting therefore, that despite its importance to many adolescents, sexuality is never mentioned in any way in these books that are specifically written for adolescents and which have adolescent protagonists. This complete absence of sexuality is marked and as such contributes to a definite construction of South Africa. However, much depends on the authors' intent, but obviously it is impossible to provide an unequivocal explanation for the lack of focus on sexuality without the authors' express opinion. I will therefore explore several possible reasons for the complete lack of focus not only on sexuality, but also on gender, religion, occupation and disability in the books published before 1994.

The most obvious reason perhaps, is that the authors simply wanted to provide a more concentrated focus on the main concerns in their books, which have nothing to do with these aspects of identity. Unless sexuality, for example, is the specific focus and subject of the books, it could complicate and obscure the real issues that the authors are attempting to raise. Sexuality is often a controversial topic and by avoiding it completely the authors can avoid controversy and criticism from all arenas (government, parents, publishers, readers) and ensure the safe and guaranteed publication of their books. Another speculation is that South African society could be considered fairly conservative in comparison to other Western nations at the time when the books were published and because of this an avoidance of the topic altogether may purely have been easier for the authors. The need to avoid controversy

could also be the reason why the authors avoided any mention of issues related to gender and religion, and why none of the protagonists suffer from any serious debilitating disease or disability. The books may have been purposefully kept as mainstream as possible in consideration of readership and assumed status quo. They may also reflect the authors' own beliefs and views. That religion plays no role in the lives of the protagonists may reflect the secular standpoint of the authors and also the generally secular nature of the society in which they are written. It certainly constructs an image of a society in which religion or religious beliefs are not of primary significance and play no real role. However, in terms of the underlying ideology of the books, it is fair to say that whilst the values and morals espoused in the books may be universal to a great deal of cultures and faiths, their expression is from a distinctly (traditionally Christian) western viewpoint. None of the dilemmas the protagonists face are due to a Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist or traditional African belief framework and worldview, for example. None of the questions posed are the result of crises or situations caused and approached from any other system or conception of reality. The reason for this, again, could be simply that the authors are writing from their own perspectives and that the books reflect their ideology.

Authorial intent aside, one can probably assume that the reason the characters never define themselves in terms of future occupations or show evidence of having given their futures serious thought in concrete terms could be an attempt to portray realistically the fact that adolescents may not be overly concerned with future occupations or employment, but are more concerned with the issues facing them at present. (The protagonists do display a very distinct attitude to the future, however, which will be explored in more detail at a later stage.)

It is possible therefore that the authors have avoided issues related to sexuality, gender, disability and religion because these issues are not the focus of the books. The authors seem to have chosen rather to develop the identity of the protagonists in relation to their socio-economic and political context of apartheid South Africa. All of the protagonists have to overcome some sort of crisis or setback as a result of this context. Nevertheless none of the protagonists grapple with issues (related to sexuality or gender for example) that may define them as social "deviants" or place them outside of the societal "norms" of the books. This could imply a desire on the part of the

authors to keep the protagonists and the books as “mainstream” as possible. This in itself could imply a context in which it is considered unacceptable to deviate from the traditional white western Christian framework the books represent. It could also imply ignorance or even insensitivity on the part of the authors towards people who may be outside what they consider to be traditional “norms”. Again, however, this is only a speculation and what must be given precedence is what the books clearly attempt to address and what their explicit concerns are.

All the books published before 1994 seem to be primarily concerned with apartheid South Africa, and if not explicit about this fact, attempt to detail the trials and suffering of the individual protagonists in this society. Only Hofmeyr does not specifically mention race or politics. Whilst the setting of *Red Kite* is stated as being South Africa, the characters and plot could be located anywhere: the book is in no way dependent on the South African context for meaning. But race particularly, and the divisions and conflict that apartheid brought to all spheres of society regarding the racial classification of people, is highlighted particularly in *92 Queen's Road*, *Pig*, and *The Kayaboeties*. These three books specifically highlight the need to overcome racism and prejudice.

A predominant sentiment in *Pig* and *The Kayaboeties* is the need for white people to embrace tolerance and acceptance of black people, and by so doing challenge existing and established racist mindsets in South Africa. As such, they seem to espouse tolerance and equality. The books always depict white people as those who are racist in the books, and do not attempt to consider or depict the racism that may be directed towards white people at this time. Whilst this could be viewed as biased, the reason for this is probably that the authors are writing for a perceived white audience and are advocating confronting negative racist attitudes specifically in white people. In other words, the books represent the liberal white stance and signal an attempt to demystify the “other” in the face of a time of inevitable political change. Although this attempt in itself is useful, it is nonetheless indicative of the way in which the black people in the stories are generally stereotypically depicted in these two books. In the case of *The Kayaboeties*, the stereotyping of the black characters could be due to the generally superficial way the characters are depicted in the book as a whole. The racism itself is realistically portrayed, as it is in *Pig*, considering the context of the

books and the fact that they are written for adolescents. Although the racism never escalates into serious violence, there is no attempt to gloss over it and it is detailed in both books in all its ugliness. For example, in both books words and phrases are used to refer to black people which are today, and even then, would have been generally considered to be very harsh and offensive in the South African context: in *The Kayaboeties*, words such as, “muntusong”, “coon”, “monkey language” and “kaffirtown” are used, and in *Pig*, “kaffirboetie”, “coons” and “Afs” are examples of this racist rhetoric. The realistic portrayal of racism is perhaps particularly characteristic of *Pig*, where the character has to endure racism at great personal cost and where his suffering is described in a very honest and heartfelt way. But the racism is largely overcome and the racist white characters realize the error of their ways by the end of both books. The resolution of *Pig* is perhaps more feasible and realistic than that of *The Kayaboeties*. In *The Kayaboeties* the previously very racist white character becomes great friends with the black character who was the subject of his abuse. The reasons for his change of attitude are not sufficiently provided or explored; it would appear that he simply realized that his black friend, “can’t help the colour he was born” with (27). Whilst of course this may be possible, in reality entrenched racist mindsets are not always so easily challenged and simply changed as the authors suggest in the books. The above quote from *The Kayaboeties* is also a perfect demonstration of an attempt at a depiction of colour-blind non-racialism, where race is viewed as a morally irrelevant category, defining people in terms for which they are not responsible and cannot help (Eyber, 1997; Goldberg, 1993).

Yet despite the apparent emphasis on non-racism and non-racialism and the attempt to demystify black people in these books, the black characters nevertheless remain very much the “other” in both of the stories; we never gain insight into their perspective of the events or are overly familiarized with their person or character. The black people are symbolic representations of the culmination of the negative attitudes of white South Africans and the need for white people to change. Whilst these attitudes are identified as destructive and wrong, the black people are still presented as passive observers to the actions of white people, they never express their feelings or point of view as clearly as the white characters do. This is particularly true of *The Kayaboeties*, where the black character has virtually no voice at all, and for no apparent or clearly

explained reason seems to desire the company of racist white people who behave in very prejudiced ways towards him. The reason for this could be the fact that the white South African authors have no real knowledge of or insight into what it truly feels like to be a black person living in South Africa at that time and therefore do not even attempt to portray the perspective of the black characters. However, in the case of *The Kayaboeties*, this could be reflective of the way in which all the characters are generally superficially portrayed. This criticism is not applicable to *Pig*, however, where the white characters are represented in a very in-depth and complex way.

But whatever the reasons, the fact remains that despite the apparent attempt to promote equality and the noble sentiments these books represent, the portrayal of the black characters reveals that complete equality is never suggested or advocated. The “tolerance” that is proposed in these books is very one-sided and seems to denote acceptance without any challenge to the actual status quo. The white characters may confront their racism and become aware of the evils of prejudice, but there is no real fruit that is borne of this; for example they never attempt to understand the true perspective or reality of the black characters or make any sacrifice in combating the racism. These books therefore, would appear to demonstrate the way in which the possible progressive effects of the non-racialism and colour-blindness are defused through over simplification of the nature of non-racialism, resulting in a lack of commitment to ensure equal status amongst all South Africans and the disregarding and devaluing of black experiences (Eyber 1997). For the books do not to give due consideration to the implications of desegregation, nor do they apply thorough scrutiny to the effects of the way South Africans’ identities are so dominated by race, but the simplistic way in which they approach non-racialism and colour-blindness seems to provide a justification for current unjust social and educational practices to continue (Eyber, 1997). Thus despite their obviously good intentions, seen in the most negative light, the books may represent, as Roux suggests, a form of “a reinscription of literary apartheid”, in that the black voice, the voice of the “other”, is never heard or even considered (2000: 246).

However, perhaps the apartheid context and the genre of the books limited the extent to which the authors could truly explore and confront racism in South Africa, and therefore they were somewhat constrained in their goal of writing to challenge the

racism of whites in a way that would be both accessible and entertaining for adolescents. They certainly manage to achieve this goal, but because they become vehicles for the expression of the ideology of the authors and their intentions, the authenticity of the protagonists is at times undermined. This results in the characters and plots occasionally seeming very constructed and two-dimensional.

While the two books discussed above may represent an expression of “white guilt” as liberal white authors express their anti-government stance and attempt to rectify the racist attitudes in other whites, the author of *92 Queen's Road* offers a somewhat different perspective from a coloured author. As mentioned, this book highlights the attempt of the coloured protagonist to come to terms with her racial classification as coloured. She sees this as a negative label and despite the fact that her family is negative and racist towards white people, she never really challenges either the racist label she is given or these racist attitudes. The racism is realistically portrayed, however, as is the setting of the book in apartheid South Africa. In this book we view racism from more than one perspective and are given significant insight into the effect it has on the lives of individuals. It may be however, that the overt criticism of the government and South African white people in general is possible because the author relies on the fact that the book is set in the 1960's. It is unlikely that in the early 1990's this book would have been censored by the ruling National Party especially because Case is not criticizing the present day government and situation in the country but is commenting on past history. This history would probably seem very remote to the present day adolescent readers of the book, a fact of which Case would undoubtedly be aware. Case relies heavily on dramatic irony in contrasting the oppression of apartheid with the “future” hopes of the characters. Thus the overall tone and message of the book is optimistic and happy, despite its apartheid setting. Whilst it is possible that this literary technique is precisely what makes the reality of apartheid accessible to adolescent readers, the way in which the characters imagine and rely on a future of a united democratic South Africa to resolve their present pain is improbable. It is highly unlikely that the characters would be able to concretely imagine “one nation” and democracy amid the escalation of apartheid oppression characteristic of this time in South Africa's history. Whilst this contrasting of past and future does not necessarily undermine the authenticity of the protagonist or the depiction of the injustice and oppression caused by apartheid, it does reveal a very

conscious effort on the part of Case to highlight the importance of unity and the need for “one nation” at that time in South Africa’s history. Therefore the present time in which she is writing, the time leading up to the first democratic election, is as much a focus of hers as the 1960’s apartheid past. For the concepts of “one nation” and “rainbow nation”, (as discussed in Chapter Two) are certainly more representative of the quest for national identity occurring during the time when the book was actually written. This focus highlights the belief that such nationalism can “restore dignity and extinguish humiliation” (Adam, 1996: 127), especially when contrasted with such an accurate and heartfelt portrayal of the humiliation and pain caused by apartheid in the book.

In other words, despite the sometimes problematic ways in which race is dealt with in these stories, race is obviously seen as an important issue and an attempt is made to openly interrogate and explore race and issues related to race in South Africa at the time. Similarly, the suffering that the protagonists endure as a result of apartheid and their socio-economic and family situation is realistically portrayed. Although this suffering is also presented as due to the family environment of the protagonists, this environment in itself is largely portrayed as due to socio-economic situation. As mentioned, apartheid society is depicted in very restricted ways, which could be an attempt to avoid censorship. A more probable reason for this could be that the authors do not wish to dwell on the harsh realities of the apartheid system too much, but construct worlds for their protagonists which allow for the promotion of their seemingly positive ideologies and values. It is highly improbable for example, that a streetchild such as Johnny in *The Strollers* would escape unscathed from his experience of living on the street during apartheid South Africa, and then decide to return to an abusive home. The South Africa constructed in the books is not an honest reflection of the society; the real issues of the time are never confronted or deconstructed. For example, there is never any portrayal of the political violence, faction fighting between political groups vying for power or deconstruction and in-depth exploration of the renegotiation of racial identities and racial relations that were symptomatic of the time. Yet as mentioned in reference to *Pig* and *The Kayaboeties*, perhaps this is because of the genre of the books themselves. The authors may be attempting to write in such a way as to make apartheid accessible to adolescents. Obviously the full horrors of apartheid would be very difficult for

adolescents to accept and understand. In addition, these are intended to be works of fiction, not political exposes. Thus despite being explicit about the context of the books, the authors nevertheless have to write in an entertaining way. This too would restrict the nature of the depiction of apartheid in the books. It is possible that the pain and hardship that many experienced during apartheid is conveyed in other ways in these books. For example, the pain that the protagonists face as a result of their family situations in *Strollers*, *Pig*, *Red Kite* and *92 Queen's Rd* is detailed in a very convincing way. The fact that in all these cases the protagonists have no father or father figure is notable, and this could signify an attempt to portray metaphorically the symbolic "absence" of the care, protection and security that a democratic government is ideally supposed to provide, and which obviously the apartheid government did not.

Nevertheless, what by far dominates any analysis of the way in which South Africa is portrayed and constructed in the books is the protagonists' attitudes towards the future. As was discussed in reference to *92 Queen's Rd*, although the South Africa in which the protagonists exist is a harsh place that provides no solution to the hardship and trials that it induces, all the protagonists remain hopeful and optimistic about their futures. Both the protagonists of *Pig* and *Red Kite* actually acknowledge that "life never gets any easier" (Geraghty, 137), and "life is not... simple and easy" (Hofmeyer, 98), but they nevertheless seem to continue to believe that "after a while, something good *has* to happen." (Beake, 64). In fact, all of the protagonists manage to persevere and overcome despite overwhelming odds and indications that things may never improve for them. A predominant theme in all of the books is perseverance and unflinching hope in the face of hardship, spurred on by the belief in a better future to come. The characters often react to their contexts in an unrealistic way; they have great insight and seem to find a solution to their complex problems very easily (as in *Kayaboeties*). All of the protagonists display great moral fortitude, regardless of circumstance or context; none of them commit crime; all of them are loyal, faithful and loving towards their families and friends; all of them develop strength and self-awareness as a result of their experiences.

Thus, through the protagonists, the authors seem to be providing examples for their adolescent readers, and the way in which this is done gives them a certain didactic tone. Similarly, there is an almost fervent artificiality to the happy endings of the

books, which may be indicative of the authors' attempts to instil some sense of optimism and hope into the South African readers of these books. These readers would be reading about the protagonists in the time leading up to the election, a time when perhaps optimism and hope in the face of possible civil war did indeed seem necessary. Although one might argue that the adolescent readers of these books may be unaware of the political context, the authors certainly would be. And because of this obvious authorial interest and concern, the overall didactic effect undermines any attempt at a realistic and effective portrayal of the problems and lives of the protagonists in some of the books. A realistic portrayal of the identity of the protagonists is achieved in the cases of *Pig* and *Red Kite*, where despite a relatively optimistic conclusion to both of the books, the protagonists' problems are not easily or clearly resolved at all and there is some degree of ambiguity that remains in relation to the future. In other words, it is clear that there is a very specific construction of South Africa in these books that were written during apartheid. This construction will be summarized and discussed in comparison to the constructions of South Africa evident in the post-apartheid books in Chapter Six.

## CHAPTER FIVE: BOOKS PUBLISHED DURING AND AFTER

1994

This chapter follows the same format as Chapter Four: I first analyse the books that were published during and after 1994 and then provide an interpretation of the analysis.

For ease of reference, here is the list of books studied that were published during and after 1994:

### Published after 1994:

Bailey, D. (1994) *Thatha*. Cape Town: Heinemann.

Robson, J. (1994) *Don't Panic Mechanic*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Smith, G. (1996) *Wheels*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Saunders, M. (1998) *Dear Ludwig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Britten, S. (2000) *The Worst Year of My Life So Far*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

## 5.1 ANALYSIS

### 5.1.1 GENDER

In the books published after 1994, three of the protagonists are male and two are female. The issue of gender is never specifically interrogated: the protagonists never question or negotiate their own gender roles or those of others. The contexts of the books are male-dominated and this is not significantly explored or challenged.

Although the male-dominated context of *Wheels* is briefly questioned when a female classmate of the protagonist questions the notion that masculinity is linked to sport in her school, this is merely a form of tokenism; the question is raised but never explored and the entire book actually reflects the view in question: the male protagonist proves his worth through sport. Gender seems to have been given more focus in *Dear Ludwig*, where a principal male character adopts a female persona and is thought to be female by the other characters. The reasons for why he chooses to present himself as a woman are not fully explored, but the fact that he had an unhappy childhood seems to be the author's explanation for this. Moreover, this character murders young children

and is thus portrayed as a criminal deviant, thereby negating any serious attempt to question or investigate traditional gender roles as presented in the books.

#### 5.1.2.1 RELATIONAL: FRIENDS

In four of the books the protagonists form friendships with people from different cultures and racial backgrounds (the exception is *Don't Panic Mechanic*). In only one of the books are close friendships formed with people from a different socio-economic background, however. Otherwise it appears that common interests are the main determining factor in the formation of friendships. Much emphasis is placed on these friendships; they are in all cases depicted as being central to the protagonists' identity and are of great importance to the protagonist. In fact, the plot and entire meaning of the stories hinge upon these friendships.

In no instance does any serious obstacle or tension arise in these stories because of race as such; in other words, because of different cultural biases or beliefs, different worldviews or prejudices and assumptions about one another. Whilst tensions do occur, they have nothing to do with race or culture. This is because although the characters involved in these friendships are said to be different colours (i.e. black or white), they nevertheless appear to be identical in every other way. They may have a different socio-economic status (as in *Thatha*) or different religions and ages (*Dear Ludwig*), or have all these things and much more in common (*Wheels, The Worst Year of My Life So Far*), but they never display vastly different worldviews or characteristics because of their culture or race. It seems therefore that race is portrayed as mere outward appearance and as such is irrelevant to these friendships. The influence of colour or race on personalities and interactions with others is downplayed (if not completely ignored), and thus the books present an image of characters who are "colour blind". Indeed, not one character is ever accused of racism; protagonists are active in espousing their "anti-racist" and "non-racist" beliefs.

#### 5.1.2.2. RELATIONAL: FAMILY

Two of the protagonists have a stable family situation, living with both of their parents in a caring environment (*The Worst Year of My Life So Far* and *Thatha*). In fact the family situation in both these books is depicted as being progressive and ideal in some

sense. The children communicate to their parents as adults and there is very little tension but a great deal of support in these relationships. Caring environments are evident in all three of the other books as well, but in these books the protagonist lives without his or her father, (because two of the fathers in question are deceased and one disappeared) and issues arise for the protagonist because of this fact. These issues seem to be resolved by the end of the books, however.

### 5.1.3 SEXUAL

There is no mention of sexuality at all in two of the books. In the other three, two male protagonists are depicted as being attracted to girls, one of whom has a girlfriend of a different race and culture. The remaining protagonist flippantly questions her own sexuality; by saying she “hopes” she is not a lesbian. But this never becomes a serious issue or is focused on specifically; the comment actually reveals a lack of sexual awareness and represents the superficial and limited approach to the issue of sexuality in the book.

### 5.1.4 GEOGRAPHICAL

Two books are set in the Gauteng, two in Kwazulu-Natal (Durban and Pietermaritzburg) and one in the Western Cape (the Cape Flats). Two of the books make very specific reference to South Africa in terms of politics and society, dealing with actual events and situations. The other three books do make reference to South African things and situations, but in more vague and veiled terms. It is made clear that all the books are set in South Africa.

### 5.1.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Four of the protagonists lead middle class lifestyles; only one is depicted as working class and poor.

The context of South African society in which these books are set is fairly evident in all five of the books. Both *Thatha* and *The Worst Year of My Life So Far (Worst Year)* are overt about the specific South African context of the books; both these books contain many references to actual South African political events and things that would be well known to a South African audience. The other three books do make reference to South Africa, but in less specific ways. The narratives studied all emphasize what

may be “socially shared” (Sampson, 1993: 123) in the society, by making specific reference to things that are considered to be typically South African. For example, *Thatha* mentions Rooibos tea, *Don't Panic Mechanic* mentions the taxi industry, *Wheels* mentions Bafana Bafana, the national soccer team, *Worst Year* mentions the rainbow nation. These are just a few examples, many such references exist.

However, although all the books contain references to things that are typically South African, only *Thatha* is completely reliant on the South African context for the plot and meaning of the story. Despite the fact that the other books may be fairly explicit about the fact that the protagonists are South Africans living in South Africa, the plots and the characters themselves are in fact completely independent of this context and could be of any nationality living anywhere in the western world. Even the black characters display no specific cultural views or behaviour that distinguishes them as South African. Thus it would appear that despite the apparent attempt to draw attention to things South African, this is only done at a very superficial level. The socio-economic reality of the protagonists who supposedly live in South Africa during and after 1994 is only expressed very superficially; the books are filled with what could be termed South African “décor” but they never depict or interrogate the real cultural, political and social issues and characteristics that are definitive of the country at the time the books were published.

In fact, the authors seem actively to avoid dealing with these real issues, preferring to present a watered down version of the socio-economic and political situation in South Africa. For example, the time leading up to the first democratic general election in the country and the end of apartheid is cryptically referred to in *Don't Panic Mechanic* as “the Great Change”, even though the book is set specifically in this time. There are some references to negative elements in South Africa in *Dear Ludwig* and *Worst Year*, but these are brief and portrayed more as an expression of the individual protagonists' personal distress and negativity towards life in general than as representative of the society. What by far dominates any negative references, such as to crime or the economy for example, is the overwhelming optimism and positive sentiment about the country clearly expressed in these books.

### 5.1.6 RACIAL/ETHNIC

In the books studied during and after 1994 three of the protagonists are white, one is black and one is coloured. But in only one of the books (*Worst Year*) are people viewed and defined distinctly in racial terms. Much emphasis is placed on the multi-racial environment of the protagonist's school and nature of her friendships. Otherwise in the other four books, race as such is not directly focused on, in that the characters' race is not explicitly defined and explained. Emphasis is placed on the multiracial friendships and associations in these books, however. Whilst the race of the protagonist and his family in *Don't Panic Mechanic* isn't ever specifically defined, they do display negative attitudes towards white people: "that's the trouble with white people, you can't trust them really" (Robson, 1994: 3). This and other similar examples suggest the situation of a coloured family living in a society divided by apartheid.

All the protagonists speak English; the white protagonist and his entire family of *Thatha* speak Zulu fluently as well and the coloured protagonist speaks a mixture of English and Afrikaans.

### 5.1.7 RELIGIOUS

There is no specific or notable adherence to religion or spiritual beliefs in any of the books. Whilst reference is made to a Christian background and vague belief in Christianity in four of the books (for example, church, the bible and praying is mentioned), religion as such does not play an influential role in the lives of the protagonists. In *Thatha* the protagonist's father is described as a "rebellious" priest, but the protagonist himself does not demonstrate any marked spiritual belief.

### 5.1.8 OCCUPATIONAL

Only one of the protagonists makes specific mention of a desired future profession. Two other protagonists express a desire to find a job in order to earn money for their families. The entire plot of *Don't Panic Mechanic* actually revolves around the protagonist's attempt to earn money for his family. He does not attend school and begs for money, but is eventually offered a job as a taxi "hopper" (a taxi driver's assistant).

#### 5.1.9.1 PERSONAL: DISABILITY, AFFLICTION, DISEASE

None of the protagonists suffer from disease. Three of the protagonists have disabilities and afflictions: one protagonist has squint eyes and a below average IQ, one has a bad stutter and one has a rheumatic heart condition and was sexually abused. However none of the protagonists are severely restricted or irrevocably affected by these conditions.

#### 5.1.9.2 PERSONAL: CONCEPTION OF OWN IDENTITY

Four of the protagonists develop their sense of self and conception of identity quite clearly, demonstrating distinct notions of who they are and revealing a notably increased sense of self-awareness. Only the protagonist in *Thatha* is not portrayed as being significantly self-reflexive, and continues to define himself in accordance with his parents' conceptions of reality.

Nevertheless, all the protagonists display an optimistic and positive attitude towards the future, which is portrayed as containing hope and an improvement in circumstances for the protagonists in all five books. In fact a prominent theme that recurs in all of the books studied is one of perseverance through difficulties and belief in the potential good that the future holds. This sentiment is particularly strong in *Don't Panic*. This hope for the future and belief in the possibility of change for the better is personified in the life of the protagonist. He manages to achieve his long awaited goal despite his personal setbacks and disability through hard work and perseverance. The value of hard work and persistence is reinforced strongly in this book, suggesting that whilst the South Africa depicted does contain obstacles, (which can be of a personal nature in addition to those posed because of apartheid), they can be overcome if one has "the right kind of spirit" (Robson, 1994: 150) and if one is willing to do honest hard work. A similar message is evident in *Wheels*. In this book the protagonist is forced to overcome his personal setbacks to prove himself and obtain his goals. This he is able to do, through commitment to the goals, honest hard work and perseverance, despite the numerous setbacks he encounters on his path to success. *Thatha* expresses an unfailing hope in the good that the future of South Africa holds for all, illustrated in the comment "perhaps in the New South Africa even animals won't be abused" (Bailey, 1994:132).

## 5.2. INTERPRETATION

### 5.2.1 AUTHENTICITY OF THE PROTAGONISTS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

As in the books published before 1994, sexuality, gender, religion, disability and occupations are not given much focus. Although there are brief references that may indicate the interrogation of gender roles or issues, this is never done to any serious extent. Where any spiritual or religious belief is manifest, it is done so in a very general way and the specific religion or belief is never detailed or elaborated on. Sexuality is also never focused on particularly, and whilst the sexuality of the protagonists may be mentioned, it is never portrayed as being vital to the identity of the protagonists. Sexuality as such is never interrogated, issues relating to sexual identity or the issues of sexuality in general are never explored in any of the books. As mentioned in the previous section, this is interesting because of the age group for which the books are written and marketed; young adults are typically known to be grappling with identity issues and attempting to understand and come to terms with both their gender and their sexuality in particular (Druker, 1996). However, the reasons that were explored in the previous chapter could be applied to these books too, but most importantly the lack of focus on these issues allows for a more concentrated focus on the issues with which the books are primarily occupied.

As mentioned in the analysis, perhaps the most prominent theme in all of the books is the message of perseverance through difficulties and an emphasis on hope for the future. The setbacks and obstacles that the protagonists have to endure and persevere through are largely realistically portrayed. These obstacles take different forms: in *Don't Panic Mechanic*, the socio-economic hardships of the protagonist and his family are highlighted in great depth and with honesty and realism; in *Wheels, Worst Year* and *Dear Ludwig* we gain insight into the isolation the protagonists feel, perhaps as they attempt to negotiate their adolescent identity crises and answer the question of "Who am I?", highlighted by Erikson as particular to this stage of identity development (1968). However, despite the convincing way in which the difficulties of the protagonists are portrayed, the simplistic way in which the protagonists overcome

their problems does to some extent undermine the depiction of the problems themselves, and certainly points to a very conscious construction. The message of “success through perseverance and hard work” seems to construct a South Africa where this is indeed possible; where opportunities are available and goals attainable regardless of who you are and what holds you back, if you are willing to persist and work honestly. This is particularly characteristic of *Don't Panic*; where the protagonist is able to overcome the pain his disability and the family's financial problems cause him, through searching for and finding an honest job. Throughout the book, the protagonist's mother repeatedly emphasizes the family's values: “We De Jonghs, we always do our work with grace and dignity” (44), which the protagonist seems desperate to put into practice. Vital to this ideology of overcoming obstacles through hard work evident in the books published during and after 1994, is the unflinching hope in the good that the future of South Africa holds for all, as is illustrated in *Thatha*, “perhaps in the New South Africa even animals won't be abused” (Bailey, 1994: 132). This message reflects an obvious optimism and sense of the “ideal” that the authors of these books are attempting to instil in the youth of the country. They seem to desire to enable the adolescents who read these books to believe that they are indeed able to endure and overcome whatever difficulties may befall them. They must just follow the example of the protagonists and *believe* that the future is promising and be willing to work hard in order to attain their goals and overcome their problems.

Whilst this may seem to be an admirable attempt, it contains many problematic oversimplifications. Firstly, this message of “success through honest hard work” and overcoming obstacles through having “the right kind of spirit” (Robson, 150) reflects typically western cultural values and ideology. The books make no reference to and demonstrate no other cultural understandings of “success” and suggest no other possible ways to approach problems other than from this white western cultural framework. Obviously this could be because the authors themselves operate from within this framework and write from the perspective of their own worldviews without claiming or intending to do otherwise. However, the fact that the books do attempt to portray characters of many cultures and seem consciously to promote and value tolerance and multiculturalism does make the limited perspective of the books questionable. For the authors themselves implicitly contradict what they appear to be promoting. Secondly, the depiction of the disabilities of the protagonists as well as the

way in which this suffering is overcome is very simplistic in nature. This denies the experiences of those who truly do have debilitating disabilities and ignores the overwhelming suffering of many South Africans, for whom the future is not so bright and therefore for whom “having the right kind of spirit” must seem meaningless. This is particularly evident in *Thatha* and *Don't Panic*, where despite the attempt at a realistic and honest portrayal of the suffering and problems facing the South African adolescent characters in the books, what by far overshadows the realism is the positive and hopeful sentiments which dominate throughout the books. These upbeat messages and values promoted in the books cannot allow for a true depiction of the real aspects of South African society; in other words, a depiction that explores not only the good and positive elements of society but also the negative, unfair, unjust and terrible elements. There is no real attempt to honestly focus on and deconstruct anything of this nature. This is a clear indication that despite the supposed realistic contemporary setting of South Africa in the books, the setting is in fact merely a construction of the authors' imaginations and in no way a true depiction of reality.

This construction of South African society is also evident in the way in which the books draw attention to what is specific and particular to South Africa. The authors seem to be attempting to create a sense of commonality and unity through what is socially shared, which possibly reveals an attempt to create an image of a united South African nation (Sampson, 1993). Yet the brief mention of things that are typically South African merely provides the books with an *appearance* of reflecting South African society accurately. No honest or in-depth investigation or interrogation of the real issues facing South African adolescents is provided in any of the books. In *Don't Panic*, for example, the author makes veiled references to the fact that the book is set during the time directly leading up to the first democratic election in South Africa, without actually explicitly stating or detailing the fact. An example of this is the protagonist's description of the time: “Those were strange weeks...there was this feeling of excitement, like something was about to happen. Funny that...Big Change was coming...” (99). Robson never elaborates on this or explains the “excitement” or “Change” in any greater detail.

Again, as suggested in Chapter Four, the fact that the authors are writing for adolescents specifically does limit the depiction of the negative elements of South

African society. The books are written for the entertainment of adolescents and must also be accessible to the adolescent readers, which could restrict a truly honest representation. *Dear Ludwig*, for example, is primarily a murder mystery that attempts to appeal to adolescents through the protagonist's adolescent angst. Although the book does emphasize the South African setting of the book and draws attention particularly to multi-cultural friendships, it makes no overt mention of concerning itself specifically with issues relevant to South Africa. This is not true of *Thatha*, however, whose plot is directly aimed at highlighting issues related to post-apartheid South Africa. It deals with some fairly shocking issues, such as incest, rape, torture and violent murder, yet the way in which the characters approach and overcome their problems nevertheless undermines the problems themselves and contributes to the generally superficial and two-dimensional nature of the protagonist and constructed context of South Africa in the book. And of course, it is important to bear in mind that there have been books of fiction published specifically for adolescents set in South Africa that *do* deal with the negative elements of society in a very honest, realistic and successful way. For example, *Who Killed Jimmy Valentine?* (Williams, 1997), a book that was not analysed for the purposes of this research, does indeed do just that. It explores the violence and crime due to rival taxi companies in Cape Town in a very honest and meaningful way. The result is undeniably more authentic and credible; the book lacks the patronizing didactic nature of those which make a claim to be depicting reality but in fact distort and construct it in order to promote their ideologies. Books like *Who Killed Jimmy Valentine?*, which realistically reflect the realities of the South African context, are by far the exception in books of this category, however.

Another prominent aspect of the books analysed above is the emphasis on inter-cultural friendships and relationships. The authors make a concerted effort to ensure us of the fact that the protagonists are "colour blind"; the different race and culture of their friends are never an issue or cause of contention at all. The protagonist of *Thatha*, Mark, appears to symbolize this belief in "colour-blindness"; evident in the comment that he makes to his black friend, "I honestly forget you're black" (Bailey, 1994: 99) and when he says of his black girlfriend: "Thatha's colour has never been an issue for me" (99). As discussed in Chapter Two, this sentiment of "colour blindness" is not entirely unproblematic and the above comments, whilst appearing to advocate non-racism, can simultaneously be viewed as an illustration of the more

negative nuances of so-called colour-blindness. The protagonist of *Thatha* seems to imply that it is a good thing that his friends' "blackness" has been forgotten; he sees them as equals because he doesn't see his friend as black anymore. Thus despite appearing to be non-racist, this sentiment is actually merely re-enforcing the "othering" process: "you are not my 'other' as long as you behave so much like me that I forget that you are different to me". It is interesting too that it is the white protagonist who can "forget" colour so easily; it is perhaps unlikely that his black friend, who would undoubtedly face constant reminders of the way his "colour" determines his reality and defines his existence in South Africa, could so easily forget his own "blackness". Indeed, the racially privileged are usually ignorant of these privileges and unaware of how racialized their lives actually are. (Steyn, 1997; Hyde, 1995).

Thus in not one book are the characters portrayed as vastly different in cultural interests and beliefs to their friends of different races, but nor do the friendships they form even acknowledge or celebrate these differences. This reveals an active attempt to espouse non-racialism and "colour-blindness" in the stories. By downplaying differences and highlighting similarities the authors are attempting to create an image of harmony, unity and equality in the South African society, and as such the books seem to contribute to a nation-building attempt. Whilst this may seem like a noble liberal democratic attempt on behalf of the authors, in reality it has many negative nuances and could be seen to be quite destructive. For this "blindness" to colour is also blindness to culture; the characters may be different colours but they all espouse a white westernized worldview. All of the black characters are moulded in terms of the typical white western view of the individual, and are only depicted as being "equal" to the white characters because they are the same as them. Whatever the reasons for this, it is highly problematic. The objectors of "colour-blindness" argue that for true equality and unity to exist, it is vital for people to not only become conscious of race, but to actively examine and interrogate racial constructions and how they have influenced and continue to influence our society (Eyber, 1997; Biko, 1978; Steyn, 1997). The rainbow nation discourse is intended to signify the importance of each culture in its own right and to celebrate the diversity that exists within the country. But the books present an image of the rainbow where all the colours are subsumed into one; cultural differences are never explored or even

mentioned, the multiculturalism that is mentioned and upheld is only for appearance's sake. Thus the books could certainly be viewed as ethnocentric and biased, as there is no real attempt to renegotiate the racist racial identities prescribed by apartheid, merely pretence of doing so. They actually demonstrate the way ethnic and other identities are subordinated in the attempt to create a national identity, which is the very reason many analysts are critical of the nation-building process (Baines, 1997: 2; Adams 1996: 142; Van den Berghe, 1990).

The question of whether or not these close, meaningful inter-racial friendships occur with such frequency in South Africa today is itself debatable. Unfortunately the legacy of apartheid's forced separation of people of different races is still largely a reality and the nation is still generally divided along racial and socio-economic lines, and the reality of grossly unequal life chances still remains (Steyn, 1996: 112). It is therefore unlikely that these friendships are as common and frequent in occurrence as the books would have us believe. Of course such friendships do exist, but undoubtedly not without issues arising due to different cultural influences and not without a great deal of openness, negotiation and understanding. This however, is precisely what these books lack. This unrealistic portrayal undermines the real inter-racial friendships that do exist, by undermining the dynamics that would most certainly come into play in friendships between adolescents of different races in the real context of South African society, with all the pressures and struggles that this society presents. This in turn undermines the adolescents themselves, as it denies their ability to effectively deal with these dynamics and to form and negotiate deep, close complex relationships in the face of such pressure. The books thus seem to represent an "imaginative creation of a new form of consciousness and way of life" (Steyn, 1998: 111), as they bear very little relation to reality in their portrayal of multi-cultural interaction and friendships.

That the authors are attempting to construct an "ideal" of South African society is evident not only through the multi-cultural friendships which are characterized by a lack of conflict, but through the depictions of the family environments of the protagonists. Unhappy family situations are not a marked feature of these books, and in general, despite the detailing of financial problems for example, there is evidence of care and a relatively protective stable family environment in all of the books.

Indeed, certainly in *Thatha* and *Worst Year*, the families are intended as examples of “progressive” family environments and relationships: in *Thatha*, for example, the school counsellor is described as admiring and “envious” of the way the protagonist’s family relates to him (88), and in *Worst Year*, the protagonist says of her family, “most of the time they try to be so supportive, I might as well be trapped inside a family-viewing sitcom... They are genuinely so caring and concerned about helping me to develop as a rounded human being whilst treating me as a separate individual with valid opinions and important feelings... that I can’t really blame them for any of my problems.” (18).

Whilst one may argue that there are specific reasons for the restricted and constructed portrayal of South African society in these books which largely ignores or glosses over the negative elements or real issues definitive of post-apartheid South Africa, the fact is there is a very visible attempt of the authors to portray a liberal, tolerant, unprejudiced and diverse representation of South African society. But this portrayal is at times superficial and didactic in nature, which largely undermines the authenticity of the protagonists and the books as a whole. Of course, to be fair to the authors, there are undoubtedly very real reasons for the constructed nature of the books. An attempt will be made to briefly explore and discuss these in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

*There are no such things as facts, only interpretations.*

Nietzsche (as cited in Carter, 1997: 111)

*Our imagination gives us the capacity to invent new visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, on the streets where we live, in our schools.*

Greene, 1995: 39

### 6.1 IMPLICATIONS: THE CONSTRUCT OF SOUTH AFRICA

It is evident that the authors of novels for young adults that have been published in English during and after 1994 have attempted to create and construct an image of South Africa that is possibly modelled on what the perceived “ideal” of the society should be, particularly in light of the country’s historically prejudiced and racist past. This ideal embodies all that apartheid denied South Africa: whereas apartheid defined South Africans so rigidly in terms of racial categories, the books offer a colour-blind non-racist society where colour is arbitrary in terms of social interaction and friendships; whereas apartheid rigidly ensured the dominance of white people in the country economically and politically by denying people of colour basic rights and opportunities, the books offer a society where opportunities and success is possible regardless of colour, disabilities, and socio-economic situation, and regardless of the nature of the obstacles that may present themselves; whereas the legacy of apartheid has resulted in a society that faces many uncertainties and fears such as crime and an unstable economic situation, the books offer a vision of the future that is always approached with unflinching hope and optimism, regardless of circumstance.

Thus whilst the books studied in this research that were published before 1994 on the whole seem to be directed towards creating a sense of hope and belief in the reality of promise that the future holds, the books studied that were published during and after 1994 generally seem to be attempting to construct an image of South Africa that embodies this hope; where peace, true democracy, equal rights, equal opportunities and one nation is a reality. Identities are constructed within this framework, and never really deconstructed or problematized in terms of race to any notable degree.

Emphasis is rather on the individual personality of the protagonist who is able to succeed and develop in this context of opportunity and hope regardless of racial, social, economic or political background. However, in the books published before

1994 there seems to be somewhat more of an attempt to portray realistically and actively confront issues that were pertinent to the time, albeit in restricted and carefully controlled ways and albeit that they are issues primarily concerned with the negotiation and placation of white guilt. A similar message of “overcoming obstacles” and “hope for the future” is evident in the books published before 1994; however, these books are somewhat more explicit about the struggles that face South Africans because of the political, economic and social situation in the country at the time. Similarly, racial issues that result from the fear, prejudice and oppression created by apartheid are more detailed. Identities in terms of race are negotiated, evident in the attempt to portray white identity as more accepting and tolerant of black people. Yet the overriding message nevertheless, is focused on the future, as even these books seem to imply that the future holds promise and hope despite all problems, related to identity and otherwise. References to “peace” (*Pig*), “true democracy”, “equal rights... equal opportunities—one nation—from the people for the people,” (*92 Queen’s Road*, 97-98) illustrate this belief and express the general sentiment of optimism about the future in South Africa. These books seem to be more concerned with the reworking of identities apart from the discrimination of apartheid, a process, which in the books published after 1994, is shadowed and consumed by the more apparent attempt to propagate the notion of a unified South African nation.

The books published after 1994 make no such attempt realistically to portray the actual situation in South Africa at this time at all, despite the literary freedom that they are now offered, but are more concerned with constructing their imagined “ideal” as an example in order to instruct their readers. The books seem to focus actively on constructing a very “positive” image of South Africa; where everyone is equal and united, where there is no conflict caused by cultural differences and where obstacles are easily overcome and problems simply resolved. Despite the somewhat problematic way in which this is done, these books, as cultural forms, are clearly attempting to renegotiate identity, both in terms of race and the society as a whole. They constitute a manifestation of the nation-building attempt characteristic of South Africa at this time: differences are minimized and similarities emphasized; people are colour-blind and non-racial; equal opportunities are available to all; the New South Africa truly is “one nation”. This image of South African society has implications in

that it is not entirely accurate; unfortunately the reality is that South Africans face many challenges because of the rigid divisions in society that largely remain as a legacy of apartheid. Racial inequity, the discrepancy between the haves and the have-nots, unemployment, widespread crime, affirmative action, emigration, the pandemic of AIDS and issues of land redistribution are just some of the issues which face South Africans in this time. Racial renegotiation and representation of identities are also at the forefront of the South African consciousness; as Steyn stated, this renegotiation constitutes a profound psychological process, one upon which the survival of the country depends (1996: 142). In addition, Eliasov discusses how, since 1995, there appears to be an increase in the amount of South African youth who commit crime in response to poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, political change, gangsterism and community violence, thereby revealing how such issues have a direct influence on the adolescents of South Africa (1998).

It is therefore fairly alarming that none of the post-apartheid books written specifically for adolescents that were analysed even attempt to negotiate these serious issues in an honest way and actually largely ignore the historical, social, economic and political reality of South Africa today. It is alarming precisely because that is what the authors make a pretence of doing: they actually *claim* to be writing for all South African youth and make a very obvious appearance of multiculturalism and attempt at dealing with issues related to post-apartheid South Africa, but this in fact is merely a transparent construction. The obvious constructed and unrealistic portrayal of the context and identities of the protagonists results in the often inauthentic, didactic and shallow nature of the books. The fact that these books are prizewinners and therefore supposedly the best in their category is even more alarming. Whilst there may be valid reasons for this, such as the author's need to provide accessible and entertaining fiction for adolescents, the books do largely ignore the complex realities of growing up in post-apartheid South Africa.

Nevertheless, despite the unrealistic way in which it is done, the books do represent a proposal for the resolution of the complex challenges which face South African adolescents by inventing "new visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society" (Greene, 1995: 39). Although this attempt does not explicitly explore or accurately reflect reality, it is possible that the authors are attempting to

frame their own experience as South Africans. Sampson (1993) quotes Harvey et al who offer the following formulation: “it is the stories that we learn to tell to frame our experiences, to explain us to ourselves and others, that are the central features of human life. The stories we tell about our lives ‘serve as the vehicles for rendering selves intelligible’ (Gergen and Gergen, 1988:17); they give order, coherence and meaning to our experiences, and structure our relationships with others. Although we might be tempted to consider these narrative accounts to be cognitive schemas that are created by individuals for their own private purposes, most narratives emphasize the socially shared, culture embeddedness of these stories and narratives.” (1990: ix)

Although I have actively tried to avoid a direct focus on the influence of the authors’ personal experiences on these books, it is an influence which is undeniable and which certainly could explain the nature of the books themselves.

## **6.2 IMPLICATIONS: EDUCATION**

As these books are marketed specifically for the adolescents of South Africa at this time, they have relevance in terms of the ways in which the South African young people who read them interpret and respond to them. For the books as texts will only find their meaning and life through interaction and an engagement with their readers. In the words of Moss, “... a book in itself is nothing—a film shown in an empty cinema: one can only assess its value by the light it brings to a child’s eye.” (1970: 17). It would appear the authors of these books are self-conscious about the act of writing such texts; the nature and content of these books reveal their awareness that they contribute to the nation-building discourse prevalent at this time and seem to reflect a belief in the assertion that whilst fiction is a social product, it also has potential to “produce” society (Rosenblatt, 1938).

Despite the inauthentic nature of the books and the primarily white western framework from which they are written, it is felt that they still have relevance and may be of use in the classroom. For despite their failings, they seem to “think of things, not as they are, but as they might conceivably, or nearly inconceivably, be” (Greene 1983: 74). Greene asserts that if children are presented with such

(re)presentations of reality through imagination, they will learn to see and perceive their own reality, as well as the reality of “others” differently; “Imagination is what, above all makes empathy possible... it is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we... have called ‘other’” (Greene, 1995: 3).

Although I am not suggesting that this is what the books are undoubtedly *able* to do, (specifically because this research is not concerned with the response of adolescents to these books or the ability of literature and imagination to change social reality), what I have attempted to show is the ways in which South Africa has been constructed in South African literature for adolescents and to examine and provide an explanation for the nature and meaning of these constructions. This construction of South Africa, despite its many faults and biases, still provides a useful platform for educators to deconstruct not only the novels themselves, but the society that the novels (re)present. The fiction under study calls for interrogation and investigation in the classroom as it concerns the lives of those it claims to represent. Maxine Greene says regarding the teaching of literature: “At the heart of what I am asking for in the domains of the teaching of art and aesthetics is a sense of agency, even of power. Painting, literature, theatre and film—can all open doors and move persons to transform” (1995: 150). As they engage with the contexts and experiences of the protagonists in the books, adolescents may find ways of describing their own landscapes, of telling their own stories. And perhaps as South African adolescents read and critique such stories, they will learn to critique the stories of their own lives and in so doing “give order, coherence and meaning” to their own experiences and “structure their relationships with others”. It is hoped that as both educators and learners become engaged in “opening the doors” to the society and their personal experiences in this way, they will gain a sense of agency and power and begin to realize the possibility for transformation. Mkhondo, a counselling psychologist at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation says of post-apartheid South Africa: “It worries me that the healing has been so slow; it’s been nearly eight years since the first democratic election. There’s still a lot of collective pain in the community, and we need to provide a safe environment for people to talk about it.” (2002, *Fair Lady*: p. 57). Thus despite their lack of authenticity and obvious constructed nature, perhaps these books (and the continued study thereof) is necessary. For perhaps South African educators can provide that safe environment where,

through deconstruction and a continued focus on the discourses present in the books, the need for “more than merely tolerating differences” and a discourse that is “capable of sustaining an ongoing mutual regard for the other” can be realized and fostered in our multicultural South African classrooms (Pignatelli, 1993:xi).

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## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF BOOKS READ:

- Bailey, D. (1994) *Khetho*. Cape Town: Heinemann.
- Bailey, D. (1994) *Thatha*. Cape Town: Heinemann.
- Beake, L. (1987) *The Strollers*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Beake, L. (1997) *Jakey*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Bowie, B. (1996) *Play Music*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Bransby, L. (1995) *Outside the Walls*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Bregin, E. (1989) *The Kayaboeties*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Briner, B. (2000) *Cassandra's Quest*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau.
- Case, B. (1995) *Wart*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers.
- Case, D. (1986) *Love, David*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Case, D. (1991) *92 Queens Road*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Davidow, S. (1991) *Freefalling*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- De Jongh, M. (1995) *Brahm and the Angel*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Forrester, V. (1994) *The Kingdom Above the Earth*. Cape Town: Heinemann.
- Frederikse, J. (1994) *The Diary Without a Key*. Cape Town: Heinemann.
- Garish, D. (1994) *Not Another Love Story*. Cape Town: Heinemann.
- Geraghty, P. (1988) *Pig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Haslam, T. (1997) *Going To See Ally*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Hill, R. (1985) *Child in Darkness*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Hofmeyr, D. (1987) *A Sudden Summer*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Hofmeyr, D. (1990) *A Red Kite in a Pale Sky*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Hofmeyr, D. (1994) *Boikie You Better Believe It*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Jermison, A. (1988) *Rebecca's horse*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Kenmuir, D. (1988) *Song of the Surf*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Lee, H. (1995) *Girl from the Mountain*. Isando: Heinemann.
- Malan, R. (1998) *The Sound of New Wings*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Munitich, B. (1987) *The Scar*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Phallas, D. (1996) *A Tale of Two Fathers*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Robson, J. (1996) *One Magic Moment*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

- Robson, J. (1994) *Don't Panic Mechanic*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Rose-Innes, H. (2000) *Shark's Egg*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Saunders, R. (1998) *Dear Ludwig*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Seed, J. (1983) *The New Fire*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau.
- Slingsby, P. (1996) *The Joining*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Smith, G. (1996) *Wheels*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Williams, M. (1990) *Into the Valley*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Williams, M. (1992) *Crocodile Burning*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, M. (1997) *Who Killed Jimmy Valentine?* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, M. (1999) *Hijack City*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Winter, S. (1990) *Flashflood*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

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## APPENDIX 2

I have tabulated all the information in detail regarding the protagonists' identities. An attempt has been made to answer all the questions that the model poses, however this was not always possible because certain aspects and information related to the protagonists' identity were not always provided, or were only done so without much detail or elaboration. I have entered all available information onto the tables, leaving blanks or specifying where such information was not available, under the same headings that the model specifies; in other words, in the form of the groups with which the protagonist may identify (for example gender, relational, etc.). Page references indicate direct quotation from the books. Two tables are presented under each heading, one for the books published before 1994, the second for books published during and after that date.

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**IDENTITY TABLES:**

**1. GENDERED:**

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
<b>Johnny Xashan:</b> -12 years old, male -gender issues and attitudes not explicit, he (as a boy) is the leader of the group, mother submissive to abuse, because J. realizes it's because she loves him.	<b>Michael "Pig" Goodenough:</b> -13/14 years old, male. -feels he cannot open up to his mother, she cannot help him, he needs a male perspective (which he finds in Johannes), wants to prove himself on the sports field.	<b>Charmaine (Charlie):</b> -female -relates to males, calls herself "Charlie" and cuts her hair short to fit in with boys.	<b>Laurence Ross:</b> -male, 13 years old. -assumes responsibility for family, father tells him he is the man in the house whilst father is away, but finds it difficult when the women won't listen to him. Also finds it hard living in a house filled with women "all the time women bossing you around" (34)	<b>Kathy Paulse:</b> -6 years old, female -grandmother is the matriarch of the family, male children submit to her, Kathy plays with "bridal doll".

<i>Thatha</i> (1994)	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic</i> (1994)	<i>Wheels</i> (1996)	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far</i> (2000)	<i>Dear Ludwig</i> (1998)
<b>Mark "Sipho" Stanford</b> -14 years old, male -Tries to be "masculine" and protect girlfriend, tells her what to do, says of girlfriend that although she's not a feminist she "equaled" boys (p. 50).	<b>MacKenzie "Chameleon" De Jongh</b> -male, 14 yrs old -critical of Oubaas "living off women" (p. 57), gets criticized for being a boy looking after a baby (p.61).	<b>Damian Hunter (de Jager)</b> -15/16 years old, male -masculinity is linked to sport, but this is questioned.	<b>Meredith Taylor</b> -14/15 years old, female -describes herself as "not very feminine"(p.77) and another boy at her school as "not the most masculine guy around" (p.13)	<b>Kenda Tshwete</b> -female, teenager -describes the "exaggerated feminity" of 'Shiralee's' room (pink and lacey).

## 2. 1 RELATIONAL: FRIENDS

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
<p>1. Abel: (Johnny's closest friend). Male, 9/10 yrs, Working Class, poor, father wants him to stroll: "one less mouth to feed," sent Abel out work then spent all his money at the shebeen; Abel ran away.</p> <p>2. Mesana: Female, 8 yrs, doesn't talk about background (neglected).</p> <p>3. Spongasi and Nongasi: female, Xhosa-speaking.</p> <p>4. Raymond: Male, 12 yrs, never went to school for long periods as "too destructive," mother, authorities and police tried to force him but after 4 yrs gave up and he was able to stroll as he always wanted to, been strolling with cousin Andrew since they were "little kids".</p> <p>5. Finkie: Male, very sick (with T. B), dies.</p>	<p>1. Phocho: (Michael's best friend). Male, 12 yrs, Zulu, father (Nyaga) was the induna of the Goodenough pig farm and head of the compound where they lived. Only child of Michael's age group in school (i.e. just two of them in Std. 4). Very close friendship with Michael, pledge to be "best friends forever" and often say the same things at the same time. Wants to join the struggle when older.</p> <p>*At new school in Cape Town, Michael is bullied by his peers, the group of boys in his class (nicknamed "pig"):</p> <p>2. Trevor: Male, 12 yrs, white, English- speaking, is the ringleader of these boys. After Std. 5 he goes to a "hooligan type technical</p>	<p>* Friends with her older brother's friends, with whom she forms a music group:</p> <p>1. 'Pecker' (Richard) Peterson: Male, +- 12/13 yrs, white, English speaking, Middle Class, family very racist, don't "have a high opinion of black people" (p. 3).</p> <p>2. Alan: White, English speaking, musical, plays guitar and sings, introduces Samuel to the group.</p> <p>3. Samuel: Male, 14 yrs, black, lives on a farm, spending holidays with mother in the city who is a domestic worker. Very musical, plays penny whistle, is offered a scholarship to a private school in the Cape for talented music pupils.</p>	<p>*No close friends.</p> <p>1. Aunt Alice: (neighbour), adult, looks after children.</p> <p>2. Kallie Cloete: (enemy) leader of gang of thieves that Horace joins, golf caddy, friend of Dora and Agnes, violent, thief.</p> <p>3. Mr. and Mrs. Karachi: own store where mother works, adult, Indian.</p> <p>4. Jake: male, 13 yrs, Laurence meets him hitchhiking, helps Laurence find food and place to sleep, streetchild, travels around the country.</p>	<p>1. Radia: (neighbour in same street), Female, 7 yrs old, coloured, Muslim.</p>

<p>* Friends consist of runaway children who live on the street in a group together (“strollers”); all from poor WC backgrounds, coloured and black children, speak a mixture of English and Afrikaans or Xhosa (p. 24).</p>	<p>school where most of the boys leave after Std. 8” (p. 137).  3. Francis: Male, 12 yrs, white, English-speaking, sits next to Mike and helps him with work. Also involved in bullying.  4. Peter Green: Male, 12 yrs, white, English-speaking. In Mike’s class at school, a social outcast, also bullied. Initially shuns Mike, but gradually befriends him and Johannes.  5. Johannes: Male, adult, black, Xhosa-speaking, lives in a shack on the soccer field (poor), caretaker, left family in Transkei to find a job in Cape Town. Befriends Mike and helps him with problems, father figure.</p>	<p>Initially is not accepted into group by Pecker and Alan, but because of his musical ability he joins and stays.</p>		
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University of Cape Town

<i>Thatha (1994)</i>	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic (1994)</i>	<i>Wheels (1996)</i>	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far (2000)</i>	<i>Dear Ludwig (1998)</i>
<p>1. Ketho: (Best friend), Male, 15 yrs, Black, Zulu speaking (also speaks English fluently), goes to Charter College school (very integrated and middle class); lives in township (Mpophomeni) in a small house/shack, mother is a cleaner (working class), has a sister who was raped as a teenager and has a child as a result, used to stutter.</p> <p>2. Thulani Mkize: (Ketho's cousin), male, 16 yrs old, black, Zulu speaking (fluent in English), goes to Charter College (lies to school about age, tells them he is 14), lives in township, family very involved in the struggle, brother tortured in detention and beaten to death by police.</p> <p>3. Thatha Radebe: (Mark's girlfriend), Female, 14 yrs, black,</p>	<p>* No real friends, spends time with family. The following are neighbours and people with whom he comes into contact:</p> <p>1. Mr. Bredekamp: adult male, lives next door, takes care of sister who has had a nervous breakdown. Refuse collector. Fancies M's mother, but she is not interested. Brings M. toys that work from the garbage.</p> <p>2. Mr. Patel: adult, male, owns the shop (café). He allows M. to watch T.V. and gives him sweets because he feels sorry for M. Meanwhile M.'s brother steals from the shop. Only time M. ever watches T.V.</p> <p>3. Jeffrey 'Car Park King' November: male, 12 years old, teaches M. about begging in the parking lot. He begs to</p>	<p>1. Greg: (best friend), male, 15/16 yrs, black, from Soweto, (Zulu and English speaking), went to private school but now at same school as Damian (where there are only 4 other black children in their class), father is a school principle and mother is a teacher (middle class), very good at cycling, got Damian involved in cycling. Is friends with Damian because he calls himself "culturally disadvantaged," and Damian "linguistically disadvantaged".</p> <p>2. Jacques Mathews: (rival in cycling), male, white, 15/16 yrs, English speaking. Son of teacher who bullies Damian, and brother of Jessica.</p> <p>3. Jessica: (love interest), female, white.</p>	<p>*Meredith states that she has never been popular with her peers (bullied at nursery school and miserable in last year of primary school, dumped by all her friends) and so starts a group of misfits/"underdog status" (p. 56) (called "the untouchables"), "With two wasps (that's me and Bronwyn), an Italian, three happy clappies and two black kids... we are quite a mixed bunch" (p. 56).</p> <p>1. Bronwyn Riley (closest friend): Female, white, English speaking, in Grade 8 at Greendale College (i.e. wealthy), father working in Dubai, lives with mother with whom she has a strained relationship, tries to commit suicide. (Nature of relationship is described by Meredith as</p>	<p>*Kenda struggles to make friends at her new school, she left one friend in England, but they didn't keep in contact. Even in England her mother describes her as "solitary" and as immersing herself in books and classical music (p.60) Eventually she becomes friendly with a girl from school:</p> <p>1. Beatrice Chavunduka: female, same age as Kenda, also interested in classical music.</p> <p>*Kenda spends her time with the Lodgers at her house:</p> <p>2. Shiralee (Steven) Jacobs: "coffee-coloured", (adult), female who works as a hostess in a nightclub, caring of Kenda, actually turns out to be</p>

<p>Zulu speaking (fluent in English), goes to Charter college, lives in Sobantu township, father is a political candidate in the elections (premier for African People's Party) who went into exile and who raped her when she was twelve, she has a daughter. Sporty (netball, swimming), successful at school, works at campaign office in township.</p>	<p>earn money for his mother who is in a wheelchair.  4. Mrs. Gilbert: adult, female, (con-artist), promises to collect money for M. to pay for an eye operation, steals money from people with "special needs".  *Emphasis on community.</p>		<p>being "co-dependant": they don't have anyone else to be friends with).  2. Bradley: Male, white, English speaking, in Grade 8 at Greendale College, intelligent, works on science project with Meredith.  3. Lerato (a member of the untouchables): female, Grade 8, black, very wealthy, father engineered a major new black empowerment deal (frequently on the front pages of financial magazines), very fat, therefore unpopular.  4. Sandra Leung: (Meredith's main rival at school) Female, Grade 8, Chinese, musical and successful at schoolwork.</p>	<p>a male (Steven) who was abused as a child by father, very unhappy childhood, disturbed, murders and dismembers small boys in the community "the Hatchet Man" serial killer who dressed up as a woman. Discovered by Kenda, fled, killed in car accident.  3. Mr. Moollah Singh: Indian, male, adult, engineer, came to South Africa from India for a better life, will send for children and wife in India when he has enough money. Very religious, prays to Krishna.  4. Garth Daley: Male, 31 yrs, white, motorcycle mechanic, ex-convict, involved in anti-drug education, talks to primary schools.</p>
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## 2.2 RELATIONAL: FAMILY:

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
<p>Lives with Mother "Ma" and mother's husband, Nelson. Father died on the mines. Has 7 older brothers: (p.2) "The last of his seven older brothers had been gone a year now, swallowed up into the welter of people who no longer live at their home address. Johannesburg maybe, or prison, who knew? Ma was determined that Johnny, the laatlammetjie, last and final of her many sons, would not go the same way."</p> <p>Nelson verbally and physically abusive, hits Johnny with belt. Mother authoritarian to Johnny and submissive to husband. Older brother, Abraham, "boetie" prominent gangster (The</p>	<p>Father dies in hunting accident on farm when Mike is 12. Lives with Mother and younger sister (age 7/8 yrs). (Originally all lived together). Uncle helps mother after father's death (find job and house in cape Town), have contact with aunt cousins etc. Mother very protective and caring, yet Mike feels he cannot tell her his problems (not much communication and he misses his father, feels only father can help), hence friendship with Johannes. Everything his mother does in an attempt to help him seems to backfire. Mike caring of sister Jenny, good relationship, yet Mike does not confide in her</p>	<p>Lives with Mother and Father (not much detail provided), and older brother Christopher. Good relationship with brother (spend time together socially), yet brother exercises a fair amount of authority over her.</p>	<p>Lives with Ma (Mother), older twin sisters Agnes and Dora, younger brother Horace and 5 yr old sister, 'Baby'. Pa (father) is a fisherman on ships and is "never there", always sails away, returning home infrequently, with presents. Ouma (grandmother), whom Laurence loved (p.20), died recently. Ouma used to be strict "in the way Pa should've been" (p. 20), when she died Ma became stricter "trying to be ouma, Pa and Ma at the same time". Ma was tired, angry, always telling them what to do "a mother can drive a person crazy" (p. 5). When Ma left house sisters would boss Laurence. Laurence is</p>	<p>Lives with Grandmother, mother, uncle Reg (when at home) and uncle's wife, Dolores, and lodger, Cedric. Grandmother is the primary care-giver and authoritarian figure and disciplinarian. Single unmarried mother who is fairly distant- no mention of Kathy's father, she doesn't know who he is, is called "illegitimate". Uncle Reg is a father figure, very caring, brings presents and money, Dolores is a mother figure, also very caring, as is Cedric (who occasionally dresses up in women's clothes). Uncle Peter and wife visit often with two cousins, but get "reclassified" as white; Grandmother</p>

<p>Spidermen) who terrorize the Cape Flats. Meets Johnny by coincidence and protects him. Wealthy through crime.</p> <p>Grandmother in the Transkei whom Johnny loves greatly.</p> <p>Mother doesn't talk to rest of family (estranged from extended family). Although Johnny runs away from his home situation, he feels bad about leaving his mother and misses her a lot. (He takes a photograph of her with him).</p> <p>Eventually he does decide to return home to her.</p>	<p>either—feels very alone in midst of family.</p>		<p>responsible for Horace and bullies him, but Horace listens to and looks up to him. After the flood, twin sisters go missing, Horace joins a gang of boys who steal and becomes independent of Horace, hates Laurence. Ma and Baby taken to hospital. L. constantly worries about his family; “nothing was OK in our family” (p. 78). Travels to Durban to find Ma in hospital, but she has changed, “Ma doesn't care anymore” (p. 60), although L. missed his father and wished that he was there to help, he realized that Ma was the one who had cared for them before, and now he would have to take over the responsibility (rebuild house, find a job) until his mother is better.</p>	<p>excommunicates them. Cousins ignore her on the street. Uncle Reg and Dolores emigrate to Canada. Mother gets engaged to Ralph.</p> <p>Family central, very close bonds and ties, family expectations and obligations, emphasis on respect and authority.</p> <p>There is a strong sense of family and community commitment. Grandmother says “we are all neighbours and must help one another” (p. 50).</p>
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<b><i>Thatha (1994)</i></b>	<b><i>Don't Panic Mechanic (1994)</i></b>	<b><i>Wheels (1996)</i></b>	<b><i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far (2000)</i></b>	<b><i>Dear Ludwig (1998)</i></b>
Lives with Father (Eddie "Khayelihle") and mother, (Zoe, "Jabu"), and younger twin brother, who are not often mentioned. Focus is on relationship between father and son, which is relaxed and open. (e.g Often calls parents by their first names and father swears at him.) Son admires father and often quotes him. Some conflict between them but this is easily resolved, Mark is treated as if he is an adult. Counsellor at school admires and envies the way the Stanfords relate to their son (p. 88). Virtually no focus on siblings, no mention of extended family.	Lives with Mother (Ma), 21 yr old brother, Oubaas and two older sisters, Grace and Dignity and Grace's baby son. Father died when M. was 2 months old. Mother misses father a great deal, rest of family don't. Mother and sisters work very hard to support family, mother has sore legs. Brother doesn't have a job, steals a lot and speaks about politics on street corners. Brother abusive towards M. punches and bullies him. Says of Brother: "he's a thief; he won't work, won't even try to find a job; he is so lazy that he drives Ma crazy. And yet when he talks, grown men listen... about the needs for the future, about the youth setting the world on fire with their passion. About the great change to come." Family angry with Oubaas for being lazy and unemployed, he says there	Lives with mother and stepfather (have only been married a few years). Father died at Damian's birth, he can't remember him, but still feels very attached and places much emphasis on their relationship (talks to his father's photo about his problems). Stepfather very caring; understands Damian's problems. Mother and Piet can't have children of their own and Piet sees Damian as his own son, wants him to adopt his surname (p. 16). Damian reluctant and resistant to stepfather and has to resolve feelings for him, which he does when Piet has a heart attack. (Piet is Afrikaans). (p.77) Realises that Piet is the "only real father that he has ever had, and that the man in the photograph is	Lives with parents (met at university and are still there). No siblings. Parents very caring and supportive, "most of the time they try to be so supportive, I might as well be trapped inside a family-viewing sitcom" (p. 18). "They are genuinely so caring and concerned about helping me to develop as a rounded human being whilst treating me as a separate individual with valid opinions and important feeling...that I can't really blame them for any of my problems." No mention of extended family.	Lives with mother (Loyce) and younger brother, Graham, who is in Grade 2 (approx. age 8). Father "vanished into thin air" in England when Graham was 3 yrs old; he went on a business trip and never returned. Family was never able to find out what happened to him (went to police). Kenda misses him and is angry, states her father "is not worth remembering". She blames her mother for her unhappiness and is rude and disrespectful. She is quite caring of Graham, looks after him in the afternoons, and cooks supper if her mother is not home from work. Mother is very worried about Kenda, knows she is unhappy in South

	<p>are no jobs and they don't respect him.  Grace is unmarried, has a baby with boyfriend, they argue as he does not support the child of contribute. M. has to look after baby, which he hates. Dignity is very kind towards M. Ma is caring, feels guilty about M.'s eyes, won't look at them. She is very strict, authoritarian, shouts a lot (M. afraid of her, but very caring towards her too). Strong family work ethic "we De Jonghs, we always do our work with grace and dignity" (p. 44), mother does not allow begging. Sisters and mother caring of M., appreciative of him. No mention of extended family.</p>	<p>not really his father".  Mother also very caring and supportive.  No siblings or extended family mentioned.</p>		<p>Africa, watched her change into a "quiet, solitary child" when her father left, and then become a "sullen teenager" (p.60).  Mother is primary care giver, but live also with 3 lodgers in house. No involvement with any other family members (cousins are mentioned).</p>
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### 3. SEXUAL:

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
No mention of sexuality	No mention of sexuality	No mention of sexuality	No mention of sexuality	No mention of sexuality

<i>Thatha</i> (1994)	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic</i> (1994)	<i>Wheels</i> (1996)	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far</i> (2000)	<i>Dear Ludwig</i> (1998)
Has a black girlfriend (his first), Thatha. Is teased about being gay by Thulani. Wants to remain a virgin until marriage, doubts own sexual "prowess" (p. 53). Wants his relationship with Thatha to be more physical.	No mention of sexuality.	"Falls in love" with Jessica Mathews, son of teacher and brother of rival.	Questions whether she could be a lesbian and states "I hope not" (p. 77). Yet she calls her friends "homophobes" (p. 91).	No mention of sexuality.

#### 4. GEOGRAPHICAL:

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
<p>Does not define himself in terms of nation (i.e. as South African), makes reference to South African cities (Johannesburg) and places in Cape Town, but not in terms of a specific time frame.</p> <p>Lives in Cape Province, Cape Town, initially in a township on the Cape Flats then lives on streets of city center. Originally from the Transkei where his Grandmother still lives.</p>	<p>Does not define himself in terms of nation, reference made to South African places and cities, and emphasis is on racial tension (racism of whites and injustice to black people, e.g. Johannes, mention of the “struggle” and fighting against injustice, but not in depth or detail, and not too explicitly.</p> <p>Lives in Cape Province, Cape Town, in the suburb of Wynberg. Moved from farm in Natal where he had lived all his life until age 13.</p>	<p>Does not define herself in terms of being South African, no real references to South Africa at all, other than in the racist remarks towards black people (“kaffir”), and the language used (e.g. “boeties”), brief mention to South African places (not in detail).</p> <p>Natal, in the suburbs (nothing further specified).</p>	<p>Does not define himself in terms of being South African, references to South African places (Durban etc) and South African products, and food, such as samoosas.</p> <p>Natal, Klaarwater (rural, slum) near Chatsworth on Umhlatunzana River</p>	<p>Book is historically situated in the 1960’s at the time of South Africa’s independence from Britain. Reflected in Kathy’s discovery of the new coins (of currency) when the shopkeeper declares, “we are the Republic of South Africa” (p. 23), to which her uncle responds, “this is not our country. We don’t belong here” (p.32). Verwoerd is assassinated, and grandmother reaction to white telephone operators “they don’t even know their prime minister was stabbed” (p.54). District 6 is mentioned, Cedric says of the government “they are trying to create a Colouredstan, like the Bantustans. They are worse than the Nazis..” (p. 73). Apartheid laws are demonstrated in the family not being allowed into a carnival, or onto a beach. When discussing South Africa it is said that civil war is inevitable: “we will suffer as a nation—black and white together—side by side. Maybe then</p>

				<p>we will turn to each other...true democracy demands equal rights. Equal opportunities—one nation—from the people for the people” (p.97), to which Grandmother responds “it will come...maybe their children’s children will live in a better South Africa”.</p> <p>*In other words, focus is on the struggle against apartheid and hope for a better future to come. Cape Province, Cape Town, Woodstock.</p>
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<i>Thatha (1994)</i>	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic (1994)</i>	<i>Wheels (1996)</i>	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far (2000)</i>	<i>Dear Ludwig (1998)</i>
<p>Focus is the situation in South Africa at the time of the first democratic election. Reference to apartheid “we were all united in one struggle against apartheid” (p. 47), father helped to relocate and rehabilitate young people traumatized by the effects of</p>	<p>Ma doesn't want M. to take baby into the streets with the “political nonsense” happening; “streets were full of excitement and drama and people cheering and police sirens and casspirs” (p. 22). Brother responds “it is not nonsense..it is the Great Change coming” Teachers at school march to Cape Town with a list of complaints (mass action) (p. 62).</p>	<p>Does not make specific reference to South African situation, or define himself in terms of nation (taken for granted), reference to South African places and things, such as the Bafana</p>	<p>Situated specifically in time and place. Multiple references to South Africa and the situation. “nobody ever suggested that anything made sense here in the good old newish South Africa” (p. 11), reference to the “rainbow nation”, very conscious of multiculturalism at school and with regards to her friendships,</p>	<p>Kenda is very unhappy moving back to South Africa and makes constant negative remarks about the country “lousy country”, “you never know when you're going to be raped or murdered in this ghastly country” (p.75), specifically in relation to crime (plot revolves around incident of serial killer). Some positive remarks as well,</p>

<p>detention and violence. Focus on political divisions after Mandela's release (p.48). Hope for the future: "perhaps in the new South Africa even animals won't be abused" (p.132). References to South African products and places (e.g. Rooibos, shebeens, Zulubeer).</p> <p>Kwa-Zulu Natal. Pietermaritzberg (suburbs).</p>	<p>Focus on race: mother's boss arrives at their home, "I didn't blame her for being nervous-a white woman here, right in the middle of extension 6" (p. 64) "Those were strange weeks...there was this feeling of excitement, like something was about to happen. Funny that: I felt like Oubaas's Big Change was coming..." (p. 99) Reference to the elections, but no overt references to the political situation in South Africa, rather on the inequalities between the white areas and where they live, wealth and abundance compared to his life situation, and the selfish attitude of many white people (p.39). Also focus on promise for a better future, black man, Mr Tema who started Taxi company from being a poor, deaf boy in the townships, now wealthy. Western Cape, Cape Town, Cape Flats, "Extension 6".</p>	<p>Bafana soccer team, President Mandela. Does make mention of the economy being bad (stepfather retrenched) p. 45.</p> <p>Central Gauteng, Johannesburg.</p>	<p>reference to "reconciliation is big in South Africa" (p.34) and corruption, President Mbeki, crime, emigration to other countries, road rage, affirmative action, beggars, white guilt, world cup cricket, SABC 3; (multiple references to South African specific things).</p> <p>Gauteng, Johannesburg, Sandton.</p>	<p>South Africa being "beautiful" (p.7), "we must all work towards the social good" (p.31), and to multiculturalism in her own home "diverse peoples who have all indeed become good companions" (p. 75). Reference to South African products and slogan of company where Mr. Singh works is "Building for a new nation" (p.64). Kwa-Zulu Natal, Durban, Morningside.</p>
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## 6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC:

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
<p>-live in a township in a shack (p.2) that has “polythene sheeting tacked over window space,” they use paraffin as fuel, eat cold pap.</p> <p>-mother is a cleaner (maid) “lifetime of wash, work, wash”; Nelson is unemployed, was a factory worker but the factory was liquidated, he never had schooling, lived on a farm until he was 18, therefore pressures Johnny to go to school.</p> <p>-Johnny doesn’t often go to school as there are often strikes and there are “too many children and not enough teachers, not enough books” and “he never seemed to learn anything” (p.5).</p> <p>- Johnny runs away from Nelson’s abuse and</p>	<p>-before father died lived on the second biggest private pig farm in Natal, afterwards they lived in a “small” house in Wynberg, Cape Town: Mike calls it a “box” and a “sardine tin” just big enough for 3 people.</p> <p>-Father was a farmer, and mother works as a secretary.</p> <p>-At the farm he went to a farm school that only had 19 pupils. There was only 1 other boy in his class, a black boy, there was resistance to his being part of the school, parents wanted only white children to attend (p.18). In Cape Town he goes to a small co-educational school in Wynberg, there are 35 children in his class.</p>	<p>No detail is provided regarding parents’ occupations, home or school.</p> <p>-Friend’s house is large (swimming pool, outside servant’s quarters etc.), where they spend their time practicing for a music competition</p> <p>-Form music “band” with friends.</p> <p>*A middle class background and lifestyle is implied and assumed, (whilst not explicitly stated), where black people and white people do not mix (their black “friend” cannot even spend the night at one of their houses). The only black people in the area are domestic cleaners.</p> <p>*Middle class (implied as there are no specific</p>	<p>-Live in a small house with one bedroom, a leaking iron roof, a primus stove (they use wood), outside toilet. The two brothers share a bed, the two sisters share a bed and Ma sleeps in a bed with Baby (and Pa, when he’s home).</p> <p>-Ma works at the store at Klaarwater station (“Ismail’s cash Store and General Dealer”), not much money, (white bread is too expensive for them, they use plastic rubbish bags as raincoats and wear second hand clothes). Laurence is very thin,</p> <p>-The school has several standards in one classroom with one teacher, “no-one at this school can afford to buy fruit...”, (lives in poor</p>	<p>-live in a old house (two bedrooms, kitchen, lounge, outside toilet shared by 5 family members and a lodger who sleeps in the lounge). There is no bathroom; they wash from a basin (not always hot water). They don’t have enough plates for everyone to eat off.</p> <p>-Grandmother doesn’t work, mother and Dolores sew in a clothing factory, Uncle Reg sails on ships, Cedric is a hairdresser.</p> <p>-Hardly any reference to school</p> <p>-spends time with family, running errands for family and neighbours, playing with friend next door and dolls.</p>

<p>home situation to “stroll” i.e. live on the streets with a group of similar children. Their days consist of begging for money, inhaling “pinies” (glue) and smoking. They live on a neglected building site where they build a fire and sleep in cardboard at night. They don’t eat much and live in fear of the police, gangs and other beggars on the streets.</p> <p>-Johnny plays the penny whistle</p> <p>* Poor, Working Class</p>	<p>There are no black children at the school. There is a strong work ethic and strong discipline and a (relatively) caring environment. Whilst Mike thinks they are small in comparison to other schools, they have good resources (playground, tennis courts, electric bell, provide soccer).</p> <p>-Mike plays soccer, is interested in the second world war, often using military terms etc.</p> <p>* Middle Class</p>	<p>references).</p>	<p>area).</p> <p>-small, close community, everyone helps each other after the flood</p> <p>-Laurence has some pet geese (had a goat for the milk), spends time with brother at the river next to their house or playing outside in the area.</p> <p>* (poor) Working class</p>	<p>*Working Class</p>
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<i>Thatha (1994)</i>	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic (1994)</i>	<i>Wheels (1996)</i>	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far (2000)</i>	<i>Dear Ludwig (1998)</i>
<p>-Live in “nice house” with garden, have a dog and a housekeeper. Mark feels “injustice everytime he compared his own home to his friend’s” (p. 25) (Friend lives in township).</p>	<p>-Live in small house on the Cape Flats (area designated for coloureds under apartheid), near big highway (extension 6). Gangland nearby, not that safe at night. They “need money” because of</p>	<p>-Live in a house in the suburbs. Piet gets retrenched; “not much money” (p. 10) Damian needs to get sponsored if to continue with cycling.</p> <p>- School is not private; there are only 4 black</p>	<p>-Live in an up market area, have 2 cars, a maid (although self-conscious about this fact p. 15) and a gardener.</p> <p>-Parents both work at the university; father teaches economics to B Comm.</p>	<p>-Live in a huge, old, double story house that Mother inherited from her sister when she died in a car accident. The family was in exile in England, both mother and father were</p>

<p>-Father is a priest, both mother and father work for the Independent Electoral Commission for the money (p.8).  Mother works for Childline (helping abused children).  -Goes to "Charter College" school, multi-racial, good resources, principle described as very caring (p. 88) as is school counselor.  -spends time with friends (Ketho, Thulani and girlfriend Thatha) even sleeps over in the townships, or they stay over at his house.</p> <p>*Middle Class</p>	<p>debt (p. 14), (e.g. they do not have a television, wash themselves from a bucket, eat cabbage and rice for dinner, M. played with toys from rubbish bins when small).  -Mother cleans a white lady's house, but is fired because she has sore legs from always standing; brother does not work (steals for money), Grace sews at a factory, Dignity answers the phone at an office, M. is worried about money so begs, but mother is very ashamed, will not allow family to beg. Father was a car mechanic.  -Left school to care for baby nephew, was 14 yrs old and still in Std. 3 (kept failing).  -Very strong community sentiment.</p> <p>*Working Class</p>	<p>children in his class (p. 7). Great value on sport in the school "leaders in school and society play sport"  -Very involved in cycling on a competitive level (introduced to cycling by black friend Greg).  -Has a pet snake</p> <p>*Working/Middle Class.</p>	<p>students and mother teaches English.  -Goes to Greendale College school: "new", private, exclusive (she has a bursary), very wealthy students, very multiracial.  -Plays the piano, reads, writes poetry, bird watching, has a pet cat, hates sport, her heroes are Bach, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Jane Goodall and Mandela.</p> <p>*Middle Class</p>	<p>born in South Africa. Mother wanted children to "come back to their roots" (p. 7) and return to the country of her birth. They have three lodgers who live in the house.  -Mother is a secretary to police superintendent, "under a lot of strain", tired, doesn't have a lot of money to spare.  -Father was a sales rep for a sweet factory.  -Kenda's goes to an all girls school, is very attached to her pet cat, she likes classical music (has cds and a music center).  *Middle Class.</p>
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6. RACIAL/ETHNIC:

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
<p>-Described as having a “dark complexion” and speaking a mixture of English and Afrikaans. Does not define himself or others according to race.</p> <p>-Speaks a mixture of English and Afrikaans</p> <p>-ethnicity alluded to (e.g. grandmother from Transkei gave him beads which he treasures), but not overtly explicit.</p>	<p>-White (definition taken for granted). Others are defined in racial terms (friend is black), father describes Induna as being a “true Zulu in the old noble tradition” (p. 19). Others make racist remarks (refer to black people as “Kaffirs”, “coons”, “Afs”) and tease Mike for having a black friend (“if you touch him you may turn black” and call him a “kaffirboetie” p.65) and although Mike doesn’t accept these terms he doesn’t directly challenge them, but defended Johannes’s shack when boys were throwing stones at it, and only then personally identifies with the struggle, he feels “I was Johannes at crossroads”. Johannes told him to show the boys “that Zulu and Xhosa people were just like anyone else” (p.70). Takes white friend Peter to Johannes and whilst originally reluctant, Peter never calls Johannes a “boy” again. (p. 133)</p> <p>-Speaks English and Zulu.</p>	<p>-White (definition taken for granted). Friend, Pecker and friend’s family racist (“not too fond of blacks”), make racist comments (“muntusong” “kaffirtown” “monkey language” “coons”(p.13; 24-27)), tension as to whether a black boy can be part of their band, Charlie feels sorry for him (Sam), he is very passive, she states “he can’t help the colour he was born” (p. 27).</p> <p>-Speaks English.</p>	<p>No mention of race of any kind (other than Indian shopkeeper)</p> <p>-Speaks English.</p>	<p>-Coloured: only realizes herself in terms of race when a “white” man forbids his white children to play with her on the beach, and says that the coloureds must go back to their own beach. She realizes: “This is coloured...this brown skin”, and this gives her a terrible feeling. “Africans” are referred to and whites are referred to in a negative sense, (“Dolores felt bitter about the government and white people in general” p.67).</p> <p>-Speaks a mixture of English and Afrikaans.</p>

<b><i>Thatha (1994)</i></b>	<b><i>Don't Panic Mechanic (1994)</i></b>	<b><i>Wheels (1996)</i></b>	<b><i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far (2000)</i></b>	<b><i>Dear Ludwig (1998)</i></b>
<p>-Mark is white (colour taken for granted, not explicitly explained). Focus is on his interaction with black girlfriend and two black friends. Mark has a fight with friend Khetho in which he calls him racist against black people and says "I thought we were beyond all that crap... You're the reason I don't even think racially anymore... I honestly forget you're black" (p. 99). He also says of his white girlfriend "Thatha's colour has never been an issue for me" (p. 99).</p> <p>-Speaks English and Zulu.</p>	<p>-Defines others as white and black; he is coloured and lives in coloured community but this is assumed and never made explicit. Fairly negative towards white people, critical (e.g. "you never really can tell with white people, that's the trouble with white people, you can't trust them really" p. 3). It makes him happy that a black woman is living in a big house in an expensive area, he assumes it belongs to her white 'madam' and thinks that she will help him more than a white lady would (p. 143).</p> <p>-Speaks English/Afrikaans mixture</p>	<p>-Race is never made overtly explicit; he is white and has a black best friend, this is mentioned (friend calls himself "culturally disadvantaged" and note is made that there are not many black children at the school (p. 7), yet race as such is not focused on.</p> <p>-Speaks English.</p>	<p>-Describes herself as being a "relatively privileged, northern suburbs white girl" (p. 87). Others are defined racially (she is very conscious of race and this is made explicit), for example, says of some girls at her school "one white, one black one Indian, united in their shallow dedication to looking good... all very rainbow nation" (p.3). All her friends are defined in terms of race in this sense as well.</p> <p>-Speaks English.</p>	<p>-Kenda is described as having black skin, and describes Shiralee as "coffee coloured" and Mr Moolah as Indian. However race is not focused on or otherwise made overtly explicit. No mention of ethnicity.</p> <p>-Speaks English.</p>

**7. RELIGIOUS:**

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
No adherence or mention of beliefs	No specific adherence to or mention of beliefs	No adherence or mention of beliefs	Ouma used to read the bible aloud to them, if they fidgeted they would have to memorise passages. Laurence thinks in biblical terms, (e.g. likens the flood to Noah, Jonah), prays to God for protection. Goes to church.	Entire family goes to church on Christmas Day

<i>Thatha</i> (1994)	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic</i> (1994)	<i>Wheels</i> (1996)	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far</i> (2000)	<i>Dear Ludwig</i> (1998)
Father is a Christian priest, but otherwise no particular adherence to or mention of beliefs	Family is Christian, references to bible, and "pastor John", quotes from bible verse that he learned at school, calls people help them "Christian". (as in 'she's a good Christian lady').	Prays to God for help, makes brief reference to his mother's church friends.	Prays to God for protection and goes to church with her mother but states "I have my doubts" (p. 11).	No specific mention of beliefs.

**8. OCCUPATIONAL:**

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
No occupation, but mentions he would like to be free in the clouds like a pilot			After the flood he realizes he will have to get a job to support himself and the family, and to rebuild his house (possible at the shop, clearing rubble).	

<i>Thatha</i> (1994)	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic</i> (1994)	<i>Wheels</i> (1996)	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far</i> (2000)	<i>Dear Ludwig</i> (1998)
	Wants to earn money for the family so that his mother doesn't have to work and hurt her legs. Tries to beg in parking lot, but feels bad, (wants people to be happy), asks for money at white people's houses in the wealthy suburbs. Acts in a play, but stops when he discovers he doesn't get paid. Gets offered a job as a "hopper" on taxi.	Wants to have a part time job in order to earn money for the family, but is worried about the job interview because of stutter.	Expresses desire to be a Zoologist, CEO of a major multinational, President of South Africa, a linguistics professor or to become famous.	

**9. 1. PERSONAL: AFFLICTION, DISABILITY, DISEASE:**

<i>The Strollers (1987)</i>	<i>Pig (1988)</i>	<i>The Kayaboeties (1989)</i>	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky (1990)</i>	<i>92 Queens Road (1991)</i>
None (malnourished)	None (but bullied at school).	none	Home and family destroyed in flood, otherwise none (malnourished).	none

<i>Thatha (1994)</i>	<i>Don't Panic Mechanic (1994)</i>	<i>Wheels (1996)</i>	<i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far (2000)</i>	<i>Dear Ludwig (1998)</i>
Has a Rheumatic heart condition, was sexually abused by teacher.	Severely squint eyes and limited I.Q.	Severe stutter.	none	none

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## 9. 2. PERSONAL: CONCEPTIONALIZATION OF OWN IDENTITY:

<i>The Strollers</i> (1987)	<i>Pig</i> (1988)	<i>The Kayaboeties</i> (1989)	<i>A Red Kite In A Pale Sky</i> (1990)	<i>92 Queens Road</i> (1991)
<p>Sees himself as a distinct individual (not defined by others), yet simultaneously defines identity by relations and as part of collective group (the strollers). Makes own, conscious decisions, yet dependant on group of strollers for identity. Surprised at others opinions of him (they see him as the leader, rather than him assuming the role). Makes own decision to run away and take care of himself, but realizes he needs and misses his mother so returns home. Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>	<p>Sees himself as a distinct individual, defines himself. He unfolds “the latest map” of his life (p. 133) and realizes “now that the huge mountains that had once stood in my way were gone, I no longer wanted to get beyond them. Others were there all right, but they were ones that looked as if they’d stay.” Insight into self, initially wanted to fit in at any cost, now more accepting of who he was and his situation. Fights against racism and bullying and gains strength and sense of self. Realises that “life never gets any easier” (p.137), and sees his own selfishness and childlike behaviour “kids can be real brats sometimes, can’t they?” (p. 138, referring to his attitude to mother’s boyfriend). Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>	<p>Describes herself as “nobody important, I’m just Christopher’s sister” (p.2). Whilst does stand up to brother and argue with his friends, derives all sense of self from being friends with them and her relationship with her brother. Not a great deal of self-awareness. Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>	<p>Defines himself in terms of family (responsible for them), yet through struggles alone grows in individuality and realizes “if I didn’t look after myself, who would?” He feels angry with “everyone and everything” (p. 31) because of what has happened to him but perseveres greatly, identifies with kite “And I long to be like it. Free from the chaos Swooping and soaring at the same time...”(p. 84). Feels alone and empty, want “to tell Pa that life is not as easy and simple as he makes it seem” (p.98). Assumes responsibility for himself and family, aims to take care of them and to rebuild their lives. Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>	<p>Sees herself as part of family and community, not distinct. Has to work out the labels that people give her, and the implications of these labels: “felt dirty being coloured” (p.47) “are Moslem people also coloured?” (p.51) Is told that she is illegitimate feels “lesser and angry” (p. 95). But through struggles becomes more aware of others and life: says she can walk home by herself “I’m old enough...I understand” (about her mother’s relationship with boyfriend). Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>

<b><i>Thatha (1994)</i></b>	<b><i>Don't Panic Mechanic (1994)</i></b>	<b><i>Wheels (1996)</i></b>	<b><i>The Worst Year of My Life So Far (2000)</i></b>	<b><i>Dear Ludwig (1998)</i></b>
<p>Sees himself as distinct but defines himself in accordance to father (quotes father all the time) hasn't developed own sense of self too strongly or visibly. Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>	<p>Sees himself as a distinct individual, struggling to make sense of himself and the world. "Maybe it's just me, maybe I just don't understand what's happening around me. I've always been stupid" (p. 3). Gains comfort from the chameleon, he's called "chameleon" at school by children, (intended negatively) but he watches a chameleon and finds it comforting "slowly, quietly, letting life happen to him, his spiky feet and his tail holding him safe" (p. 7). Gains strength from standing up to brother and mother when in trouble for begging (p.93). Grows through troubles and no longer identifies with children in his class "they seem so young to me, young and not able to understand anything" (p 97). Gains distinct identity apart from family: "I sat and listened, looking at these</p>	<p>Develops own individuality strongly. Fights against negative labels given to him by teachers (average) "inside I'm sure, I'm not average, but how the hell am I going to prove that?" (p.5). Finds identity and self-worth through cycling. Talks a lot inside his head and feels his company is lost to society, flees from the "demons and sirens inside him" (p.34). Realizes his love for his stepfather and that he is loved by Piet when Piet has a heart attack, expresses this by riding for him and by adopting his surname. Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>	<p>Distinct individual, very self-reflexive and analytical of herself and others. Blames herself for her own problems, realizes her own pain is covered up by humour, feels alone, different, and outsider, realizes negative things about herself, thinks about suicide a lot, confident in her own abilities and intelligence. Becomes "happy...almost" because "my worst nightmares have come true and I've survived them" (p. 125). Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>	<p>Distinct individual, own needs, wants etc. Rebellious against mother and family situation, strong sense of self. Feels frustration and angst at being in South Africa and her father's disappearance greatly affects her. Depressed: "I wish I was dead, I wish everybody was dead. I wish the world would explode into powder." (p. 37). Desires independence "I'm not a baby...I don't need anyone keeping an eye on me" (p. 77). Gains compassion for serial killer and realizes she did have a friend all along in 'him'. Manages to find good in terrible situation, becomes more accepting of her circumstances.</p>

	<p>people who were my family, trying to understand how they were feeling...It was good that, trying to understand them as people who were separate from me”(p.131); gains insight into family life and himself through this.</p> <p>-realises individuality  “...I didn't want to be just another face in huge crowd. Another voice shouting the same thing as everybody else. Answering along with everybody else.” (p.133).  Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>			<p>Approaches future with optimism and hope.</p>
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