BORDER THINKING AND THE MODERN *PLAASROMAN*: A STUDY OF THREE NOVELS

BY

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To my supervisor, Prof Harry Garuba, and co-supervisor, Prof Horman Chitonge,

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To the many conference organisers and participants,

To my colleagues,

To my partner,

And to my parents.

ABSTRACT

In Afrikaans literature, the farm concept has a history of entanglement with ideals that are racist and nationalist. The early *plaasroman* (farm novel in Afrikaans) subgenre was a product of the 1920s and the 1930s, a period when Afrikaner nationalism was incipient. Later farm novelists brought new energy to the *plaasroman* during the second half of the twentieth century. In the modern *plaasroman* subgenre, challenges to racist-nationalist ideals are exhibited, along with ideals of the early *plaasroman*.

The following study is an attempt to gauge whether, and the extent to which, three modern *plaasromans* are an expression of border thinking. These novels are Etienne Leroux's *Seven Days at the Silbersteins*, Etienne van Heerden's *Ancestral Voices* and Nadine Gordimer's *The Conservationist*. The paradigm of border thinking is chosen due to the similarities between its objectives, on the one hand, and the critical stance of the modern *plaasroman*, on the other hand. Both border thinking and the modern *plaasroman* can be described as a response to racial injustice and inequality. For this reason, it would seem that a study of modern *plaasromans* is well-suited as a context for the application of border thinking. Given that previous studies addressed challenges by modern *plaasromans* to racist and nationalist ideals, moreover, a study that deploys border thinking (focusing on racial injustice) is considered to be a valuable critical contribution.

In order to determine whether these three novels are expressions of border thinking, this study first formulates three templates of 'literary border thinking' (border thinking that is expressed in literature). Criteria that are derived from these templates are then used to determine whether, and the extent to which, these novels represent literary border thinking.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE *PLAASROMAN* AND BORDER THINKING

Studies of the *plaasroman* (farm novel in Afrikaans) genre show that the ideals it represents are comparable to those linked to Afrikaner nationalism (Devarenne, 2009:628, 630, 632-3; Warnes, 2011:123-4). According to Nicole Devarenne, the period in which this genre originates – specifically the 1920s and 1930s – was "one of emerging Afrikaner nationalism" (2009:628, 630-2). In early *plaasromans*, values are found that are racist and exemplary of what Devarenne calls a 'racist nationalist ideology' (Viljoen, 2004:107, 111, 114, 122; Devarenne, 2009:627, 628-33, 636). Later farm novels revisited this legacy (Van der Merwe, 2001:173-7; Van Coller, 2008:32-33; Devarenne, 2009:627, 633-5). In later farm novels, Gerrit Olivier notes, the "situation on the farm" is "explore[d] … as a product of past injustices and transgressions"; in addition, they are found to have "restor[ed] the bodily and sexual presence of black characters" (2012:319, 320).

In these later farm novels, strong similarities are found to the concept of border thinking, as characterised by Walter D. Mignolo and Madina V. Tlostanova. Mignolo and Tlostanova describe border thinking as a kind of epistemic shift (2006:214) that is traced to "anti-imperial epistemic responses to the colonial difference" (2006:208); the concept of border thinking is concerned with what they call the "liberation of different layers (racial, sexual, gender, class, linguistic, epistemic, religious, etc.) from oppression" (2006:208). With its racial hierarchy, it seems that the concept of the farm (a 'cornerstone' of the tradition that is associated with Afrikaner ideology [Van der Merwe, 2001:165]) is an embodiment of the principles of the

colonial difference (Mignolo, 2000:13; Van der Merwe, 2001:164-5; Mignolo, 2002b:66; Veronelli, 2015:111). Both later farm novels (The term I use is 'modern *plaasromans.*') and border thinking are therefore a response to, and a critique of, racial oppression or injustice: the former are found to 'restore' black characters' bodily and sexual presence; the latter seeks liberation from racial and sexual oppression.

In response to these similarities, this study considers whether the subgenre of the modern *plaasroman* (defined as a form that challenges both racist, nationalist ideals and the ideals of the early *plaasroman*) is an expression of literary border thinking. Three novels are explored to this end: *Seven Days at the Silbersteins* (Leroux, 1972), *Ancestral Voices* (Van Heerden, 1989) and *The Conservationist* (Gordimer, 1974). Three templates of literary border thinking are used to assess whether, and the extent to which, these novels are an expression of literary border thinking.

1.2. THE FARM AS A CONCEPT AND THE *PLAASROMAN*

In South Africa, the farm is a concept in which far more is encompassed than a piece of arable land. As a trope, it is imbued with significance that is both literal and figurative, fictional and historical. The African farm in literature is traced to at least the nineteenth century, with Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) a prominent example thereof (Devarenne, 2009:627-8). Schreiner is the direct precursor to Afrikaans farm novelists, such as C. M. van den Heever and Johannes van Melle (Coetzee, 1988:79-80; Devarenne, 2009:628). According to J. M. Coetzee (1988:78, 82-3), the context in which farm novelists were writing involved major developments in Afrikaner history, such as "conflict between farmers and land speculators … [and] the hardening of class boundaries between the landed and the landless".

Further complexities were added when details emerged regarding Vlakplaas (a name that means 'shallow or level farm or place'), where state agents tortured and murdered their victims, and which transformed the "archetypal retreat … [into a] site of horror" (Van Wyk Smith 2001:19-20). More recently, 'farm murders' brought farms back into public discourse (Mitchley, 2019), while proposed changes to the property clause, namely section 25 of the South African constitution, is a matter of direct interest to the farming community (Phakati, 2019).

As a concept with symbolic/ideological relevance, the farm is closely associated with aspects of Afrikaner discourse. According to C. N. van der Merwe (2001:161), the concurrent processes of 'industrialisation and urbanisation,' firstly, and budding Afrikanerdom, secondly, meant that "Afrikaner identity was linked to the … rural, agrarian way of life". As he traces the farm concept through works of Afrikaans literature – including C.P. Hoogenhout's *Catharina, die Dogter van die Advokaat* (1879), the first novel to be published in Afrikaans – Van der Merwe is most interested in the so-called "ideological content of the farm concept" (2001: 162, 164-82, 184). Hein Viljoen, Minnie Lewis and Chris N. van der Merwe describe the farm as 'an icon of Afrikaner identity' that "symboliz[es] a heroic struggle against the wilderness" (2004:10). Recalling his school education, Van Wyk Smith notes that the "nexus of the 'boer' and his 'plaas'"[1] (which "express[ed] … the very soul of the Afrikaner's being") was deeply inculcated (2001:17-18).

Though the concept of the farm is affirming in Afrikaner discourse, in many respects it is exclusionary. Consequently, one may compare it to other forms in which Afrikanerdom, or

[1] The terms 'boer' and 'plaas' mean 'farmer' and 'farm,' respectively (Eksteen, 1997:88, 440). 'Boer' also means one of a Dutch settler community that was renamed 'Afrikaners' (Morris, 1992:114).

ideals linked to Afrikanerdom, were articulated.[2] The farm is exclusionary to the extent that numerous prejudices can be ascribed to it. These prejudices manifest in the racial distribution of farm labour and resources, as well as a racial hierarchy of knowledge/epistemology. Through a brief overview of interventions that frame the farm concept vis-à-vis ideals that are related to Afrikaner discourse, the farm concept will be shown to express these prejudices. In my research, the farm concept that embodies any of these racial prejudices is labelled 'the farm narrative.'

While drawing on elements of *Catharina, die Dogter van die Advokaat*, Van der Merwe describes aspects of what he calls traditional Afrikaner ideology; the farm is "a cornerstone of the tradition", he adds (2001:164-5). Van der Merwe explains that the farm ideology consists of "an interconnected system of values" and includes, among other things, racism and nationalism (2001:183). According to Van der Merwe, the farm in Hoogenhout's novel is 'hierarchical' (2001:164-5). Specifically, "the prevalent hierarchy provides security to the white male, with the whites as masters of the blacks" (2001:164-5) (In this context, the term 'male' means 'Afrikaner' [Van der Merwe, 2001:161-2].) Given that Afrikaners were 'white,' and of Dutch descent (Van der Merwe, 2001:167; Morris, 1992:114), racially they are considered 'Western'/'European.'[3] Hence, the farm concept is conceived of as including a race hierarchy of which Westerners (specifically white Afrikaners) are topmost.

[2] A detailed study of the ways Afrikaner discourse shaped and influenced apartheid is T.D. Moodie's *The rise of Afrikanerdom: power, apartheid, and the Afrikaner civil religion* (1975). For a comprehensive history of apartheid, see *The rise and fall of apartheid* (Welsh, 2009).

[3] For my purpose, the term 'Western'/'European' is synonymous with 'white.' Various scholars on whose work I draw relate 'whiteness' to 'Europe' or 'the West' (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992:550; Escobar, 1995:193; Mignolo, 2009:177; Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012:63). Dutch forces were also among those that contributed to the Western imperial expansion, a phenomenon with which Westerners are associated (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012:3, 40). Thus, it is reasonable to describes Afrikaners, who are 'white' and of Dutch ancestry, as Westerners/Europeans.

In the context of traditional Afrikaner ideology, this race hierarchy impacts on farm labour. Van der Merwe describes the Afrikaner in terms of his superiority and the invisibility of farm labourers (2001:164). The white male (Afrikaner) is 'master' of blacks (Van der Merwe, 2001:165).[4] In this reference to labour, Van der Merwe imbues the farm concept with a system of racialised labour, in which Westerners are superior.

By analysing J. M. du Preez's 'master-symbols' (elements that constitute Afrikaner identity), one finds that not just labour but resources are distributed according to this race hierarchy (1983:73, in [Cloete, 1992:45]). Du Preez echoes Van der Merwe in that, in two of the master-symbols, the farm concept is framed in terms of anti-black racism[5] and Afrikanerdom: "South Africa is an agricultural country and the Afrikaner *volk* are farmers (*Boerevolk*)" (The term '*volk*' has strong ties to nationalism in its evocation of an Afrikaner nation) (Dubow, 1992:219-20, 233); "whites are superior, blacks inferior". In a third master-symbol, he expands this view by attributing total propriety of South Africa to the Afrikaner – and thus to the farm concept: "South Africa belongs to the Afrikaner". This symbol describes Afrikaners as those to whom the control of resources is attributed. Thus, the farm concept is found to exhibit racial distribution not just of labour but also of resources.

The race hierarchy permeates the farm concept in matters relating to knowledge/epistemology, in addition to labour and resources. Citing Mark Sanders, Christopher Warnes argues that the *plaasroman* is "the genre par excellence for the literary performance" of theories regarding the Afrikaners' shared humanity (2011:124). According to Sanders, these theories were

[4] The meaning of 'master' in this instance is "[a] man who has people working for him, especially servants or slaves" ("Main definitions of master…", n.d.).
[5] The term 'racism' is used to describe "[p]rejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized" ("Meaning of racism…", n.d.).

exclusionary, for "[t]he ties imagined as enabling the attainment of full humanity for Afrikaners are the same ones that will … mean withholding it from other Africans" (2002:74). By way of example, he notes: "[I]t was possible for an Afrikaans intellectual to treat black intellectual life as irrelevant, as if black Africans did not partake of 'spiritual life'" (2002:74). Together Warnes and Sanders show that the farm concept, typified by the *plaasroman*, conjure a hierarchy in which Western intellectuals, and their associated knowledge/epistemology, are uppermost.

The racial prejudices of the farm concept are relevant in that they reflect certain aspects of decolonial criticism, with which border thinking is associated: the coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge (These elements are defined later in this chapter.) Insofar as these shared elements reflect meaningful parallels and intersections of the critical contexts of the *plaasroman*, on one hand, and border thinking, on the other hand, these elements further justify my choice of border thinking as a lens for analysis. In referring to the them, I have sought, moreover, to introduce a discussion of the *plaasroman*, in which racial prejudice (specifically as it concerns aspects of Afrikaner discourse) is a steady source of concern.

The advent of the *plaasroman* gave new life to the farm as a trope in South African literature, this time as a reflection of certain 'Afrikaner' concepts (Devarenne, 2009:627-8). The early *plaasroman* draws heavily on concepts with an 'Afrikaner' theme. In addition, early *plaasromans* display traces of what Devarenne labels a racist nationalist ideology (2009:627). The modern *plaasroman* deviates from these early texts in its criticism of ideals that are linked, firstly, to early *plaasromans* and, secondly, to Afrikanerdom. Thus, the *plaasroman* genre can be said to transform from a form that advocated Afrikaner ideals into a subgenre in which that legacy is critiqued. Within the history of the *plaasroman*, several factors are found to have

influenced the genre, its origins and subsequent development. These factors will be considered in the following discussion.

The term '*plaasroman*' is used to describe a genre of South African writing that emerged during the 1920s (Viljoen, 2004:109). As a 'formal type,' it emerged during, and is thus connected with, a period of great social and economic uncertainty: as Viljoen notes, it was a time in which not only was the Afrikaner "strongly associated with the farm and with landownership", but the so-called "agrarian way of life in South Africa was … giving way under the pressures of urbanization and the market economy" (2004:109). Among the works that he sees to be representative of this period is D.F. Malherbe's *Die meulenaar* (1926), which Ampie Coetzee considers the first 'true' Afrikaans farm novel (Coetzee, 1996:125, 127; Viljoen, 2004:107, 109). The term for this form (i.e. the farm novel in Afrikaans), Coetzee notes, is '*plaasroman*' (1996:125).

Among the noteworthy farm novelists of this era are Van Melle, Malherbe and Van den Heever, in addition to whom are C. Louis Leipoldt, Abraham Jonker and Jochem von Bruggen (Coetzee, 1988:78; Devarenne, 2009:627-33). According to Coetzee, some shared interests are identified due to societal issues with which writers, particularly Afrikaans writers, were concerned (Coetzee, 1988:83). Among these interests, Coetzee notes (1988:83), is a lauding of the farm's originators: the ancestors "carved [the farm] out of the wilds, out of primal, inchoate matter"; they are the 'originators of lineages', "men and women of heroic strength, fortitude, and faith". In my research, the term 'early *plaasromans*' is used to denote farm novels that fall into this category.

Proof of the early *plaasroman*'s confluence with ideals linked to early Afrikanerdom is seen in the works of Van den Heever. Though it was Malherbe who wrote the first *plaasroman*, the title of 'most considerable' farm novelist in Afrikaans goes to Van den Heever, at least from Coetzee's perspective (1988:83). More than a prolific farm novelist, Van den Heever was an essayist and a supporter of "the cause of the Afrikaans language and literature" (Haarhoff & Van den Heever, 1934:v; Coetzee, 1988:82-114). "Van den Heever's works lent credibility to a story about Afrikanerdom's rural origins", Devarenne writes; in this story, women are 'mothers of the nation' (2009:632). Owing to their interest in ancestors – that is, particularly in women as 'mothers of the nation' – these works seem typical of the early *plaasroman*.

Nonetheless, their proximity to ideals linked to Afrikanerdom has meant that the works of early farm novelists provoke criticism for their treatment of race issues. As Devarenne argues (2009:628-33), Van den Heever and his peers were writing in a "[social context] of emerging Afrikaner nationalism". Their work channelled 'nationalist energies,' conveying what Devarenne labels a "racist … nationalist ideology" (2009:627, 628-33, 636). In Malherbe's *Die meulenaar*, a difference in class separates those who are white from the 'jolly coloured' characters (Viljoen, 2004:111). In the novel *Somer*, Van den Heever paints coloured characters in the style of the stereotypical 'jolly hotnot' – "noisy, merry … with little sense of responsibility, [and] rarely tempered by superficial feelings of sadness" (Viljoen, 2004:107, 114, 122). In *Gallows Gecko* (1932), Leipoldt's hero feels that "Africa belongs by right to the white man" (Devarenne, 2009:633). When one considers these examples, it is not surprising that the subgenre of the early *plaasroman* is seen as a defence of 'white supremacy' (Devarenne, 2009:627, 633).

In later years, the *plaasroman* was revisited by writers to critique the legacy with which the *plaasroman* genre is associated (Van der Merwe, 2001:173-7; Van Coller, 2008:32-33; Devarenne, 2009:627, 633-5). These writers challenged the ideals of the early *plaasroman* as well as those that were associated with a racist-nationalist Afrikaner discourse (Van der Merwe, 2001:175; Viljoen, 2004:109; Van Coller, 2008:32-3; Devarenne, 2009: 633-5, 636-7; Olivier, 2012:317, 319-21). According to Viljoen, this new form is an 'ironic revision' of earlier farm novels (2004:109); H. P. van Coller calls it a 'parody' (2008:32). For my purpose, these novels are dubbed 'modern *plaasromans*.'

Generally speaking, it is thought that the subgenre of the modern *plaasroman* originates either in or about the 1960s (Viljoen, 2004:109; Van Coller, 2008:32; Devarenne, 2009:634).[6] Farm novels published in this period, or else in later years, include Etienne Leroux's *Seven Days at the Silbersteins* (published as *Sewe dae by die Silbersteins* in 1962), André Letoit's *Somer II* and Etienne van Heerden's *Ancestral Voices* (published as *Toorberg* in 1986) (Devarenne, 2009:634-8; Penfold & De Kock, 2015:73). Other modern *plaasromans* have been published in both English and Afrikaans (Olivier, 2012:317-321). For instance, Nadine Gordimer's *The Conservationist* (1974) and J. M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) are two novels in which the Afrikaans farm novel crosses into English-language territory (Gorak, 1991:254; Van Wyk Smith, 2001:22, 31; Devarenne, 2009:633-4). Where dates are concerned, the precise origins of the modern *plaasroman* are unclear (Devarenne, 2009:634; Olivier, 2012:318); however, as evidenced by one example, Marlene van Niekerk's *Agaat* (2004), the subgenre has outlived its origins in a context of institutional racism ("Apartheid", n.d.; Devarenne, 2009:640-1).

[6] During the 1940s and 1950s, however, the Afrikaans farm novel was "mostly a popular light genre" (Viljoen, 2004:109). This 'secondary type' was a variant of the early *plaasroman* subgenre that "turn[ed] the original impulse into stereotype and cliché" (Viljoen, 2004:109). No texts from this period will be considered in this research.

Key attributes of the modern *plaasroman* include, firstly, a critique of early *plaasroman* ideals and, secondly, a critique of racist-nationalist ideals linked to Afrikanerdom. The modern *plaasroman* is seen thus as engaging with the farm narrative, or the farm concept that embodies racial prejudice. By engaging with the farm narrative, the form is considered to confront concepts that are associated with the field of decolonial criticism, specifically the coloniality of power and coloniality of knowledge. For this reason, one may argue that a study of the modern *plaasroman* subgenre that considers racist-nationalist ideals would be well-served by a framework that is derived from decolonial criticism.

Owing to the parallels between border thinking and the modern *plaasroman* (see the previous section), the framework that I use is border thinking. Prior to this, it will be necessary not only to define border thinking in greater detail, but also to summarise its critical context. The critical context of border thinking is decolonial criticism; that context is given in order to clarify key terms and to better conceptualise the elements of border thinking.

1.3. BORDER THINKING: KEY TERMS AND THE THREE ELEMENTS OF BORDER THINKING

The following section outlines the critical context of border thinking (namely decolonial criticism) so that key terms may be explicated (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:206; Grosfoguel, 2009:13; Mignolo, 2013:137). These terms are important, not just to border thinking, but to the concept of the farm narrative, which includes several of them. They are also found in the 'templates' (see Chapter 2) that I will use to assess whether, and the extent to which, the selected novels are expressions of literary border thinking. Once the critical context has been given, the

concept of border thinking is defined and attributed with three constituent elements, which will inform my study of the modern *plaasroman*.

Various scholars of decoloniality are convinced that the concept of Western or Eurocentred modernity requires interrogation (Mignolo, 2002a:936-7; Grosfoguel, 2009:21; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:vii). In this context, the term 'modernity' is used to denote an array of social, epistemic and technological processes starting in the Renaissance that are seen as beneficial to humanity (Mignolo, 2002a:939-40; Mignolo, 2006:17; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:vii-viii). Specifically, Western modernity promised what Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni describes as "a brave modern world in which rationality and techno-scientific thought would be able to overcome all the obstacles standing in the way of human progress" (2013:vii).[7] According to scholars like Mignolo and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, modernity does not benefit all humanity as is claimed but is instead exclusionary (Mignolo, 2006:16-17; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:vii).

This so-called 'darker side' of modernity (De Oliveira Andreotti, 2011:383) is evident in the way early modernity relates to colonialism. In this context, the term 'colonialism' is taken to refer to the "direct, political, social and cultural domination [that] was established by the Europeans over the conquered of all continents" (Quijano, 2007:168), and is key to the development of Western modernity.[8] The consequences thereof were far-reaching, as will be demonstrated.

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[7] Numerous critics treat 'Europe' and 'the West' as though the two terms are closely associated (Mignolo, 2006:14, 31; Quijano, 2007:168, 169, 174, 176; Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009:13, 16; Mignolo, 2013: 133, 136, 146-7). In his essay on rationality (a paradigm with which border thinking is contrasted [Mignolo, 2013:133-4, 136, 137]), Aníbal Quijano conflates 'Western' and 'European' (2007:169, 172-4). Given that my research concerns border thinking and relies heavily on Quijano's concept of the rational knowledge relation, I too use these terms interchangeably.

[8] Edgardo Lander (2000:525) offers a view in which colonialism is a 'condition' that enables the development of the 'modern West.' Vanessa De Oliveira Androetti suggests that colonialism is "constitutive of modernity", and that it is a "Eurocentric process of expansion of a mode of knowing and representation" (2011:383).

As the West's influence was consolidated, both the colonised and colonisers were assigned roles (e.g. merchant, peasant, slave, serf) based on their distinct race categories (Quijano, 2007:171). Being 'European' meant one was 'higher,' racially and socially, than the other race categories (Veronelli, 2015:110-1). This paradigm will be referred to as 'the colonial race hierarchy.' Not just people, but epistemologies were ordered in accordance with the colonial race hierarchy: if an epistemology was based on one of six European languages (French, English, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese), or else Greek or Latin, it was considered legitimate (Mignolo, 2013:133, 137). The connection of Europe with the idea of legitimacy led to a process of repression of local knowledges in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East (Quijano, 2007:169-170). Based on these comments, it is clear that the consequences of Western colonialism are felt across an array of areas.

Though the phenomenon of direct colonialism has ended (for the most part), its consequences, in terms of 'work and resources,' are still in evidence (Quijano, 2007:168, 169). Aníbal Quijano writes:

> In fact, if we observe the main lines of exploitation and social domination on a global scale, the main lines of world power today, and the distribution of resources and work among the world population, it is very clear that the large majority of the exploited, the dominated, the discriminated against, are precisely the members of the 'races', 'ethnies', or 'nations' into which the colonized populations, were categorized in the formative process of that world power, from the conquest of America and onward. (2007:168-169)

In matters of 'work and resources,' Quijano notes, the signs of colonialism are still evident. Specifically, as regards work and resources, distribution still follows the colonial race hierarchy (as evidenced by the terms 'races', 'ethnies', 'nations' and 'colonised populations'). The effects of colonialism are found thus to have outlived historical colonialism (Walsh, 2007:229); to describe them as 'effects of colonialism' (as opposed to a broader phenomenon) therefore seems inaccurate. An alternative is 'coloniality' (Walsh, 2007:229). In his rendering of the relation

that exists between the West and non-West (a relationship of 'colonial domination' [Quijano, 2007: 168, 169]) as in the above passage, the term Quijano uses is 'Eurocentred coloniality of power' (Quijano, 2007:171). Hence, when describing the distribution of labour and resources according to the colonial race hierarchy, I use the term 'coloniality of power.'

Like the consequences in terms of labour/resources, evidence of the epistemological consequences of colonialism has endured as well. This evidence includes the espousal of an 'established racial hierarchy,' and of a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge (Quijano, 2000, in [Walsh, 2007:229]). For example, Catherine Walsh argues that "indigenous and black peoples are still considered … as incapable of serious 'intellectual' thinking" (2007:229). Following Walsh (2007:229), the term that I use to describe the sum of these epistemological consequences is 'coloniality of knowledge.'

The concept of border thinking is seen as an alternative to Western rationality (Mignolo, 2013:133-4, 136, 137, 145). The latter must thus be explicated (specifically what I call the rational knowledge relation). As I show, the rational knowledge relation is seen to constitute the phenomenon known as the coloniality of knowledge, to which border thinking is a response (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:218-9). Moreover, I will show that the rational knowledge relation can be perceived in terms of the '*humanitas*' and the '*anthropos*.' These terms are used to derive templates for literary border thinking (see Chapter 2), and as such, they are critical to this study.

In the discourse that is Western rationality, knowledge stems from a relation that involves two entities – a subject and an object (Quijano, 2007:172-3). These entities are distinct from each other: the subject is "bearer of 'reason'" and is capable of reflection (Quijano, 2007:172-3); the

object meanwhile is different to the subject at the level of its nature and has properties that "demarcate it and … position it in relation to the other 'objects'" (Quijano, 2007:172-3). The term 'rational knowledge relation' will be used for the relation that involves subject and object entities.

As a concept, the rational knowledge relation is found to constitute not just Western rationality, but also the coloniality of knowledge. This point is seen in how, historically, the rational knowledge relation reflects elements of the coloniality of knowledge; these elements are the espousal of a Eurocentred perspective of knowledge and the colonial race hierarchy.

During colonisation, Quijano notes, the culture of Europe was transformed into a "universal cultural model" (2007:169), meaning that colonisers' 'patterns of producing knowledge' were regarded, along with other aspects, as a kind of 'aspiration' (2007:169). One outcome of Western colonialism, in other words, was the spread of a Eurocentred perspective of culture, including knowledge. Western rationality (and thus the rational knowledge relation) is a type of European knowledge (Quijano, 2007:171-2) and may thus be regarded as constituting this Eurocentred perspective of knowledge.

The rational knowledge relation is also expressed in terms that evoke the principles of the colonial race hierarchy. According to Quijano, "[t]he emergence of the idea of the 'West' … is an admission of identity – that is of relations with other cultural experiences, of differences with other cultures" (2007:173). By alluding to 'difference,' particularly from the West, this quote calls to mind the racial structure of the colonial race hierarchy. Later, Quijano confirms this impression, noting that, to the West, the cultures of the non-West seemed inferior: "[T]o that … Western perception in full formation, those differences were admitted primarily above all as

inequalities in the hierarchical sense" (2007:173-4, emphasis added). The basis of these inequalities is the perceived absence of rational subjects that distinguishes the non-West from the West: only Europe can 'harbour' rational subjects (Quijano, 2007:174); other cultures can be 'objects' or contain objects ("the 'other' is … present, can be present, only in an 'objectivised' mode") but not subjects and as such, they – non-Western cultures – are inferior (Quijano, 2007:173-4).

As a reflection of the coloniality of knowledge, the rational knowledge relation can be said to warrant border thinking. Further details are now added in order to describe the subject and object entities of this relation; these entities are associated with the West and the non-West, respectively.

By showing that the non-West's inferiority is conceived from the perspective of the subject entity, through their intervention, Tlostanova and Mignolo expand the concept of the rational knowledge relation (2009:12, 17, 19). In their application of Quijano's discourse, Tlostanova and Mignolo define the *humanitas* (a 'subject' position) and its relationship with the 'other' or *anthropos* (2009:11, 17, 19). Tlostanova and Mignolo describe the relationship in terms of the *humanitas*/subject and its 'exteriority' (2009:17); the term that Quijano uses, when describing the subject-object relation, is 'externality' [Quijano, 2007:172]). The unequal character of the relation involves a form of 'domination,' according to Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009:11); in Quijano's study, this term is used for the relationship between the West and non-West (2007:169). These discursive similarities show that Tlostanova and Mignolo are employing Quijano's discourse as it pertains to the rational knowledge relation.

New terms are added by Tlostanova and Mignolo in the form of the *humanitas* and *anthropos* concepts. These concepts are now used to delineate the roles in the rational knowledge relation that are embodied by the West and non-West. As I mentioned, the *humanitas* role is linked to the subject of the rational knowledge relation, a Western entity; *anthropos* is a term used to describe the non-Western object entity (or, as Tlostanova and Mignolo suggest, the so-called 'other' [Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009:12, 16-7; Mignolo, 2013:134]).[9] Tlostanova and Mignolo add further details to the roles that have been given to the West/*humanitas* and non-West/*anthropos*: "The distinction [between the *humanitas* and *anthropos*] was a pure, sole, and unilateral decision made by those who considered themselves, and their friends, to be the *humanitas*" (2009:12). Being a *humanitas* therefore means that one sees non-Westerners as inferior – as *anthropos*. Not only is the *humanitas* Western but, as this quote shows, the role of the *humanitas* also involves the classification of the non-West and the creation of the *anthropos*. When one is *anthropos*, one is considered to be inferior by the *humanitas*, in addition to which one also exists in an 'objectivised mode' (to borrow Quijano's term).

Concepts that have been proffered – including, but not limited to, the colonial race hierarchy, *humanitas* and *anthropos* – provide context to my definition of border thinking, as well as clarification on key terms. Having furnished the groundwork, my next step is to define border thinking in terms of its constituent elements. To this end, various studies are used to describe border thinking as comprising three distinct elements (Mignolo, 2000, 2002b, 2005, 2006, 2013; Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006; Delgado & Romero, 2000).

[9] In practice, the *anthropos* category is broader than that which is invoked in this research. According to Mignolo, "the *anthropos* ('the other') impinges on the lives of men and women of color, gays and lesbians, people and languages of the non-European/US world from China to the Middle East and from Bolivia to Ghana" (2013:134).

The first element of border thinking is recognition of the phenomenon known as the colonial difference. Not only is border thinking "unthinkable without understanding the colonial difference", according to Mignolo, but "it is the recognition of the colonial difference … that demands border thinking" (2000:6). In this context, 'colonial difference' is seen as synonymous with the colonial race hierarchy: it is defined vis-à-vis race categories – namely Western and non-Western categories – much like the colonial race hierarchy (Mignolo, 2002b:66; Mignolo, 2006:7; Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:209); the colonial difference is constituted by discourses that were excluded by the West (Mignolo, 2002b:66) and reflects thus the colonial race hierarchy in its impact on non-Western epistemologies; and finally, as Mignolo notes, the colonial difference is "articulated by the coloniality of power" (2002b:68), a quality it shares with the colonial race hierarchy.

Another part of this element is the rejection of ideals that are associated with the colonial difference, and relate to the 'inferiority' of the *anthropos*. Once the colonial difference has been recognised, Mignolo suggests, one response would be to 'delink' (a term that "implies border thinking" [Mignolo, 2006:26]):

> [O]nce you realize that your inferiority is a fiction created to dominate you, and you do not want to either assimilate or accept in resignation the bad luck of having been born equal to all human beings, but having lost your equality shortly after being born, because of the place you were born, then you delink. Delinking means that you do not accept the options that are available to you. (2013:135)

The act of delinking is thus tantamount to the rejection of ideals linked to the colonial difference, namely the inferiority of the *anthropos* (Mignolo, 2013:134-5). Further consequences are inferred for the entities that comprise the rational knowledge relation, specifically the *humanitas* and *anthropos*. The relation itself is inferred from the term 'dominate,' since 'domination' is a key feature of that relation (see earlier). Therefore, in the

context of the rational knowledge relation, the rejection involves that of the principles by which the *anthropos* is objectivised.

The second element of border thinking is based on its function as it relates to the 'de-colonial epistemic shift.' That is, not only is border thinking "a way to move toward the de-colonial shift" (2006:218), but, as argued by Mignolo and Tlostanova, the de-colonial epistemic shift also involves "the empowerment and liberation of different layers (racial, sexual, gender, class, linguistic, epistemic, religious, etc.) from oppression" (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:208). The origin of this oppression is the colonial difference, as implied by Mignolo and Tlostanova (2006:208); the 'oppressed' are thus non-Westerners, specifically the 'inferior' *anthropos* (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:208-9).

Another purpose is attributed and should be considered in terms of the second element of border thinking. As a path leading to what Mignolo and Tlostanova call the de-colonial epistemic shift, border thinking is aimed at the "undermining of the assumption upon which imperial power is … enacted" (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:208). In this instance, the term 'assumption' is taken to mean the claim of the West's epistemology to being universal: Mignolo and Tlostanova note that the "assumption of the inferiority … of the Other" serves partly to "justify oppression and exploitation" (2006:206); they imply also that 'other' epistemologies were replaced as part of "imperial expansion" (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:206-208). The assumption that 'others' are inferior seems thus to justify imperial expansion, a form of oppression/exploitation that involved the replacement of 'other' epistemologies; hence, it is the 'assumption' that Western epistemology is universal. Part of the second element of border thinking is thus the undermining of the claim of Western epistemology to universal applicability.

The third element is a process or a 'presupposition,' to borrow one of Mignolo's terms (2005:124). In comparing four scholars, two from India and two from 'the West,' Mignolo notes:

> Border epistemology is a powerful one for the simple reason that it is based, on the one hand, on the critical examination of non-Western languages and *traditions* and, on the other, on the critical examination of Western languages and *traditions*. *Border epistemology presupposes a double critique* (of Shiva and Nussbaum, for example, as well as Nandy and Sen) … that can transcend the *modern/colonial structure* and contribute to move all toward a *trans-modern world*. (2005:124, emphasis in the original).

The third element of border thinking (which, in this instance, is synonymous with 'border epistemology' [Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:208]) is what Mignolo calls a double critique, a process that involves languages and traditions of both the West and non-West. In this passage, Mignolo is advocating for a critique that considers Western discourses (embodied here by Marta Nussbaum and Amartya Sen) alongside non-Western discourses (embodied here by Vandana Shiva and Ashis Nandy) (2005:112, 113, 115). The double critique is not limited to matters relating to science, as it is here (Mignolo, 2005:113, 115); it is limited by language and tradition. During an interview with L. Elena Delgado and Rolando J. Romero, Mignolo describes language in terms of its implications for 'creativity' (2000:13); in other words, the scope of the double critique is extended to include, for example, the literature of the West and non-West.

One can summarise the elements of border thinking, which have been discussed, as follows: the recognition and rejection of the colonial race hierarchy (and thus of the colonial difference); the liberation of 'oppressed layers' along with the 'undermining' of Western epistemology's claim to universal applicability; and a double critique of Western and non-Western languages and/or traditions. These elements make up my definition of border thinking.

1.4. USING BORDER THINKING TO EXPLORE THE MODERN *PLAASROMAN*

By referring to the critical context of border thinking, one can see how features thereof intersect with elements of the farm narrative (that is, insofar as the coloniality of power and knowledge reflect both the racial distribution of labour and resources and the racial hierarchy of knowledge/epistemology). In addition to that clarification, the previous section helped to proffer a better concept of border thinking, which can be used for a meaningful discussion about the need for border thinking in a study that concerns the modern *plaasroman*. That need will be discussed presently. Specifically, I will show how, in several studies, the modern *plaasroman* is framed in terms that evoke the three elements of border thinking. Given these parallels and similarities, one might say that, by considering these three elements, one can enrich current critical views on the modern *plaasroman* subgenre. Two further comments are made to conclude this section: first, I will note how these novels (*Seven Days at the Silbersteins*, *Ancestral Voices* and *The Conservationist*) were selected; second, I explain how border thinking is adapted in order to examine texts of a literary nature.

In several studies of the modern *plaasroman*, an aversion to racism, or ideals of racial discrimination, can be identified. Van der Merwe points out that, during the 1960s, Afrikaans writers began challenging what he calls 'Afrikaner ideological tradition' (2001:172). A consequence of this challenge was, among other things, that "[r]acism on the farm was exposed" (2001:172). According to Devarenne, later farm novels are part of a 'leftist tradition' that "interrogat[es] … mythical underpinnings of a white supremacist definition of Afrikaner identity" (2009:627, 634). In their criticism of anti-black racism, these novels seem to recognise and reject ideals of the colonial difference, mirroring the first element of border thinking.

In contrasting early farm novels with those that emerged later in the century (2012:316, 318), Olivier notes that "[l]ater farm novels address the silences in Van den Heever, Van Bruggen and others" (2012:319). Through their reorienting of the *plaasroman* genre, later farm novels are found to "explore the situation on the farm as a product of past injustices and transgressions"; they "restor[e] the bodily and sexual presence of black characters" (Olivier, 2012:320). In this restoration – presumably of those whom the early *plaasroman* 'silenced' – moreover, such novels would seem not only to be 'liberating' black characters, but also to critique the farm's meaning in the early *plaasroman*. The new form indicts that meaning, and as such ideals that are linked to the early *plaasroman* (a subgenre that is Western-oriented, as evidenced by its interest in white supremacy) are undermined. The new form is thus evocative of the second element of border thinking.

The third element of border thinking, namely a double critique, may be found in *The Conservationist* (Devarenne, 2009:634). In this English farm novel, there are two claims that can be seen in regards to farm ownership. First, there is Mehring, the farm owner who, as Van Wyk Smith suggests, appears emblematic of the 'domination' of Afrikaner nationalism (2001:29-30). Second, there is the corpse that is found and is "hastily buried"; the body is that of a black man who usurps Mehring's claim to ownership (Van Wyk Smith, 2001:30). The usurping thereof is mirrored in what Van Wyk Smith labels "the emergent text of Zulu cosmology"; that text is triumphant, for it "gradually usurps the stability and status of Mehring's own text (2001:30). The use of Zulu cosmology calls to mind the terms of the double critique. In this case, the double critique might concern two discourses on the concept of land ownership: one discourse is Mehring's and, therefore, evokes the 'domination' of (Western)

Afrikaner nationalism; the other is linked to the dead body and (non-Western) Zulu cosmology (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2005:348-51).

Critical discourse on the modern *plaasroman* is revelatory given its evocation of border thinking. As was shown, elements or border thinking are found in a wide range of critical contexts due to the following observations: in its challenge to white supremacy, it seems that the modern *plaasroman* recognises and rejects the colonial difference; the restoration of black characters is both a form of liberation, on one hand, and a challenge to the farm's meaning as per the early *plaasroman*, a challenge that undermines its applicability, on the other hand; in *The Conservationist*, two discourses are evoked in regards to land ownership, forming thus a double critique.

In this summary of modern *plaasroman* criticism, elements of a range of texts have been considered. However, the goal of this research is to assess whether, and the extent to which, specific novels can be considered to embody border thinking; thus, it will contribute to criticism of the modern *plaasroman*. To ensure confidence in this study, novels must be selected that exemplify the modern *plaasroman* subgenre. Key attributes of the modern *plaasroman*, as I mentioned, include critiques of racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals and those linked to the early *plaasroman*. In each chapter on a chosen novel (Chapters 3-5 of this study), prior to analysis, I will show why that novel is a modern *plaasroman*.

Another challenge must be surmounted before border thinking can applied meaningfully and in a manner that is illuminating. The above summary of modern *plaasroman* criticism does neither given that, in its citing of border thinking, the three elements are sketched only in broad outline; in practice, these elements employ concepts (e.g. *humanitas*, *anthropos*) that

were defined earlier in relation to decolonial criticism. As I wish to apply border thinking in a way that is both meaningful and illuminating, where possible I will do justice to that complexity.

To this end, my research is guided by essays that evoke border thinking in a study of literary texts. In particular, these studies will be used to derive templates for 'literary border thinking' (my term for border thinking in a literary text) that are then used to explore modern *plaasromans*. Chapter 2 is thus a review of three essays that identify border thinking in a range of texts. The ways that it manifests (discerned mainly from these essays, as opposed to the texts themselves) are taken as templates for literary border thinking. In other words, each essay will be used to extrapolate a distinct template of literary border thinking based on insights on the text being considered. When the three novels are considered in Chapters 3-5, only one template is used to examine each of the modern *plaasromans*.

CHAPTER 2:

THREE TEMPLATES OF LITERARY BORDER THINKING

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to develop three templates that will be used to explore three novels in terms of literary border thinking. These templates are derived from studies that explore literary texts in terms that evoke the three elements of border thinking. Given this evocation, these studies are seen to provide keys insights on matters regarding the identification of literary border thinking. Each study shows the ways in which border thinking might manifest in literary texts (albeit, in three forms that correspond to their chosen texts).

Three templates of literary border thinking are derived using studies by Walter D. Mignolo (2006), José David Saldívar (2011) and Hermann Herlinghaus (2011). For each study, I will show how the three elements of border thinking (defined in Chapter 1) are embodied in the literary texts that are considered. With that said, my main interest is the essays (as opposed to the literary texts), which demonstrate which elements of the selected text ought to be considered.

2.2. MIGNOLO AND THE WORK OF WAMAN PUMA

The three elements in Mignolo's essay are seen in his reading of the work of Waman Puma de Ayala, "an Indian living in the Viceroyalty of Peru" (2006:19) (The term 'Indian' denotes "the diversity of Aymara- and Quechua-speaking communities" [Mignolo, 2006:5].) The purpose of this reading, seemingly, is to describe Waman Puma's works as a case of 'de-

linking,' or a challenge to Western epistemology. By studying this work as it is rendered by Mignolo, I show that, as a text, it exhibits the three elements of border thinking.

That Waman Puma's work is an expression of de-linking (which 'implies border thinking') (Mignolo, 2006:17, 19, 26) means that my interest in this study is justified: the ground seems ripe for literary border thinking. De-linking, according to Mignolo, "means to detach oneself from the rules of the game imposed by the hegemony of European Theo- and Ego-logical politics of knowledge/understanding" (2006:18); hence, it is a challenge to Western discourse, under which "Indians and Africans …. [were] colonized" (2006:17). In the case of Waman Puma's work, de-linking is also a challenge to "the tyranny of written Greek and Latin authority and tradition" (Mignolo, 2006:26). In the way that Mignolo uses it, the term 'Greek and Latin authority and tradition' is closely associated with the West and Theo- and Ego-logical politics of knowledge (Mignolo, 2006:10, 11, 14, 19, 26, 33). It is in this challenge specifically that Waman Puma's work exhibits the three elements of border thinking.

In his criticism of the Spaniards and of their 'abuse' of the Aymara- and Quechua- speaking communities (Mignolo, 2006:5, 26), one finds in Waman Puma's work the first element of border thinking. The so-called abuse can be said to evoke the terms of the colonial difference, given that the Aymara and Quechua were colonised (Mignolo, 2006:5, 17, 35). His criticism is thus seen to display a recognition of the colonial difference.

In addition, Waman Puma's critique is based on that of Bartolomé de Las Casas, a supporter of evangelisation who to this end employs 'Greek and Latin authority and tradition' (the basis of Western knowledge [Mignolo, 2006:5, 16]); however, unlike Las Casas, the traditions that Waman Puma cites are of Aymara and Quechua origin (Mignolo, 2006:26, 33). Waman Puma

therefore challenges the logic according to which the epistemologies of the non-West are seen as inferior, and owing to which they were silenced (2006:9, 14, 26). This challenge manifests in a rejection of the principles of 'Greek and Latin authority and tradition.' Given that they are Western and that they 'silenced' non-Western epistemology, the principles of Greek and Latin authority and tradition evoke the colonial race hierarchy (Mignolo, 2006:5-6, 7, 33). Hence, in his rejection of Greek and Latin authority and tradition, Waman Puma also rejects the colonial difference.

In his concern for the Incans affected by colonial rule, specifically their social roles, the second and third elements of border thinking are exhibited (Mignolo, 2006:19, 20). According to Mignolo, Waman Puma was concerned with the shift that transformed the social role Kipucamayoc (the term for an Incan accountant [2006:20]) into that of the Kilkaycamayoc. The latter differs from the former in that the Kilkaycamayoc possessed "ink, pen, and a table (instead of a set of knotted strings called Kipus)"; for this reason, or so it seems, the Kilkaycamayoc is "closer to the paradigm of the literate subject" (Mignolo, 2006:19, 20, 24). A study of the Kilkaycamayoc shows that this 'transformed' social role is an instance of the second and third elements of border thinking.

In this context, the so-called 'literate subject' constitutes a discourse that is associated with the West, since it is with the West that 'alphabetic literacy' is associated (Mignolo, 2006:7-8, 17, 19). Thus, the shift from one social role, the Kipucamayoc, to one that is 'more literate,' namely the Kilkaycamayoc, involves partial inclusion of a Western discourse. That this influence is partial as opposed to complete is seen in the discourse that Mignolo uses to describe the Kilkaycamayoc. Firstly, the Kilkaycamayoc is 'closer to', but not quite the same as, the so-called literate subject. Secondly, the roles of Kipucamayoc and Kilkaycamayoc

appear similar given that the main difference (at least as Mignolo suggests) is literacy (2006:19-20, 22). Thirdly, the term 'quilcay' (a reference to the Spanish writing system and thus seemingly a root of 'Kilkaycamayoc') is Quechua in origin; thus, the new social role (the Kilkaycamayoc) is closer to the discourse or epistemology of the non-West, than to that of the West (Mignolo, 2006:6, 20, 22, 35; Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:207).

The combination of these three factors – the incomplete change into a literate subject, the similarity of Kipucamayoc and Kilkaycamayoc social roles and proximity with non-Western discourse/epistemology – suggest that this shift was a Quechua program and had roots in Quechua needs and epistemologies (the change is a kind of 'experiment' [Mignolo, 2006:19, 20, 22]). The purpose of this shift is thus one that embodies the liberation of 'oppressed layers' (in this case, the racial layer). Quechua needs were met not by Greek and Latin authority and tradition, but, seemingly, by a discourse premised on Indian tradition. In other words, the new social role highlights the limits of Greek and Latin authority and tradition, and thus of the Western epistemology they underpin (Mignolo, 2006:33); more specifically, it is a rejection of the claim of Western epistemology to being universal. In this rejection and in its aim, which is the liberation of 'oppressed layers,' Waman Puma's work exhibits the second element of border thinking.

The third element of border thinking is implicit in the rejection of the West's claim to a kind of universal epistemic applicability. More specifically, the new social role is one that embodies neither 'original,' namely the Kipucamayoc, nor the literate subject; without both, though, it would not have existed. On one hand, it invokes an Indian tradition and its name is Quechua in origin. On the other hand, in its restrained 'use' of Western literacy, the Kilkaycamayoc hints at the limits of Western epistemology. Therefore, the Kilkaycamayoc

social role embodies a critique of the traditions of the West and non-West; in this 'double critique,' it embodies the third element of border thinking.

By exploring samples of Waman Puma's work that are relayed by Mignolo, I have shown that this work exhibits the three elements of border thinking. Waman Puma challenges Las Casas's critique of the abuse of Indians and thus the colonial race hierarchy, according to which the *anthropos* discourses are inferior. The shift by which one social role, the Kipucamayoc, became another, the Kilkaycamayoc, is a concern that undermines the claim of Western epistemology to universal applicability. Finally, it was shown that the Kilkaycamayoc social role is an expression of a double critique involving Western and non-Western traditions.

2.3. SALDÍVAR AND *OSCAR WAO*

Saldívar's essay might be described as a reflection on the concept of 'Americanity' as applied to Junot Díaz's novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (hereafter *Oscar Wao*) (2011:121). My own study will show how, when studied by Saldívar, *Oscar Wao* is seen as embodying the three elements of border thinking. To do so, I will look specifically at how the temporal and epistemological structures (as characterised by Saldívar) in *Oscar Wao* combine to reflect the three elements of border thinking. Hence, Saldívar' essay is a basis for a template for literary border thinking premised on Díaz's novel.

The novel *Oscar Wao* tells the life stories of Oscar de Léon, a science fiction writer, and his ancestors in New Jersey and the Dominican Republic (Saldívar, 2011:120, 127-8, 130). The main narrator is Yunior (Saldívar, 2011:121, 125, 127, 128), who while reading, archiving and interpreting Oscar's manuscripts, "writes the book we are reading" (to borrow Saldívar's

terms) (2011:124). Yunior frames the narrative with a theory that concerns the *fukú americanus*, "generally a curse or a doom of some kind" (also called 'fukú') (Díaz, 2007) (Saldívar, 2011:127, 132). In the prologue to *Oscar Wao*, he notes that the arrival of Admiral Colón (Christopher Columbus) in the New World led to the inauguration of the *fukú americanus* (Butzer, 1992:545; Díaz, 2007; Saldívar, 2011:121, 125; Hofman, et al., 2018:203). The curse has continued existing, and is a key force in the lives of non-Western characters, like Oscar (2011:125, 126, 128).

Based on Saldívar's essay, it seems that the ideal of border thinking is displayed in the temporal and epistemological structures of the novel. The temporal structure is defined by the shifts in the time period of the narration, and also highlights the non-Western vantagepoint; it does this, for example, in the stories of Oscar's mother, Belicia Cabral, and Admiral Cólon: the former takes place in an earlier time period than Yunior's and is the story of Belicia's immigration from the non-West (i.e. the Dominican Republic) to the West (Saldívar, 2011:127-8) ("Dominican Republic", n.d.); the arrival of Admíral Cólon is framed, meanwhile, as unleashing the *fukù americanus*, a concept that is "analogous to the colonial difference" and therefore invokes a non-Western vantagepoint (Saldívar, 2011:125, 134).

The concept of *fukú americanus* is also integral to the epistemological structure given that, as Saldívar notes, the *fukú americanus* is "an attempt to reveal and displace the logic by which Europeans have represented their others" (2011:134) (The term 'others' is taken to denote non-Europeans or non-Westerners). As Saldívar hints, it is a concept that allows Yunior to write "[Oscar's life history] as a fukú narrative (doomed and damned)" that originates with "Admiral Colón's so-called discovery of the New World"; in addition, it is with this concept that Yunior is interested in "'thinking from' such an experience" (2011:125). The narration is

thus framed by this concept, which is synonymous with the colonial difference. This framing starts with the arrival of Admiral Colón (Díaz, 2007), and continues in the doomed/damned framing of Oscar's life history. Another aspect of the epistemological structure is the diverse knowledges (Western and non-Western) that make up Oscar's discourse (2011:130); such knowledge includes Aimé Césaire's *négritude*, a "new science or discipline", and the Global North's science fiction (Saldívar, 2011:131).[10]

The temporal structure of *Oscar Wao* allows Díaz to express the first element of border thinking. In switching time periods, Díaz shows how the brutal regime of Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina jailed and tortured Oscar's grandfather, Abelard Cabral (Patterson, 2006:223-4; Díaz, 2007; Saldívar, 2011:129). By doing so, Díaz shows Abelard to be made into an *anthropos* due to the terms that are attributed to him (he is labelled a communist and a homosexual).[11]

Since Abelard's torture is ordered by Trujillo, the "high priest" (Díaz, 2007) of the *fukú americanus*, this reading would seem accurate. Saldívar argues that "[Abelard's] tortured body … cannot be separated from the neo-fascist turn under the Trujillato" (the name given to Trujillo's regime) (Lifshey, 2008:435, 452; Saldívar, 2011:129); he also suggests that the *fukú americanus*, or 'colonial difference,' was 'unleashed' concurrently with the "hegemony

[10] The terms 'Global North' and 'the West' are considered proximal. The obverse, 'Global South,' denotes the 'non-West' or 'colonial subjects.' In order to derive these definitions, I employ criticism by Saldívar (2011) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013). The critical juxtaposition of these scholars can be justified by their shared interest in modernity and colonial difference (Saldívar, 2011:120, 122; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:23, 24-5). More importantly, both Saldívar and Ndlovu-Gatsheni use 'Global South' to denote what was formerly 'the Third World' (2011:134; 2013:24). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "the Global South … has since the time of colonial encounters struggled to achieve decolonization" (2013:24). By using this definition, I am able to equate the 'Global South' and 'the non-West,' since non-Westerners are in need of decolonisation (Mignolo, 2006:17). Saldívar adds that the two sides of the "the violent colonial contact" are the Global North and the Global South (2011:126). If the term 'Global South' denotes the colonised, then the 'Global North' must be the (Western) coloniser (Quijano, 2007:169).

[11] In this instance, the term 'anthropos' is used in its broader definition. See Chapter 1 and Mignolo (2013:134).

of Eurocentricism", which "produc[ed] and controll[ed] the Global South's subjectivity and knowledge" (2011:121, 126, 127, 134). Being the so-called 'high priest' of the *fukú americanus,* Trujillo is seen to embody the *humanitas* position, buttressing the role of the colonial race hierarchy as well as a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge. Thus, in showing how Trujillo turns Abelard into an *anthropos*, *Oscar Wao* recognises the colonial difference.

Much like its temporal structure, the way *Oscar Wao* is structured epistemologically exhibits the first element of border thinking, specifically with regards to the *fukú americanus*. The *fukú americanus* allows Yunior to interpret, and thus orient, the narrative of *Oscar Wao*: the concept enables him, Saldívar argues, to "think of … history in terms of dominant and subaltern positions in the field of knowledge (or epistemology)" (2011:127). In this quote, Saldívar is hinting at what one might call the epistemic nature of the colonial difference: the colonial difference ranked Western epistemology above that of the non-West; the so-called 'dominant' and 'subaltern' (a descriptor that relates to the non-West, as is implied in Mignolo's interview with Delgado and Romero [2000:13, 18-9, 24]) positions are thus similar to the West and non-West, respectively.

Insofar as Oscar and Yunior are seen as the victims of the *fukú americanus* (Saldívar, 2011:125, 126), the depiction of the curse may be seen as a rejection of that concept, and thus of the colonial difference; in addition, one might argue that, due to its origins, the curse (and thus the origins of their victimising) and the modern world system are inextricable.[12] These origins are shown in the prologue in the arrival of Admiral Colón. According to Yunior, not

[12] The modern world system came about with what Quijano and Wallerstein label Americanity (a phenomenon linked to the 'new capitalist world-economy'), as well as with Western colonialism (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992:549-551; Saldívar, 2011:123). The modern world system consists of the racial/ethnic hierarchisation of people in terms of European/non-European race categories (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992:550-1). For this reason, the terms 'modernity' and 'modern world system' are seen as synonymous.

only did Admiral Colón 'discover' the New World, but that discovery was what caused the *fukú americanus* to be "unleashed … on the world" (Díaz, 2007). In other words, the fates of the characters are forever linked to the 'discovery' of the New World, and thus to a 'model' for the modern world system (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992:549-50; Saldívar, 2011:122, 123; "Dominican Republic", n.d.). In the novel's version of Admiral Colón, the colonial difference (via the *fukú americanus*) is part of a broader, indeed of a global, phenomenon, that of the modern world-system. This phenomenon is where the curse or *fukú americanus* (and thus the victimising of Oscar and Yunior) originates, and for this reason, it is a point of focus in the rejection of the colonial difference.

The temporal and epistemological structures of *Oscar Wao* are crucial not just to the first element of border thinking, but to the second element as well. To demonstrate this, I will revisit Abelard's story (relayed by Saldívar), a story that warrants a temporal shift as per the temporal structure. Through Abelard's story, Díaz shows how "diverse social groups and family identities [that were] produced by the Trujillo dictatorship (relatives of the tortured and murdered, survivors, and so on) exercised a form of brave cultural citizenship imbricated with the history of authoritarian brutality" (2011:130). The process of doing so, suggests Saldívar, involves showing the humanity of those among whom this 'brave citizenship' is exhibited: Abelard's discourse is "a figure for the enlargement of human powers" (Saldívar, 2011:130). Thus, in this demonstration of their humanity, Díaz is advocating for the liberation of 'oppressed layers' that are oppressed chiefly by Trujillo and thus by the *fukú americanus*/colonial difference (see earlier).

At the same time, Abelard is linked to the concept of so-called 'Greater Antillean magic,' an alternative to Western rationality, as he believes Trujillo may have 'supernatural powers'

(Saldívar, 2011:130). Thus, Abelard is framed in terms of the epistemological structure, and his discourse challenges that of the West, specifically its claim to universal epistemic applicability. The latter point is seen, firstly, in the fact that his discourse is non-Western, specifically 'Greater Antillean' ("Dominican Republic", n.d.); by 'discourse' I mean his book about Trujillo, which as Saldívar shows draws on a range of discourses, including 'magic' and the (presumably historical) "unspeakable violence of the Trujillo regime" (Patterson, 2006:225-6; Saldívar, 2011:130, 131). Secondly, as evidenced by the term 'supernatural,' that discourse is premised on ideals that are at odds with Western rationality, challenging thus the premise of "secular philosophy and science" (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012:64).

The latter point brings me to the writings of the title character, Oscar de Léon, who like Abelard draws on a range of discourses (Saldívar, 2011:120, 121). In Oscar's journal writings, Yunior finds what he sees as a discourse derived from Western and non-Western discourses, the Global North's science fiction and the Global South's *négritude* (Saldívar, 2011:130-1). Hence, Oscar's discourse is a double critique in which both Western and non-Western literature are considered (the latter embodied by the poem *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* by Antillean writer Aimé Césaire) (Munro, 2006:81, 82; Saldívar, 2011:131).

Owing to its temporal structure, *Oscar Wao* also features a second double critique, the focus of which is Admiral Colón and his unleashing of the curse known as the *fukú americanus*. Saldívar writes:

> [T]he task of Díaz's *fukú americanus* as analogous to the colonial difference is to reinscribe this erased history [of colonialism] in the novel's spatiotemporal simultaneity. To make the Greater Antilles, New Jersey, and Americanity no longer peripheral and behind the "now," Diáz [sic] ingeniously replaces hierarchical categories and field-imaginaries, such as the "discovery" and colonial "encounter" by Admiral Colón, with better ones, such as his theory of the Admiral's unleashing the fukú on the planet. (2011:134)

The term ‘erased history’ is taken to describe that of the non-West, including of the curse’s origins (Díaz, 2007). The Western element, meanwhile, is the ‘discovery’ of The New World (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992:551-2, 553; Díaz, 2007; Saldívar, 2011:125). Díaz shows this ‘discovery’ from not just a Western point of view (“despite ‘discovering’ the New World the Admiral died miserable and syphilitic” [Díaz, 2007]), but also that of the non-West (In Santo Domingo, “it is believed that the arrival of Europeans … unleashed the fukú on the world, and we’ve all been in the shit ever since”) (Díaz, 2007; Saldívar, 2011:125; “Santo Domingo”, n.d.); thus, when depicting ‘Western’ history, *Oscar Wao* does so critically and by using Western and non-Western histories to frame the narrative.

Through an exploration of Saldívar’s study as it pertains to *Oscar Wao*, more specifically the latter’s temporal and epistemological structures, a template for literary border thinking was developed. The brutal treatment to which Abelard is subjected foregrounds the process by which he is made into an *anthropos*, and thus the colonial difference. As victims of the *fukú americanus*, the depiction of Oscar and Yunior challenges the framework for which that curse is an ‘analogue,’ the colonial difference; that challenge is also linked to the concept of the modern world system through the arrival of Admiral Colón. Abelard’s discourse is used to reveal the humanity of the oppressed victims of the colonial difference; as such, that discourse is an element that stands for the liberation of oppressed layers. Moreover, in drawing on diverse discourses, that discourse is framed in opposition to Western rationality, and as such it is a challenge to the latter and, more specifically, its claim to universal applicability. Finally, in my study of Saldívar’s essay, I found that there are at least two double critiques: the first involves Oscar’s drawing-on of the literature of the West and non-West; the second concerns ‘Western history’ and invokes the histories of both the West and the non-West.

2.4. HERLINGHAUS AND *2666*

The third essay that will be used to develop a template for literary border thinking is Herlinghaus's 'pharmacological' study of *2666*, a novel by Roberto Bolaño (2004). In this study, Herlinghaus shows that the Western critic is a role that embodies Western epistemology, and is a vehicle for criticism of that epistemology. For this reason, and since border thinking is also a critique of Western discourse/epistemology, my reading starts with a definition of the Western critic as a concept that is used in this analysis. By studying aspects of this essay that pertain to border thinking, I then show how Herlinghaus highlights each of the three elements of border thinking in the context of *2666*, including (but not limited to) in its criticism of the Western critic/epistemology.

According to Herlinghaus, *2666* can be split into what he calls 'three major scenarios,' (2011:105-6). The first scenario is a section titled "The Part About the Critics" (Bolaño, 2004:1, 111-4; Herlinghaus, 2011:108). The section concerns four critics, literary scholars from Western Europe, who are devoted to the author Benno von Archimboldi, whom they think is "the greatest post-war German writer who should be a candidate for the Nobel Prize" (Herlinghaus, 2011:105, 106). Another scenario is the section entitled "The Part About the Crimes"; this section concerns Santa Teresa, a town in northern Mexico modelled on real-life Ciudad Juárez, that is the site of multiple femicides of whom many are plant labourers (Bergin, Feenstra & Hanson, 2008:3; "Juárez", n.d.). The third section is the story of Archimboldi, specifically his real life as contrasted with the ideas of the critics (Herlinghaus, 2011:109-10).

In the contrast between sections, suggests Herlinghaus, a critique of Western knowledge takes place (2011:101, 107, 109-10). That critique manifests in the way 'Western critics,' embodied

by the three literary critics, are represented. The concept of the Western critic is worth noting given that, although border thinking does not feature in this study, border thinking is also a critique of a type of Western discourse. Thus, before I explain border thinking as it manifests in *2666*, I will define the Western critic.

While trying to establish what the section "The Part About the Critics" is "all about", Herlinghaus asks:

> Is not the work of the critic supposed to be concentrated upon a worldly matter – literature, culture – that *can be objectified* through the analysis of texts and guiding ideas or discursive constructs? Is not the quality to be achieved and upheld by the academic text interpreter predetermined by an expectation of the *uniqueness* or the singular importance of his or her object of study? And is there not a subconscious power at work which seems to suggest that scholars in the humanities *do good* by choosing and reinterpreting the gallery of intellectual founding figures and geniuses …? (2011:108-109, emphasis added)

The above excerpt may be seen as furnishing a definition of the Western critic, of which the main purposes are 'objectification' and dedication to one's object of study. The critic is Western insofar as, in 'doing good,' the role is comparable to that of the Western scholar: the 'point' of this section, Herlinghaus notes, is to connect the concept of the 'Western scholar' with "the desire to be … cured by (the search for) the literary genius" (2011:111) (In this instance, curing can be compared to 'doing good through reinterpretation.')

That the Western critic is the embodiment of Western knowledge is shown by its similarities with the subject of the rational knowledge relation (see earlier). Much like the paradigm of the Western critic, which 'objectifies' his/her 'unique' field, the rational knowledge relation consists of a subject along with an inferior object, which is "identical to itself" (Quijano, 2007:172). Prior to the above definition, Herlinghaus notes that "what … matters for the modern subject's identity" encompasses "production and achievement from *a pre-established prospective vantage point*" (2011:108, emphasis added). In other words, the Western critic is

framed by a concept that evokes the subject of the modern knowledge relation: insofar as the subject is constituted independently of any object (the subject "constitutes itself … in its discourse and its capacity for reflection" [Quijano, 2007:172]), it precedes the relation and thus is 'pre-established.' Owing to these similarities, the Western critic is considered to embody ideals linked to Western rationality, in addition to the two aforementioned purposes.

Evidence of the colonial difference is seen in the femicides that take place in Santa Teresa. According to Herlinghaus, most of these women are *maquiladora* workers (2011:106) and are thus associated with the "dehumanizing aspects of the *maquiladora* system" (2011:105), a system that comprises assembly plants (Bergin, Feenstra & Hanson, 2008:1). Based on these factors, it would seem that among the dead are those who are exploited plant labourers. Their depiction is thus seen as combining elements that make up the coloniality of power: firstly, they are non-Westerners[13] and the work they do is 'dehumanising' (a descriptor that, in this context, evokes the racial distribution of labour); secondly, their killing is part of a "dark, hemispheric dynamic" linked to the drug war that emerged as the 'culmination,' or so it seems, of an 'imbalance' between the West and the non-West (implying an imbalance in resources) (Herlinghaus, 2011:102-3, 106). In other words, through the killings in *2666*, Bolaño is recognising the impact of the colonial race hierarchy in terms of the coloniality of power – that is, in terms of the racial distribution of labour and resources.

The term 'tragic and absurd victims' is used by Herlinghaus in order to describe these murdered *maquiladora* workers in the context of the war on drugs (2011:102-3, 105-6). The implication is that the text criticises their treatment in terms of the colonial race hierarchy,

[13] The terms that Herlinghaus uses, like Saldívar, are 'north' and 'south.' For my purpose, these terms are seen as synonymous with 'West' and 'non-West.' 'Northern' and 'western' are used alternately to describe 'intellectuals' who are 'cosmopolitan' (2011:105, 106-7). 'Global South' is used meanwhile to describe that which contrasts with "'northern' intellectual identity" (2011:107); hence, this term is synonymous with 'non-Western.'

specifically of coloniality of power. As the latter's 'tragic and absurd victims,' these women are as vehicles through which ideals that inform the colonial race hierarchy, and thus the colonial difference, are rejected. Based on Herlinghaus's study, it would seem that *2666* not only recognises but rejects colonial difference and as such, it is a reflection of the first element of border thinking.

The second element of border thinking is seen in the contrasting of two viewpoints, that of the critics and that of the violence in fictional Santa Teresa. As Herlinghaus hints, this contrast is used in order to "encapsulat[e] far-reaching questions", questions that he then distils into a single 'strategic interrogation' (2011:105, 109, 113, 117). "What can literary experiences," he asks, "condensed in an imagination of the Global South, teach us, *not in terms of representations of 'otherness'* … but regarding our dominant Western situation in the present world, its severe limits, and its mistaken assumptions?" (2011:117, emphasis added) This question imbues *2666* with a purpose like that of border thinking, namely 'liberation from oppressed layers': by turning the lens inwards, rather than on the 'other,' *2666* shows that Western discourse ('mistaken assumptions') is in need of interrogation.

The contrasting of perspectives is also used to reveal the limits of a Western discourse, specifically Western epistemology. The embodiment of that discourse is the critics, who are in fact Western critics. As Herlinghaus notes, the three critics are trying "to find out, interpret, and make public 'what' Archimboldi 'is' or 'was'" (2011:109); in addition, Herlinghaus notes, they are "commit[ted] to the 'what' of their subject" such that their mission resembles "a sort of occupational *therapy*" (2011:109, emphasis in the original). The way they objectify Archimboldi (the 'what' of their mission) and their commitment show that they are Western critics as per the definition, and as such their perspective embodies Western epistemology.

The fact that *2666* challenges this perspective implies that the ideals of Western epistemology are undermined. Evidence of this challenge is the way in which the perspectives of the critics and Archimboldi are contrasted, challenging thus the former perspective. Although they exemplify the Western critic, ostensibly their mission (which is to find out 'who' Archimboldi is) is a failure owing to their ignorance of the "connections in Archimboldi's historical life, which are unearthed in the final part of *2666*" (2011:109-110). As a reader, one is shown 'who' Archimboldi is when the perspective shifts and the true Archimboldi is revealed. In other words, this new perspective contrasts with that of the three critics and their ideas of Archimboldi: though they try, they are unable to learn 'who' Archimboldi truly is (Herlinghaus, 2011:109, 110). The novel therefore challenges the discourse with which the critic is associated, namely Western epistemology.

Another contrast in perspectives sets up a double critique. The contrast between those of the critics, as seen in "The Part About the Critics", and "The Part About the Crimes" means that two forms or experiences of violence are contrasted, one the critics' (Herlinghaus, 2011:106, 114), the other the *maquiladora* workers'. As Herlinghaus notes, "[i]t is revelatory that Bolaño foregrounds the issue of intoxication through violence in relationship to the two European academics before moving the narration … to Santa Teresa" (Herlinghaus, 2011:115). The violence that Herlinghaus refers to takes place in "The Part About the Critics", where two of the critics are assaulting a Pakistani taxi driver (Bolaño, 2004:1, 73-4; Herlinghaus, 2011:113-4). While doing so, they tell him to "shove Islam up your ass, which is where it belongs", invoking disdain for the traditions of the non-West (Bolaño, 2004:74; Mignolo, 2006:16-17). Though it is not an explicit point, it seems that Herlinghaus is comparing this episode (which embodies the West's disdain for the non-West) with the violence in Santa Teresa: he explains

that the "violence … emanating from 'Santa Teresa'" has been "linked with [the] intellectual identities" of these critics (2011:117). The juxtaposing of these perspective is thus taken to make up a double critique regarding two experiences of violence – experiences that have analogues in history (Herlinghaus, 2011:105, 106, 115-6) – one Western, the other non-Western.

Through a close reading of the essay by Herlinghaus, I have shown that each of the three elements of border thinking manifests in *2666*. In doing so, I defined the 'Western critic,' specifically its two purposes and its relation to Western discourse/epistemology. The first element is found in the depiction of the murdered *maquiladora*, specifically as tragic and absurd victims of the coloniality of power. The second element manifests insofar as, to paraphrase Herlinghaus, the novel *2666* is an inquiry into the 'limits' of Western discourse; shifts in perspective are used to contrast the critics' perspective with that of the 'real' Archimboldi, and as such undermine the claim of Western epistemology to universal applicability. Finally, the novel conducts a double critique of experiences of two types of historical violence.

2.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed three studies in which elements of border thinking were found in literary texts. It explored the ways in which border thinking is embodied, as per these essays, and thus furnished three templates of literary border thinking. For each one of the forms taken by border thinking (corresponding to each of the essays), in other words, a corresponding template was developed. Each template invokes features of the specific literary text that make up the three elements of border thinking. These features are framed as criteria in Chapters 3-5. For a novel

to be shown to embody each of the three elements of border thinking, it must meet the criteria for each element.

CHAPTER 3:

VICTIMS, PERSPECTIVES AND THE GIVING OF GIFTS IN ETIENNE LEROUX'S *SEVEN DAYS AT THE SILBERSTEINS*

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The novel to which I apply literary border thinking first is *Seven Days at the Silbersteins* (hereafter *Seven Days*), a modern *plaasroman* by Etienne Leroux. Under the title *Sewe dae by die Silbersteins*, *Seven Days* was first published in Afrikaans in 1962, and in English, with a translation by Charles Eglington, in 1964 (Penfold & De Kock, 2015:73). For the purpose of this research, the edition used is a translation that includes two others, the novels *One for the Devil* and *The Third Eye*. This trilogy of novels is titled *To a Dubious Salvation*.

At first, *Seven Days* may seem ill-suited to a study of the modern *plaasroman*, for the key elements of this subgenre are not clearly evident. Through a study of relevant details, I will show that *Seven Days* is a modern *plaasroman*. These elements include those that are shown to challenge early *plaasroman* ideals regarding farm ownership, and racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals that relate to race and gender.

Chapter 2 drew a series of templates for literary border thinking from the literary studies of Mignolo, Saldívar and Herlinghaus. In order to explore *Seven Days* in terms of literary border thinking, a suitable template must be selected. Each template will be considered to determine which one is best-suited to a study of *Seven Days*. Their suitability is gauged by assessing whether the key aspects thereof will be compatible with elements of Leroux's novel.

Once a suitable template has been chosen, it is then used to determine whether, and the extent to which, *Seven Days* is an instance of literary border thinking. The template will serve as a guide; the study it is based on will help me to explore *Seven Days* with respect to the three elements of border thinking.

3.2. *SEVEN DAYS*: A MODERN *PLAASROMAN*

Seven Days is the story of Welgevonden, a prosperous farm owned by Jock Silberstein (13-4, 15-7, 35, 134-5).[14] The protagonist, Henry van Eeden, is engaged to marry Jock's daughter, Salome (13, 70, 84-5). While at Welgevonden, he becomes Jock's protégé, and is drawn into a number of strange rituals (16-17, 33-5, 41, 68-75, 76-82, 88-9, 135-42). Among the strange and bizarre characters he meets, and who are studied in this chapter, are Dr Johns, Judge O'Hara and Professor Dreyer (19, 23-24, 63-5, 76-7). At the fourth chapter's close, one of the parties is disrupted when a fire breaks out in the nearby township (88-9, 98-9). In the aftermath, chaos and confusion descend on Welgevonden (100-2, 112-4). Order is soon restored, though, and in this new order, the betrothed couple are wed (113-4, 133-4, 157-8, 163-5).

Based on this summary, it is unclear why I consider *Seven Days* to be a modern *plaasroman*. The modern *plaasroman* subgenre is defined by its critique of ideals that are associated with the early *plaasroman*, as well as of racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals. Neither critique is seen clearly in my summary of the narrative. Unsurprisingly, this view is shared by Olivier who regards Wilma Stockenström as the main frontrunner of the modern *plaasroman* subgenre (or, to use his terms, 'later farm novels,' which resemble my definition of the modern *plaasroman*) (2012:317, 318-20). Given the density of its source materials, one is not surprised by scholars'

[14] In-text citations of *Seven Days* include page numbers only.

tending to regard *Seven Days* less in terms of the farm concept specifically than in terms of other discourses (Berner, 1975:255, 262; Penfold, 2013; Penfold & De Kock, 2015).

Owing to this brief summary of views within relevant critical scholarship, one might dismiss *Seven Days* as a text worth considering. However, on closer analysis of the text's elements, one finds that the novel is a kind of modern *plaasroman*, per my definition. The elements that I am referring to concern ideals that are associated with the early *plaasroman*, specifically ideals of land ownership, and with a racist-nationalist Afrikaner discourse, namely the 'colour bar' and the *volksmoeder*.

Land ownership in the early *plaasroman* (as typified by Van den Heever's work) is a matter that concerns each new generation who inherit the farm after the 'founding fathers' (Coetzee, 1988:85). The concept of 'natural right,' a term Coetzee uses for this type of land ownership, is contrasted with what one might call market economics (Coetzee, 1988:84, 85): to sell or a buy a farm is 'sacrilegious.' Instead, Coetzee notes, land ownership as "[n]atural right must be reestablished … by good stewardship" and "cannot exist between a farm and its mere purchaser" (1988:84, 85). The figure of the 'creditor' (another of Coetzee's terms) is linked closely to the sale of the ancestral farm; often the creditor is "a Jewish immigrant trader, a lawyer from out of town, [or] an upstart *bywoner* (tenant farmer)" (Coetzee, 1988:85). Thus, to be a 'good steward' means shielding one's land and one's legacy from the likes of the acquisitive creditor.

The farm in *Seven Days* subverts this ideal, in which the farmer and creditor are opposed in their respective interests. The farmer, Jock, is both farmer *and* creditor. Unlike his counterparts in the early *plaasroman*, Jock is the farm's owner not due to inheritance but through a monetary

transaction (Coetzee, 1988:83, 91, 95-6, 101-2) (15, 16). His skill as an entrepreneur (as what one might call an 'upstart') is also emphasised: Jock proudly expounds how, by simply changing the shape of a wine bottle, he duped buyers into paying more (16). Had one thought Jock's ownership involved natural right then, by this stage, the impression is dispelled. However, Jock is not only the creditor, but a farmer who has managed, through whatever means, to turn Welgevonden into a vast and highly profitable undertaking (13-4, 16-7, 134-5). Thus, Jock's ownership is based somewhat on the principles of natural right, since he is a 'good steward.' By having Jock 'own' the farm through principles of both natural right and market economics, Leroux conjures and subverts the ideals of the early *plaasroman*.

In addition to these ideals, *Seven Days* seems critical of values linked to a racist-nationalist Afrikaner discourse. To this end, racial and gendered ideals are most relevant and are analysed in their expression in *Seven Days*: racism at Welgevonden is complex; the way Mrs Silberstein (Jock's wife) is portrayed, meanwhile, challenges the ideal of the *volksmoeder*.

As the story progresses, it appears that there are two paradigms, or rather two sets of laws, governing race relations. The first set may be compared to apartheid: in the farm's day-to-day workings, whites are in charge, while housework is done by black and coloured servants (14-15, 38, 41, 50, 85, 93, 110, 113, 115, 117, 164); Jock's version of apartheid (he even calls it 'apartheid') is evident in the bottling plant where the roles of white, coloured and black employees are distinct (78-80) ("Apartheid", n.d.). The second set is less prevalent but is seen in one gathering at the farm. These rules are marked by an attitude that is more tolerant of other race categories. For instance, at one gathering, guests are of various race groups (68-75, 87-90, 135-42,). The guests mingle and engage freely across race lines, a fact that prompts Professor Dreyer to bewail the lack of a 'colour-bar' (88, 90, 107) (Sallaz, 2005:39).

Failure to enforce this colour bar may be seen as challenging the very ideals of that colour bar – the failure undermines its legitimacy. The colour bar has no purpose, that is, but to allow Jock to distinguish his employees, as evidenced by the scene in the bottling plant. In a social setting, almost no value is given to it. Hence, *Seven Days* seems critical of the colour bar, a concept Jock advocates, as shown by the racial distribution of farm labour. By having Jock highlight that concept and call it 'apartheid,' Leroux turns his critique into a critique of apartheid, and thus of racist ideals that are associated with Afrikanerdom (Giliomee, 2003).

Yet another blow is dealt to the nationalist ideals of Afrikanerdom in the figure of Jock's wife, Mrs Silberstein. Mrs Silberstein, who more often is called 'slim Mrs Silberstein,' is the direct opposite of the *volksmoeder* idyll (15, 19, 24, 38, 85, 67, 117, 163-4). In the beginning, it seems that the adjective ('slim') has been added to differentiate Mrs Silberstein from the duchess, who is also Mrs Silberstein (15, 27). However, the term 'slim' acquires a new meaning that is evidenced as her character grows more distinct – and less like that of the *volksvoeder*.

As Jock's wife and mother to the three Misses Silbersteins (including Salome), the *volksmoeder* role seems suited to slim Mrs Silberstein – at least in theory (15-6, 84). The early *plaasromans Somer* and *Die Meulenaar* viewed mothers as archetypal *volksmoeders*. The role of *volksmoeder* is an ideal that is ascribed to Afrikaner nationalism: the *volksmoeder* is 'mother of the nation,' a bastion of values such as virtue, integrity and housewifeliness (Devarenne, 2009:632-3; Van Niekerk, 1996:147-9). These ideals do not fit slim Mrs Silberstein, who is rather the exact opposite. Though she counsels Henry on his relationship with his fiancée, she also engages in an affair with his uncle (13, 17, 33, 46-7); thus, she lacks virtue and integrity. Mrs Silberstein is not housewifely: the housework is seemingly done by servants, including

chefs and maids (14-5, 87, 113). Owing to these digressions from the *volksmoeder* ideal, her 'slim' figure[15] takes on a clear, anti-nationalist meaning. Mrs Silberstein is described as being "as pretty and well-proportioned as the youngest and prettiest of the girls" (38). A consequence of her slimness is thus that she resembles more her daughters than the *volksmoeder*, a role in which she would be as a 'mother' (37-8).

By applying the two features of the modern *plaasroman* subgenre to *Seven Days*, I have shown that the novel is a modern *plaasroman*. A challenge to early *plaasroman* ideals was found in Jock Silberstein, who is both a farmer and a 'creditor.' The novel also challenges ideals linked to apartheid (and thus to a racist Afrikaner discourse) in its critique of the 'colour bar.' In its criticism of the *volksmoeder*, which is linked to Afrikaner nationalist discourse, the text also challenges nationalist ideals associated with Afrikanerdom.

3.3. SELECTING A SUITABLE TEMPLATE: *SEVEN DAYS* AND LITERARY BORDER THINKING

Although it is clearly a modern *plaasroman*, one cannot argue that *Seven Days* is, for this reason, an expression of literary border thinking. To establish whether it is, it is necessary to examine *Seven Days* in terms of the criteria set by one of the templates of literary border thinking; these templates are based, as noted in Chapter 2, on the studies of Mignolo, Saldívar and Herlinghaus. The purpose of this section is thus to determine which of the three templates is best suited to a study of *Seven Days*. Prior to this, a brief comment is made to explicate my interest in *Seven Days* as an instance of border thinking, in which parallels between elements of the novel and the latter concept are mentioned.

[15] The meaning of 'slim' is understood as "gracefully thin" ("Definition of slim…", n.d.).

The previous section drew parallels between *Seven Days* and the hallmarks of the modern *plaasroman*. Elements of *Seven Days* are found, also, to evoke the three elements of border thinking. By challenging the colour bar (a concept that is analogous to the colonial race hierarchy), one might argue, *Seven Days* is rejecting the colonial difference. In its inclusion of black farm workers, it also challenges the terms whereby the South African pastoral justified white land ownership (Coetzee, 1988:5). The consequence of this challenge is that black labour is 'restored,' mirroring thus the liberation of oppressed layers. It is also a challenge to Western discourse, namely the pastoral in South Africa (the allegiance of which lies, evidently, with whites [Coetzee, 1988:5]). Finally, a discussion between Dr Johns and a former Mau Mau leader teases the prospect of a double critique. While they are talking, Dr Johns questions the Mau Mau leader on the subject of his religion; they go on to discuss "the Nigerian idea of God" (90). Conversations with Dr Johns regularly involve some type of Western discourse; in this instance, though, a transection of Western and non-Western discourses is implied (63, 89-90, 117) ("Christianity", n.d.; "Nigeria", n.d.; Mignolo, 2006:8, 27).

The above points are made to support my interest in whether *Seven Days* is an instance of border thinking: they suggest that, at points in the text, this is the case. Gauging whether it is or is not is a task that requires me to examine *Seven Days* using a suitable template of literary border thinking. As I show presently, that template is the one based on Herlinghaus's essay. Specifically, it is both the lack of meaningful parallels between *Seven Days* and Mignolo's and Saldívar's essays, on one hand, and the parallels between *Seven Days* and *2666* (the subject of Herlinghaus's essay), one the other hand, that justify my choice of template.

The template that is based on Mignolo's essay proves limiting in that there are no parallels in *Seven Days* to the social role of Kilkaycamayoc. In Chapter 2, I showed that the shift of the Kipucamayoc into the Kilkaycamayoc is one that underpins two of the three elements of border thinking. With this in mind, the sheer lack of non-Westerners in *Seven Days* who espouse a non-Western epistemology is significant.

In *Seven Days*, it seems Leroux is uninterested in what one might call non-Western epistemologies. As evidence, one might consider that many characters who are non-Western lack discourse, whether direct or interior (14-5, 38, 79-80, 85, 88, 103, 153-4) (Murphy, 1998:4, 6, 8-9). An exception to this fact proves the rule, so to speak. When giving a speech at a party, an albino character is shown speaking in direct speech, and is given a section of interior monologue (96-7).[16] However, the direct speech is a prepared speech, and echoes the words spoken by other characters; as such, it is unclear whether it constitutes non-Western epistemology (68, 96). In addition, his internal discourse shows that he feels unified with "the emotion underlying apartheid", in which he exults (97). The combination of these points – namely, of ambiguous direct discourse and exulting of apartheid – further highlights the lack of significant non-Western discourses. Hence, were this template to be used, it is unlikely that a study of *Seven Days* would prove insightful.

A similar argument is made to exclude Saldívar's essay for a study that concerns *Seven Days* and border thinking. The main issue is the premise of this template. In Chapter 2 of this study, I showed that the premise of Saldívar's essay as it concerns literary border thinking is related to the novel *Oscar Wao*, specifically its temporal and epistemological structures. By the

[16] In this context, 'interior monologue' is defined as "[a] piece of writing expressing a character's inner thoughts" ("Meaning of interior monologue…", n.d.).

temporal structure, I mean the way Díaz shifts between one time period and another, foregrounding the *anthropos* point of view. The epistemological structure describes elements that, like the *fukú americanus*, 'reveal and displace' Western logic, and the use of diverse discourses, Western and non-Western.

Neither the temporal nor epistemological structures of *Seven Days* are nuanced to the degree that this template is worth applying. As far as the temporal structure is concerned, nothing about *Seven Days* is complex. In fact, as the novel's title seems to confirm, action in *Seven Days* is shown chronologically: each chapter of *Seven Days* opens on a new day (the exception being Day 1 – the day Henry arrives at Welgevonden) (13, 31, 52, 76, 100, 124, 126, 134-5, 150). Likewise, there is little of interest in its epistemological structure. The dearth of non-Western discourse in *Seven Days* means that the usefulness of this template, which relies on non-Western discourse, is somewhat restricted. The suitability of this template is thus inadequate.

A better case is made for the template based on Herlinghaus's essay, particularly as it concerns 'Western critics.' Per my summary of these templates, this concept is key to the template that is derived from this investigation, informing two of the three elements of border thinking. For this reason, that a character in *Seven Days* is framed as a type of Western critic suggests that this template would suit a study of this novel.

In *Seven Days*, a counterpart to the Western critic is found in Professor Dreyer, a 'wine expert' (76). As if to confirm this parallel with the critics in Bolaño's *2666*, among the descriptions of him is 'the product of specialisation' (107). The extent of this parallel is seen when Henry first visits the laboratory. In this episode, the professor (who is studying a test tube) is found to be

"isolated in private rapture" (76), a phrase that suggests he is dedicated to his field, subject or speciality. The field in question – wine – is an object in terms of the rational knowledge relation: firstly, the wine is unique in that it produced, from Professor Dreyer's perspective, "a satisfaction in itself" (77); secondly, Professor Dreyer is not interested in "the idea of wine" or "the romance of love and wine" (He is conscious only "of a coloured liquid … its beauty distilled to an abstraction" [76].), meaning that its significance is diminished – it has been made inferior.

The absence of non-Western discourse in *Seven Days* means that both Mignolo's and Saldívar's studies are inadequate. Another issue that arises in regards to Saldívar's essay is the absence of complexity within the temporal structure. When comparing elements of *Seven Days* to Herlinghaus's essay, it was found that similarities between *Seven Days* and *2666* include the Western critic, and thus Western epistemology: *Seven Days* has its own Western critic in Professor Dreyer. This similarity is worth mentioning given that the Western critic is a key part of the template that is derived from Herlinghaus's essay; hence, of the three templates, this one is best-suited to this study.

3.4. *SEVEN DAYS* AS AN INSTANCE OF LITERARY BORDER THINKING

For the novel's treatment of colonial difference to be seen as emblematic of border thinking, the depiction of non-Western characters must be examined. As in Herlinghaus's study (where these characters are exploited *maquiladora* labourers), I must gauge whether that depiction meets the following criteria: the non-Western characters are subjected to the colonial race hierarchy, articulated in the racial distribution of farm labour and resources; in the way they are treated, they are found to be tragic and absurd victims of the coloniality of power. By

applying these criteria, one is able to assess the degree to which the first element of border thinking is embodied.

Seven Days makes the point early on that the context of Welgevonden is one that exhibits signs of racial inequality. From the outset – in fact, from the opening paragraphs – one is forced to view Welgevonden in terms that expose the legacy of racial injustice and inequality. As Henry is arriving, many of the farm elements are described in great detail, including the front door (13-4). The following encounter takes place at the front door:

> An ornamental keyhole plate with a leaf motif gleamed in the late afternoon sun on the front door. 'It looks like a womb' said J.J. He lifted the heavy dragon-shaped knocker and rapped with the appropriate firmness … First the top half of the door opened and a Coloured girl in a starched cap, and a starched white collar that made her narrow, half-oriental little face seem even narrower, looked merrily at the two men who, with proper lack of interest, were blinding themselves in the rays of the setting sun. (14)

The description of the ornate front door offers key insights into the farm's owners, the illustrious Silbersteins. In the keyhole plate and 'heavy dragon-shaped knocker,' an element of excess is invoked (one that is echoed in the opening paragraphs, which describe "interesting corners and alleyways … large palm trees, cypresses, oak trees, loquat trees, [and] peach trees" [14]). One might ask what point there is to a door knocker shaped like a dragon – except its aesthetic purpose. When the young maid enters the scene in 'starched cap' and 'white collar,' this impression is unchanged (14). With these terms, a comparison is set to compare her with that of the other farm elements: like the door-knocker, her pristine uniform is proof of the immense wealth of the Silbersteins; its unblemished state meanwhile speaks of a sense of refinement bordering on excess, echoing thus the farm's elements that suggest the materialism of the Silbersteins. These parallels suggests that treatment of the farm property and of the non-Western servant are equivalent. The latter is an extension of the former. By reacting to her

'merry' appearance as one would to an inanimate object (that is, 'with proper lack of interest'), Henry and J.J. confirm this impression.

By conflating the farm and the farm labourer, *Seven Days* invites criticism of the farm narrative, particularly of its role in legacies of injustice and racial inequality. *Seven Days* asks readers to expand their definition of the farm concept beyond that of the South African pastoral (Coetzee, 1988:5). The pastoral in South Africa tends to ignore 'black labour' in favour of 'white labour,' Coetzee notes, to avoid questions about white land ownership (1988:5). *Seven Days* disrupts this paradigm: the first face that one sees is not Jock's but a servant's (a 'labourer'), who is not white (Murphy, 1998:6, 8). This challenge to the pastoral frames Welgevonden as an instance of the farm narrative, specifically that part of the farm narrative regarding the colonial race hierarchy.

Depictions of *anthropos* characters are not limited to the opening paragraphs, nor are those that evoke the colonial race hierarchy. What is worth noting, though, is that some difficulty is had when one studies the characters in *Seven Days* in terms of their racial attributes. Specifically, it is challenging since there are characters to whom no race is explicitly given, such as Julius Jool (95-6, 99, 103). From this position, one might argue that a study of *Seven Days* that concerns 'race' would yield little of significance.

Such an argument would be fair were it true that the choice to specify or to ignore race in *Seven Days* were merely arbitrary. On the contrary, closer study proves that the characters whose race is specified tend to be farm workers. In this instance, the term 'race' is taken to describe both ethnic and national signifiers: characters who are Xhosa (an ethnicity ["Xhosa", n.d.]) or Malawian (a nationality [Kaspin, 1997:496]), markers that describe non-Westerners, are also

seen as *anthropos*. The correlation of race and farm labour, as I will show, are reminiscent of a constituent element of the coloniality of power – the racial distribution of labour.

One of the race markers, 'coloured,' is used only to describe characters who are farm labourers – maids, serving girls and bottling-plant employees (84, 108, 120, 143). There is just one exception: a gathering in Chapter 4, which is attended by guests of various race groups. To judge from Professor Dreyer's comments, however, the gathering is not typical of race relations in other parts of Welgevonden (such as farm labour). The gathering is instead typical of Jock's parties, where, according to Professor Dreyer, "there is no colour-bar" (107). Thus, the parties are seen as distinct from the farm proper, where the race of employees dictates where, and in what role, they are employed (55, 79-80).

Other characters are considered *anthropos* due to their ethnic and national identities, which are specified. The connection between race and labour is thus reinforced, as it affects various race groups. In Chapter 5, this point is explicit, when slim Mrs Silberstein notes that "the cooks are Xhosas" (113). In other instances, it is less explicit. Subtler instances include those that involve a particular farm worker, who is from Blantyre, Malawi ("Blantyre", n.d.). When that man is referred to, he is called "blackamoor", "an African from Blantyre" or simply "Blantyre" (38, 59, 85, 112, 113, 162). Moreover, his inclusion is confined solely to those moments in which he carries out, or fails to carry out, his farm duties. Thus, his (non-Western) race is expressed with respect to his role at Welgevonden. His depiction contributes thus to the notion of Welgevonden in which race and labour are interconnected.

Another link is made in *Seven Days* between race and resources. Specifically, the way in which land is distributed mirrors the land law of apartheid, at least in some respects. To show how

land is distributed, one law in particular – the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act – will be used to explore similarities between *Seven Days* and apartheid.

Given that the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act was passed almost a decade after *Sewe dae by die Silberstein*'s initial publishing (Sallaz, 2010:297), to propose that an historical link exists between the law and *Seven Days* would be both meaningless and anachronistic. However, the two might be compared in terms of the principle on which this law, and those preceding the publishing of *Sewe dae by die Silbersteins*, was established. The principle is that which restricted land rights for people who were not white ("Apartheid Legislation 1850s-1970s", n.d.). Thus, it is useful to consider *Seven Days* and the distribution of (land) resources in terms of the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act.

One of the consequences of the law known as the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act was to "turn all black South Africans into migrant laborers", writes Rita Barnard (2007:72). Moreover, policies like this led to a phenomenon marked by what Barnard describes as "the displacement of a rural peasantry" (2007:72) and "enforced villagization of thousands … who formerly, in some way or another, had lived off the land" (2007:73). Efforts were also made to restrict access to areas impacted by apartheid land policies; despite such efforts, however, these areas gained a degree of visibility (Barnard, 2007:72, 74).

A fictional counterpart to such areas is the so-called 'native village' in Leroux's modern *plaasroman* (also called the 'African village' and the 'African location') (98, 101, 108, 114, 121, 132). Jock Silberstein built the village to accommodate his African employees (98); hence, the purpose of the village, like that of the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act, is labour-oriented. In a noteworthy incident, the village is struck by a 'riot' during which state forces are

despatched (102-3) (Liebenberg & De Wet, 2012:71-2). Order is soon restored, but by then, several people are dead and the village lies in ruins (104, 113-4, 153, 164). One of the consequences of this incident is that the village and its occupants are foregrounded (98-103); this effect also coincides with questions' emerging about the distribution of resources.

When the village comes to the fore, readers are told that Jock built it in order to house his African employees (98). Thus, questions are raised about how resources, and land in particular, are distributed at Welgevonden. It is not surprising that Jock can afford to construct an entire village just for his employees: the wealth they lay claim to is significant, as evidenced by the opening paragraphs (13-18). What is rather peculiar is that, prior to the fourth chapter, the village is left unexplored. When this fact is viewed in conjunction with other elements that are described in great detail (from the panoramas in the first pages to the sections where Jock takes Henry on an almost-anthropological tour of the farm property [31-7, 52-7, 76-82, 126-7, 131-3]), the silence about the village seems significant.

The profound silence about the village can be compared to the ways South Africa's apartheid state sought, ostensibly at least, to conceal similar areas (2007:72, 74). The comparison seems apt given that, from Jock's perspective, these efforts are appealing: when a fire erupts in the village, a number of journalists appear on the scene; from Jock's perspective, these journalists are "troublesome as flies" (100). In this comment, Jock's sentiment is one that no doubt prompted the government to "ba[n] 'hostile journalists and photographers' from squatter camps" (2007:74). That is, between Jock and the journalists there is a relationship that is one of hostility. The parallels between this village and apartheid land laws mean that a comparison between them is justified. For this reason, Jock's farm is seen as embodying the types of land

laws embodied by the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act, and according to which (land) resources were distributed in accordance with race categories (Barnard 2007:71).

The fact that the village is unexplored suggests that the way land is distributed is not just racial, but also unequal. As evidenced by the opening paragraphs, the narrator's gaze is shrewd and far-reaching; given that the village is excluded from that gaze, it seems that the village is in fact very small. The quantity of resources that it uses are thus few, though its residents – who are African – are numerous (102-3, 121). The land on which the Silbersteins (who number fewer than ten) live, meanwhile, is expansive: their opulent home houses a pool, courtyard, garden, several big drawing rooms and a tennis court (14, 15-16, 17, 24, 77, 115). The way in which land is distributed is unequal and disadvantages those who are non-Western (160) (Murphy, 1998:7-8).

As evidenced by its portrait of Welgevonden, in which labour and resources are racially distributed, *Seven Days* recognises the colonial race hierarchy. In doing so, the text meets the first criterion that is related to the first element of border thinking. My next step is to determine whether, per the second criterion, non-Westerners are the tragic and absurd victims of the coloniality of power.[17] To do this, I will examine how non-Westerners are treated with respect to the two elements of the coloniality of power – the racial distribution of labour and resources.

Insofar as the coloured farm workers are concerned, the characters in *Seven Days* seem upbeat, cheerful and untroubled. The maid who greets Henry and J.J. does so 'merrily,' then exits in a manner dubbed 'sideways-dancing' (14-5). Jock and Henry pass a building where "rows of

[17] In this case, the term 'tragic' is taken to denote "[s]uffering extreme distress or sorrow" ("Definition of tragic…", n.d.), while 'absurd' denotes "[w]ildly unreasonable, illogical, or inappropriate" ("Definition of absurd…", n.d.).

Coloured people" are at work, "all cheerful and merry" (55). As the 'victims' of racialised labour, they seem neither distressed nor sorrowful; in other words, the treatment of coloured farm workers is not wholly 'tragic.'

However, one may characterise the work that they do as 'absurd' given that it is unreasonable and/or illogical. Specifically, I am referring to their roles in the bottling plant, where coloured and white employees work separately. Why they must do so is unclear, and so the whole scene exhibits a sense of absurdity, one that is further enhanced by the fact that "[i]t was not quite clear what they were doing" (79). Another scene in the bottling plant demonstrates how truly absurd this labour is. Owing to the riots in the village, factory production has all but ceased. However, the employees are found at their posts in the bottling plants, even though "only an occasional bottle came sailing by on the conveyor belt" (110). The image of a lone bottle adds to the absurdity: the presence of so many employees is clearly illogical.

Whether or not the Malawian man's labour is 'absurd' is unclear due to a dearth of meaningful evidence in the text (38, 59, 85, 112, 113, 162). Where the Xhosa cooks are concerned, though, some absurdity is evident. A comment by slim Mrs Silberstein ("But the cooks are Xhosas!" [113]) seems to suggest that the role of cook is given based on a specific race category – in this case, 'Xhosa.' There is no reason for this link; it is illogical. Further evidence thereof is seen in slim Mrs Silberstein's failure to predict whether the cooks will join in the riots (The above comment implies that, because they are 'Xhosas,' they will join the riots; seemingly they do not.): owing to this failure, *Seven Days* suggests that correlations with race categories are deeply illogical (113-4).

A lack of evidence keeps me from gauging whether the Malawian and Xhosas are 'tragic victims.' Neither their sorrow nor their distress is referred to (79-80; 85, 113-4). One might argue that their 'distress' is evident due to their absence during the village riots; however, this claim is challenged by the fact that they return and resume their duties as labourers (38, 113-4, 162). As for their absence, moreover, the narrator even gives an explanation: any workers who tried to go back to work earlier were set upon by 'agitators' (103).

Insofar as it reflects land laws under apartheid, the treatment of non-Westerners is such that they are tragic and absurd victims. The village in *Seven Days* was shown to reflect the phenomenon of apartheid land policies; a critique of the village is thus inextricable from a critique of apartheid and the state itself. For this reason, state forces that are shown in *Seven Days* (that are embodied by the Saracens) must be read in the same plane as land policies of which the village is a reflection; the fact that Saracens (armoured vehicles) are found at the village entrance reinforces this standpoint (Liebenberg & De Wet, 2012:71-2). The way that state forces treat the village-dwellers is thus inseparable from their treatment as victims of the racial distribution of resources (i.e. land).

State forces in *Seven Days* treat village-dwellers in a manner that is both tragic and absurd, to the extent that the actual needs of village-dwellers are neglected. As evidence, I would cite the episode that begins the fifth chapter of *Seven Days*. During this episode, the village is found ravaged by a fire that has reduced parts of it to mere "charcoal drawings of frameworks" (102). The latter phrase shows the extent of the damage, and thus their 'distress,' given that the affected buildings are a church, school and administrative buildings (102). Juxtaposed with this scene, moreover, are Saracens that are seen guarding the village entrance; there are no firefighters. The presence of Saracens speaks to the tragic, absurd treatment that is endured by

the village-dwellers: firstly, the absence of firefighters paints state forces as contributing to their distress, if only through negligence/apathy; secondly, the Saracens are an element that is deeply illogical given that what is needed are emergency services.

The farm in *Seven Days* is a space where labour and resources are racially distributed, mirroring the colonial race hierarchy. The novel was thus shown to fulfil the first criterion that is related to the first element of border thinking. In studying the depictions of non-Westerners, I assessed whether they are the tragic and absurd victims of racial distribution of labour and resources. Where labour is concerned, none of the characters are viewed 'tragically'; however, some of these instances hint that their labour is absurd. The reflection of land laws means that village-dwellers are victims of state forces from which land laws – and thus the racial distribution of resources – are inextricable; hence, the village-dwellers are tragic and absurd victims. Based on these findings, it seems that only a part of the second criterion has been met.

To gauge whether the first element is embodied, a study of non-Westerners was embarked on. For the second element, I am less interested in this category than I am in the *humanitas*. Two criteria will be used in order to assess *Seven Days* in terms of the second element of border thinking. These criteria, which are based on Herlinghaus's essay, are as follows: in order to liberate oppressed layers, the limits of Western epistemology are exposed; a contrast in perspectives leads to the undermining of a viewpoint linked to the West, specifically that of the Western critic. Two episodes will be used to assess *Seven Days* in terms of these criteria: in the first, the narrating voice is found to embody a Western perspective, to which the *anthropos* characters' reflections, or rather their intentions, are ambiguous; in the second episode, a contrast in perspectives – one of which is Professor Dreyer's – is explored to determine whether the text thereby undermines the paradigm of Western epistemology.

The first episode takes place in the fifth chapter and exposes the limits of the narrating voice, which embodies Western epistemology. During the episode (102-3), Henry and Jock visit the village, where they are met by a group of African village-dwellers. The latter are described as follows:

> And then there were the faces of the assembled: the African faces that looked all alike to the Whites, the lips and eyes that, according to individual experience, looked pleasant, crafty or cruel. The motionless faces that simply stared; that, perfectly passive now, were waiting perhaps for a call to further demoniac outbursts – or waiting for the order: To work! Or, the next moment, would burst out laughing at someone who tripped over a beam and broke his leg. Or that merely hated. Or that wanted Jock Silberstein's factory and his wife. Or wanted to live in his house. Or wanted to open the faucets on all the wine barrels. Or simply moved with the others when the summons came. (103)

The element of this passage that is worth noting, first and foremost, is the perspective of the narrating voice; the perspective is Western, specifically *humanitas*, as evidenced by its discourse in relation to the African/*anthropos*. To the degree that the narrating voice is a 'white' voice, the perspective it represents is a 'Western' perspective. The voice is 'white' insofar as it expresses the logic of whiteness, which is defined in this passage. 'White' logic is defined by its perception of Africans, a perception that may range considerably (from 'pleasant' to 'cruel'). Shortly after this logic has been characterised, the voice uses it to describe the Africans, attributing to them a *range* of intentions (including 'to work' and to engage in 'demoniac outbursts'). Insofar as it mirrors the range between 'cruel' and 'pleasant,' which distinguishes 'white' logic, the range of intentions shows that this voice is white.

To prove that the voice is *humanitas* (not just 'white'), my notion of the *humanitas* must be expanded. Chapter 1 noted that, in terms of the rational knowledge relation, the role of *humanitas*/Westerner is a subject role. The *anthropos*/non-Western role is confined to that of the object and lacks the capacity for 'reason.' Echoing these terms in a study that examines the

'coloniality of gender' (2010:745), María Lugones argues that the so-called 'European man' was considered to be "a being of mind and reason" (2010:743). On the other hand, Lugones notes: "enslaved Africans were classified … as animals, uncontrollably sexual and wild" (Lugones, 2010:743). The latter phrase is significant as it expands the concept of '*anthropos*,' and thus that of *humanitas*. To create the *anthropos* as 'inferior' is, after all, a role served by the *humanitas*; hence, the expanded '*anthropos*' concept is taken to constitute the logic of the *humanitas*.

This logic is used by the narrating voice to describe the assembled Africans and to classify them as *anthropos* characters, in accordance with the expanded concept. The Africans in this passage are considered, firstly, to lack reason and, secondly, to be 'uncontrollable.' Owing to their (perceived) inability to do anything without a stimulus, they are seen to lack cognitive capabilities (they are 'waiting'). Thus, they seem passive or reactive. The apparent lack of cognition suggests that, to the narrator, these characters are considered to lack the power for 'reason.'[18] To the degree that their yearnings are, or may be insatiable, the characters also seem 'uncontrollable.' These yearnings are manifold: the narrating voice hints that they may 'want' Jock's factory, his wife, to live in his house or to open the wine barrels (103). Through its repetition of 'wanted,' it implies that these yearnings are bottomless and as such that the Africans' appetites cannot be controlled. As if to solidify this point, the final yearning is an act that, in the opening of faucets (which *controls* outflow), symbolises loss of control.

The narrating voice represents the *humanitas* and as such it is the embodiment of Western epistemology. The way that the passage treats that voice is now analysed to determine whether

[18] When used in this study, the term 'reason' denotes "[t]he power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgments by a process of logic" ("Definition of reason…", n.d.).

it exposes the limits of that perspective, and thus of Western epistemology. As I mentioned earlier, it is a 'white' voice that narrates this passage and as such a variety of prospects (from 'working' to 'further demoniac outbursts'), representing the Africans' intentions, are considered. By embodying the *humanitas* role, the voice not only adds to these prospects (for instance, by considering that they will open all the faucets), but is found to embody Western epistemology. None of these prospects are realised, since the African/*anthropos* characters in this episode do nothing. In doing nothing, they defy ideas that are projected onto them by the narrator and as such foreground the limits of the narrating voice, the *humanitas* and Western epistemology. In other words, the first criterion is fulfilled.

However, when one broadens one's scope to include other passages, this reading of *Seven Days* and of the first criterion is undermined. The narrating voice is 'limited' insofar as the prospects that it lists are unrealised, and so are challenged. Later on, though, that challenge is undermined; the workers go back to their duties and as such one of the prospects (to 'work') is realised (113-4). In future research, this point may be interrogated to determine whether the first criterion has meet met. Critics may choose a different template, or else a different passage may be explored.

In the second episode, a contrast is established between the perspectives that are embodied by Henry and Professor Dreyer, a Western critic. In Chapter 5, Jock and Henry are found making their way to the home of Professor Dreyer. Professor Dreyer is fuming, so much so that he blames Jock for the riots of the evening:

> 'I was just about –' Professor Dreyer blabbed his jealously guarded secret impulsively – 'to solve the problem of perpetual fermentation.'
> (Like all dear lunatics in the field of *perpetuum mobile*.)
> 'Thugs broke into the laboratory. Your own labourers, Mr Silberstein. And drank everything. DRANK IT! Imagine that! Persons in your service, Mr Silberstein. Your labourers. Do you expect me to

> sacrifice a life's work to barbarians who were *allowed* to get out of hand? Which you allow, Mr Silberstein, with all your parties – I was there last night – where there is no colour-bar?' (107)

In his notion of non-Westerners,[19] as 'barbarians' and 'out of control,' the logic he uses mirrors that of the *humanitas*. The descriptor 'barbarian' is one that recalls the description of the *anthropos* as 'uncontrollably sexual and wild.'[20] Consequently, in this scene, the professor seems to embody the logic of the *humanitas*.

A shift in perspectives takes the narrating voice 'inside' Professor Dreyer and as a result his true feelings are exposed, this time in indirect discourse. In the above passage, the narrating voice is seen to be a reflection of Henry, whose comments are those rendered in indirect speech in parentheses (106-7). In other words, his perspective is the one from which the professor seems to be an embodiment of the *humanitas*. The narrating voice then moves from his perspective to Professor Dreyer's, which is evidenced by his use of free indirect discourse.[21] The professor's point of view is embodied when, in free indirect discourse, he notes: "Professor Dreyer really had no interest in politics and would have worked even for President Nkrumah, provided he were left alone and given all the necessary facilities" (107). As I mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, Professor Dreyer is a Western critic, and as such he embodies Western epistemology. In other words, the contrast that is established between the professor's and Henry's perspectives is found to include the perspective of the Western critic, as per this criterion.

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[19] The labourers are considered non-Western due to the reference to the 'colour-bar': as Professor Dreyer argues, it is Jock's admission of non-Westerners that led to his workers' ransacking of the laboratory; since this passage relates non-Westerners and labourers, these labourers must be non-Westerners.

[20] For my purpose, a 'barbarian' is "[a]n uncultured or brutish person" ("Definition of barbarian…", n.d.), and 'wild' means "[l]acking discipline or restraint" ("Definition of wild…", n.d.).

[21] In this context, the term 'free indirect discourse' is taken to describe a "manner of presenting … utterances of a fictional character as if from that character's point of view", that "combin[e]s grammatical and other features of the character's direct speech with features of the narrator's indirect report" ("Definition of free indirect discourse…", n.d.).

The contrast in perspectives also challenges that point of view given that two versions of Professor Dreyer are depicted. The one is Henry's version and depicts him as a *humanitas*; the other one is the professor's (i.e. the Western critic's) and suggests he is not a *humanitas*. The latter version is evidenced by the free indirect discourse that is used to render his perspective, specifically the terms 'politics' and 'President Nkrumah.' In this context, the term 'President Nkrumah' is taken to denote Kwame Nkrumah, a prominent advocate of African nationalism who in 1960 became president of Ghana ("Kwame Nkrumah…", n.d.). By saying in free indirect speech that he would work *for* Nkrumah, a non-Westerner, the professor challenges the version of himself that is perceived by Henry and in which he, Professor Dreyer, is a *humanitas*: one imagines that, if he truly thought all *anthropos* were brutish and a threat to his research, the prospect of working for Nkrumah would be appalling.

A consequence of this contrast is that both Henry's and the professor's perspectives are challenged, each by the other, or so it would seem. The second criterion appears to have been met, given that *Seven Days* challenges the perspective of the Western critic. With that said, it is unclear whether that perspective is truly challenged, for – as I hinted earlier – Professor Dreyer's perspective is seemingly a reflection of his, and thus the Western critic's, actual feelings. If that is so, then the effect of this episode is not to undermine the perspective of the Western critic, but rather to reaffirm it. Future research into the text might focus on a different episode to determine, as I have tried to, whether the Western critic is challenged.

A study of two episodes was done to determine whether, in those episodes, the second element of border thinking is embodied. In the first episode, the narrator assumes a perspective that is reflective of the *humanitas* role in its perception of African characters. Thus, the episode was found to expose the limits of Western discourse and Western epistemology. The second episode

contrasts the perspectives of Henry and Professor Dreyer, a Western critic. Both perspectives are challenged as a result. With these findings, one may contend that the criteria linked to the second element have been fulfilled. However, I found also that, for each finding, there is a limitation that impacts the validity of that finding, and as such further research is required.

To determine whether *Seven Days* embodies the third element of border thinking, as per the selected template, two criteria must be considered: a phenomenon is experienced from two perspectives, one Western and one non-Western; the phenomenon is linked to an experience that is paralleled by an historical experience(s). Thus, the episode I will study is one that involves the 'phenomenon' of gift-giving and is narrated from the perspectives of two characters, one Western and one non-Western.

During the final chapter, Henry is wandering about the farm and receives gifts from a number of the characters (150-61). Among these gifts is a clay pot given to him by a group of African women (154). One of these women greets him, blesses his marriage and bestows the gift on him. When the gift has been given, Henry pays her, and the exchange is concluded.

In this episode, the narrating voice shifts in perspective between Henry's and that of the woman. Since that shift is a subtle one, it requires some explanation; as such, the episode is transcribed in full:

> One of [the women], witch-like with her shrivelled skin and crafty eyes, shuffled nearer and touched Henry's jacket. She spoke a mixture of Afrikaans and Xhosa: she greeted the man of Salome. She hoped it would go well with him. And that he would have many children. And that the corn would always bear four cobs. And that the rains would come at the right time. She mentioned a gift: He received it: a gleaming clay pot, burned black and glazed. She clapped her hands and accepted the money in upturned palms, counted it quickly with palms turned down. Long would he live, the owner of Salome, the prince of Silberstein. (154)

The use of a third-person narrator means that in this passage, the shift in perspectives is reflected in the distinct styles of the narrating voice: the two perspectives are shown and differentiated by the styles of their respective discourses. When using third-person speech, Leroux puts the narrator in Henry's perspective; with free indirect discourse, however, the voice shifts to the woman. To demonstrate this shift, I will show how both instruments of third-person narration and free indirect discourse are used to differentiate these perspectives.

When the passage opens, the voice is found to be in Henry's perspective due to its use of third-person narration. The phrase "witch-like with her shrivelled skin and crafty eyes" is one that describes the external features of the woman; the narrator's 'eye' is focused on her, as Henry's must be, for she greeted him and is now approaching. In other words, it is the simple third-person narrator that defines Henry's 'discourse' or perspective. The passage then shifts to free indirect discourse and to the woman's point of view. Since neither character is shown speaking in direct speech, a comparison of her discourse (having 'greeted the man of Salome,' it is she who is speaking) with 'features of her direct speech' is not possible; however, a comparison with Henry's discourse shows that the style of these discourses are quite different. The first sentence (i.e. Henry's perspective) is long and descriptive: "One of them, witch-like with her shrivelled skin and crafty eyes, shuffled nearer and touched Henry's jacket". After the greeting, the discourse changes – the sentences are now shorter: "She hoped it would go well with him."; "And that he would have many children."; "And that the corn would always bear four cobs". The difference in style suggests that a new voice (and therefore a new perspective) is being emphasised. The first voice is Henry's; it is rendered in simple third-person narration. As such, the new voice (which is rendered in free indirect discourse) must be that of the woman.

The shifting narrative voice is used to describe the act of gift-giving; it is in this act that the perspective shifts, revealing a Western (Henry's) and non-Western (the woman's) perspective in regards to this 'phenomenon.' After taking the gift from the woman, Henry pays for it. Thus, it would seem that there is a misunderstanding; these two acts are contradictory, and as such the exchange is perceived differently by each of the characters. From Henry's perspective, it is a bestowal; from the woman's, it is a transaction. Henry's perspective is inferred by his re-entry to the action, which is narrated from a third-person vantagepoint: "She mentioned a gift: He received it: a gleaming clay pot, burned black and glazed" (154). Meanwhile, it is clear that the woman was expecting payment: payment is not offered by Henry but is given in response to her 'clapping.' After the payment, Leroux shifts the perspective back to that of the old woman, as is evidenced by the shorter sentences and free indirect discourse: "Long would he live, the owner of Salome, the prince of Silberstein" (154). Thus, in the depiction of gift-giving, two perspectives have been shown, one Western and the other non-Western. In other words, the first criterion has been met.

Whether the second criterion is fulfilled is unclear, since the 'phenomenon' of gift-giving is not clearly linked to experiences in history (153-4). Other gifts are given in this chapter; thus, it would seem that this episode forms part of a broader network of thematised associations. However, in this episode, too little evidence is given to suggest whether this phenomenon reflects a broader historical experience.

This shift in perspective establishes the interaction as a type of double critique in terms of the template of literary border thinking: a ritual is portrayed from two vantagepoints – that of the Westerner and that of the non-Westerner. While in *2666* that ritual is the experience of violence from the *humanitas* and *anthropos* perspectives, in *Seven Days*, it is 'gift-giving.' The stark

contrast in their perspectives is established, in both novels, by the juxtaposition of those perspectives. However, this reading is limited by the fact that it is unclear whether the phenomenon of 'gift-giving' relates to a specific historical experience.

3.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to determine whether, and to what extent, Leroux's *Seven Days* is an expression of literary border thinking. The first step was to establish that *Seven Days* is, in fact, a modern *plaasroman*. To do so, I showed that, firstly, *Seven Days* mocks the early *plaasroman* in its subversion of a paradigm of farm ownership that is espoused by the latter genre (Jock Silberstein is both 'owner' and 'creditor.') Secondly, *Seven Days* challenges racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals in its treatment of the colour bar, on one hand, and of the *volksmoeder* ideal (Slim Mrs Silberstein is the antithesis thereof.), on the other hand.

Thereafter, I compared three templates of literary border thinking to gauge which one is most suitable to a study of *Seven Days*. The templates derived from Mignolo's and Saldívar's essays are ill-suited, since both rely on the presence of a non-Western epistemology, which *Seven Days* lacks. The template based on Herlinghaus's study seemed most promising: this template relies, largely, on a counterpart to the concept of the Western critic; that role is embodied by Professor Dreyer.

When this template was applied, the results thereof were mixed. In studying the first element, I found that, in *Seven Days*, labour and resources are racially distributed. The text fulfils thus the first criterion that is related to the first element of border thinking. Per the second criterion,

these non-Western characters should seem to be tragic and absurd victims of the coloniality of power. Since they were neither tragic nor absurd, for the most part, this criterion was not met.

A study of the second element of border thinking proved more promising. Per the template, I examined whether the perspective of the narrating voice is subject to 'severe limits.' Thus, *Seven Days* was shown to embody that aspect of the second element of border thinking that concerns liberation of oppressed layers. Another aspect (the undermining of the claim by Western epistemology to universal applicability) was displayed after a study that considered two points of view in an interaction involving Henry and Professor Dreyer.

Finally, I showed that *Seven Days* embodies the first criterion relating to the third element of border thinking (a double critique). The shifting perspective of the narrating voice allows two voices (one Western, the other non-Western) to frame the experience of gift-giving, fulfilling the first criterion. However, since gift-giving is not framed in terms of a broader historical experience, the second criterion is not met.

CHAPTER 4:

DISCOURSES OF THE WEST AND NON-WEST IN ETIENNE VAN HEERDEN'S *ANCESTRAL VOICES*

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The novel to which this chapter applies literary border thinking is *Ancestral Voices*, a modern *plaasroman* by Etienne van Heerden. Originally in Afrikaans, it was published near the end of apartheid, in 1986 ("Apartheid", n.d.), under the title *Toorberg*. In this chapter, page numbers will refer to the edition entitled *Ancestral Voices* (an English translation by Malcolm Hacksley), which was published in 1989.[22]

As I show later, much of the criticism tends to view *Ancestral Voices* in terms of the farm novel or the *plaasroman*. By applying my definition, I show that *Ancestral Voices* is a modern *plaasroman*: the novel is opposed to racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals and those of the early *plaasroman*. To this end, I explore, firstly, how the figure of the farmer-father (a trope of the early *plaasroman* genre) is undermined in *Ancestral Voices* and, secondly, the depiction of one character who is a 'black African' (to borrow Sanders's term) intellectual.

Thereafter, I compare elements of *Ancestral Voices* to each of the templates of literary border thinking. My purpose in doing so is to determine which of the three templates would, if applied to *Ancestral Voices*, prove most illuminating. Criteria are then derived from that template that correspond to the three elements of border thinking. By studying whether these criteria have

[22] See Van Heerden, 1989.

been met, I establish whether, and the extent to which, *Ancestral Voices* is an instance of literary border thinking.

4.2. *ANCESTRAL VOICES*: A MODERN *PLAASROMAN*

Ancestral Voices is the story of Toorberg, a farm owned by the Moolman family that is occupied by the Moolmans and 'Skaamfamilie' ('family of shame' [Wicomb, 1998:373]) (5, 19, 46, 158, 220).[23] The Moolmans are led by Abel, an Afrikaner who is descended from FounderAbel, the farm's originator (4-5, 13, 39, 49, 54, 160, 184). The Skaamfamilie, meanwhile, are a family of non-whites descended from Floris Moolman (FounderAbel's son) and GranmaKitty Riet (the daughter of Jan Swaat, who is FounderAbel's non-white servant) (3, 12, 31, 65, 66-8) (Murphy, 1998:4). A range of perspectives is used to narrate *Ancestral Voices*, including characters from both families, some living and some deceased (42, 64-8, 102-8, 117, 245-7).[24]

Two stories take place in the novel, and in different time periods. In one story, Abel's grandson, Noah, has fallen in a borehole (58-62, 106-7, 257). In the other, over a year has passed since the incident, a magistrate has come to look into it, and into Noah's death specifically (33-4, 54, 132, 232).

A similarity between the novel and the *plaasroman* can be seen in the above plot summary. In the passing of Toorberg (first from FounderAbel to OldAbel, then from OldAbel to Abel [5, 19, 160, 215, 217]), a theme is identified that is found in the early *plaasromans*. More specifically, that theme concerns 'self-realization' (Coetzee, 1988:87). According to Coetzee,

[23] In-text citations of *Ancestral Voices* include page numbers only.
[24] When a chapter foregrounds the point of view of one character, that character is called the 'narrative focaliser.'

early *plaasromans* (those by Van den Heever, especially) feature a kind of self-realisation, in which the self is not an 'individual' but "the transitory embodiment of a lineage" (Coetzee, 1988:87). The novel *Groei* (by Van den Heever) is a prime example: according to Coetzee (1988:95, 96, 98), a "figure in Gustav [the protagonist] … looms larger as his biological father dwindles – a transindividual figure standing for the line of patriarchal farmer-fathers". The shift from the individual to the 'farmer-father' implies, to some degree, a loss of individual identification. In *Ancestral Voices*, that loss is thematised in the names of each farmer-father. Each farmer-father is named 'Abel' (5, 13, 40, 42, 49, 160). The similarity in their names signals a loss of individuality. Moreover, that loss is underscored by characters who note the similarities, or possible similarities, among the Abels (207, 227, 239, 251).

By invoking the farmer-father, Van Heerden puts his novel in dialogue with others that are written in the *plaasroman* genre. With that said, given the origins of the farmer-farmer, the novel would seem to be an early *plaasroman*, or a version thereof. The present research is concerned with modern *plaasromans*; thus, my first task is to confirm that *Ancestral Voices* is a modern – not early – *plaasroman*.

Fortunately, the case for this text's being a modern *plaasroman* seems better than that for *Seven Days*. Chapter 3 hinted at a tendency with criticism wherein *Seven Days* is considered less in terms of the farm concept specifically than in terms of other discourses; the novel is also missing from Gerrit Olivier's modern *plaasroman* historiography. Van Heerden's novel is read widely in terms of the farm novel and *plaasroman* (Wicomb, 1998:373-4; Warnes, 2004:52-3; Devarenne, 2009:636-7; Snyman, 2009:10; Warnes, 2011:121; Manià, 2019:55). According to Olivier, it is also among the so-called 'later farm novels' – works that, in his view, "address the

silences in Van den Heever … and others" (2012:319) and "restor[e] the bodily and sexual presence of black characters" (320).

Based on these comments, it appears that the racial ideals of *Ancestral Voices* are at odds with those of the early *plaasroman*. To prove that it is a modern *plaasroman*, however, one must show (as I did in Chapter 3, regarding *Seven Days at the Silbersteins*) that two criteria have been met: the novel challenges the ideals of the early *plaasroman*; Afrikaner ideals that are racist and nationalist are also undermined.

The first criterion is met in the depiction of the three farmer-father characters (i.e. the 'Abels'). As I mentioned, each of the Abels seems to embody the figure of the farmer-father: by naming each one 'Abel,' that is, Van Heerden conjures the 'transindividual figure,' the sum of the farmer-father figures. With that said, it takes more than a name to make up the farmer-father; it takes hard work and prosperity. By applying this concept, I show that, in Van Heerden's novel, the figure of the farmer-father is doomed. The grim fate of the farmer-father suggests that *Ancestral Voices* is opposed to the ideals of the early *plaasroman* genre.

In his reference to *Groei*, it would seem that Coetzee is conflating 'transindividual figure' with the 'true self' of the protagonist (98-9). Moreover, he writes:

> [T]o actualize that self he has to yield up his individuality in a devotion of labour to the past and future of the farm, which is nature inscribed with fences, walls, buildings, boreholes, irrigation channels, and signed above all with the scars of the plough. (99)

In other words, it is through labour that the farmer becomes his 'true self.' That labour is linked to the farm's building, or in Coetzee's term, the 'inscribing of nature': in this passage, Coetzee hints that the product of labour is 'inscriptions' (buildings, boreholes, irrigation channels, etc.). This point is confirmed when Coetzee notes that the lineage (a term I take to mean the 'line of

farmer-fathers,' which he mentions earlier) manifests in "an area of nature inscribed with the signs of the lineage: with *evidences of labour* and with bones in the earth" (109, emphasis added). Labour is not all that is needed, though; to 'maintain the lineage,' the farm must be prosperous (Coetzee, 1988:109).

Similarities can be traced in *Ancestral Voices* between this so-called transindividual figure and Abel, OldAbel and FounderAbel. Each 'Abel' inscribes Toorberg with his own 'signs' and as such resembles the figure of the farmer-father. In Chapter 1, Katie Danster (a member of the Skaamfamilie) tells her grandchildren that FounderAbel "shot and ploughed and chopped and built till Toorberg Farm was the pride of the frontier" (3-5, 102). When the farm's water supply begins dwindling, OldAbel has an aqueduct built to bring water from a nearby spring (3, 215-218). Abel then spends his tenure trying to create an alternative water supply, drilling first in one area, then in another (49, 60, 198, 199, 223-4). The farm's construction, the aqueduct and the boreholes are 'signs' that each Abel has inscribed, or what Coetzee calls 'evidences of labour.'

I noted how naming is used to suggest that each Abel loses part of his individuality. That loss can be said to accompany a duty of sorts that concerns the fate of the Moolman lineage. In Chapter 40, Abel Moolman describes visions in which he sees OldAbel and FounderAbel (223-4). The latter asks Abel: "Abel, where are you taking your patrimony? Are you farming successfully, like your fathers – or are you failing?" (223) In order to take one's patrimony (i.e. the farm[25] [19, 223]) in the right direction, one must farm successfully. In the questions that he asks, FounderAbel connects two elements of the farmer-father, namely commitment to farm

[25] In this context, 'patrimony' is defined as "[p]roperty inherited from one's father or male ancestor" ("Meaning of patrimony…", n.d.).

labour ('farming successfully') and the maintenance of the lineage ('patrimony'). By having Abel see these ancestors (rather than, say, Judge Lucius or Granny Olivier [4, 138, 208]), Van Heerden links these elements to the name 'Abel.' Two elements of the farmer-father (commitment to farm labour and the maintenance of the lineage) combine thus with another – the loss of individuality.

The depictions of Abel, OldAbel and FounderAbel are found thus to resemble the 'transindividual figure,' including the line of farmer-fathers. As I showed, these characters display three of the features that exemplify the farmer-father: a loss of one's individuality, commitment to farm labour and commitment to the maintenance of the lineage. In the context of *Ancestral Voices*, they are the farmer-fathers; specifically, as I will show, they are vehicles through which the text offers a critique of the farmer-father ideal.

The strong presence of the farmer-father might lead one to describe *Ancestral Voices* as an early *plaasroman*, or a champion of early *plaasroman* ideals. One should note that the full ideals of the farmer-father remain unrealised, in spite of these parallels. While Abel is farmer, it seems that the produce of Toorberg is decreasing (37, 40-1). This happens in spite of his efforts to develop Toorberg, a la the farmer-father. When Abel dies, Toorberg falls to CrossAbel, who is sterile (227, 241-2, 247). His sterility means that, when he dies, so too will his lineage.

Given that two of the functions of the farmer-father (as elements that make up the transindividual figure) are to maintain the lineage and to ensure prosperity, the failure of the Moolman farmer-fathers to do both is significant. Each Abel inscribes Toorberg with his 'signs' and fulfils thus his role as farmer-father. This role is ridiculed, for despite their efforts, the farm

ultimately loses its prosperity.[26] The fact that the very last of the farmer-fathers is sterile also spells death for the lineage.

In addition to early *plaasroman* ideals, the novel can be said to challenge racist-nationalist ideals that are associated with Afrikanerdom. These ideals were described earlier (see Chapter 1); they are ideals of the early Afrikaans intellectuals who considered 'black African' intellectuals 'irrelevant,' "as if black Africans did not partake of 'spiritual life'" (Sanders, 2002:74). In *Ancestral Voices*, Oneday Riet can be seen as a kind of 'black African' intellectual.[27] Through him, it is revealed that *Ancestral Voices* challenges racist-nationalist ideals of early Afrikaans intellectuals.

Given how regularly the text notes both his schooling and his intelligence, Oneday clearly is an intellectual (3, 6, 63, 98-9, 117, 123, 150, 177-8, 238, 254, 257).[28] In addition, one might note, as a pastor, Oneday partakes of 'spiritual life' (94, 125).[29] His spiritual life is subject to criticism. Abel's wife, Ella, and the magistrate (who apparently are Afrikaners) both see him as impudent (94, 98, 163-4, 184); in addition, Ella claims that his 'collar' is "political not clerical" (163). In their portrait of Oneday, the latter's faith is dismissed in light of his so-called 'political activities' – activities for which he is imprisoned, apparently (125, 150, 163). To Ella,

[26] 'Prosperous' in this context is defined as "[s]uccessful in material terms; flourishing financially" ("Meaning of prosperous…", n.d.).
[27] In this context, Sanders does not differentiate among types of 'black Africans' (see, for instance, Murphy, 1998) (Sanders, 2002:74). The term 'black African' is thus understood to denote anyone who is not white and not an Afrikaner (See my earlier justification for equating 'white' and 'Afrikaner.') Since Oneday's heritage is mixed-race, he is placed in this category.
[28] The meaning of 'intellectual' is taken to be "[a] person possessing a highly developed intellect" ("Meaning of intellectual…", n.d.).
[29] The meaning of 'spiritual' is understood as "[r]elating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things" ("Meaning of spiritual…", n.d.). This definition was chosen due to its emphasis on the soul. Since Oneday is a pastor, it makes sense that the definition one chooses focus on the soul – a key part of many Christians' belief systems (Cooper, 2009:33; "Meaning of pastor…", n.d.).

his activities seem also to be less a serious enterprise than an extension of his impudence ("I'm glad he's been detained. He was always cheeky, even as a child." [163-4]).

Owing to the structure of *Ancestral Voices*, this portrait does not stand unchallenged. When the perspective shifts in Chapter 21, Oneday becomes the narrative focaliser (117-123); thus, one is shown the depth of his so-called spiritual life (insofar as his faith is an index of his spiritual life). Noah is trapped in the borehole. After Oneday tells her that he will pray for Noah, Katie tells him: "A white minister has been here already" (122). Oneday rebuts her point, noting that "[t]he Lord belongs to everybody" (123) and that, like the white minister, he "can also pray" (122). Oneday's comments show that he is committed not only to his activism, but also to his 'spiritual life': he rejects her subtext (that the white minister is superior to him) and as such rejects racial inequality; had he not been stopped, one imagines that he would have acted on this view, praying for Noah, a white child (154). Oneday's desire to pray represents a convergence of faith and activism; neither one trumps the other, as Ella suggests.

In the depiction of Abel, OldAbel and FounderAbel, Van Heerden offers a model for the so-called 'transindividual figure,' which represents the line of farmer-fathers. The farmer-father embodies ideals of the early *plaasroman*, of which it is a hallmark. In the failure of Toorberg (in terms of the ideals of the farmer-father), these ideals are undermined. In its characterisation of Oneday, who is a 'black African' intellectual, the text also challenges racist-nationalist ideals that are associated with early Afrikaans intellectuals: as is shown, Oneday takes his spiritual and political obligations very seriously. Given that it challenges racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals and those of the early *plaasroman*, *Ancestral Voices* is considered a modern *plaasroman*.

4.3. SELECTING A SUITABLE TEMPLATE: *ANCESTRAL VOICES* AND LITERARY BORDER THINKING

Like *Seven Days*, I have shown that *Ancestral Voices* is a modern *plaasroman*. Next, I must gauge whether, like *Seven Days*, it represents literary border thinking. Doing so warrants a study that involves a suitable template of literary border thinking. Thus, the templates that were developed (see Chapter 2) will be compared to key elements of *Ancestral Voices*, to see which is most suitable.

My initial comments on *Ancestral Voices* suggest that it is an instance of border thinking, including its three elements. Structurally, the text treats characters who are non-Western similarly to those who are Western: both Western characters (including the Moolmans and the magistrate) and non-Western characters (i.e. the Skaamfamilie) feature as narrative focalisers at various junctures (15-22, 57-63, 117-123, 156-160, 184) (Murphy, 1998:4). This clear challenge to the colonial race hierarchy calls to mind the first element of border thinking. In the three Abels, it subverts ideals linked to the theme of farmer-father. These ideals stem from the early *plaasroman* and are associated with whites/Afrikaners (Coetzee, 1988:82-3, 96, 98). Their subversion is thus comparable to part of the second element of border thinking. In its shifting between Western and non-Western characters, the narrative focaliser may be used to carry out a double critique (i.e. the third element).

While these comments are elucidatory, it is not clear whether the text does, in fact, depict literary border thinking. To gauge whether, and the extent to which, it does, one must choose a suitable template of literary border thinking. These templates are derived from interventions by

Mignolo, Herlinghaus and Saldívar. To select one, I will explain each of the templates and compare key aspects thereof to *Ancestral Voices*.

One of the cruxes of Mignolo's essay is a shift from one social role (the Kipucamayoc) to another (the Kilkaycamayoc). That shift is also linked to colonial conquest and was found to involve partial inclusion of Western discourse. To apply this template, one must show that a character(s) in *Ancestral Voices* embodies the shift from one social role to another.

This template is ill-suited to a study of *Ancestral Voices*. The main issue is a dearth of characters whose 'social role' can be said to parallel that of the Kipucamayoc/Kilkaycamayoc. Characters like this must be non-Westerners and have personal histories that precede Toorberg (the setting that, as I show later, is associated with Western colonialism) or else their encounter with it; then, one might argue that, in the social role they embody, they draw on Western and non-Western paradigms. Of the non-Western characters, only four seemingly lived outside the farm; thus, their social roles may have been uninfluenced by the West/Toorberg (at least, prior to their arrival). Jan Swaat and TameBushman arrived with FounderAbel (118-121). Neither Katie nor Meisie Pool are descended from Floris Moolman (a fact shown by the family tree in the first pages of the novel) and as such, they are not 'of' Toorberg or as closely connected with its link to Western colonialism. Of these four, only two of them are narrative focalisers (Katie and Meisie [1-10, 177-183]). Further adding to the issue is the number of narrative focalisers: Katie and Meisie are but two of the voices with which the plot of *Ancestral Voices* is narrated; thus, any 'transition' they embody is not prominent.

A key element of the template that is derived from Herlinghaus's essay is the concept of the Western critic. The role of the Western critic is one that resembles the subject of the rational

knowledge relation, as opposed to the object. For this study to be suitable, a character(s) in *Ancestral Voices* must be shown to be a Western critic.

Much like the previous template, the usefulness of this template is limited by a dearth of suitable characters. The character whose role is most like the Western critic is arguably the magistrate.[30] His attitude toward laws, which inform his investigation, is one of devotion (116, 184, 220-1). His field, which is law, is an 'object' in terms of the rational knowledge relation (50, 95). The role he is given by the Department of Justice is to "test … the findings of [his] colleagues" (101), presumably other law practitioners (35, 95). In other words, in his relation with his field (as it concerns these findings), he is the subject: he is the 'bearer of reason' while the law is, in a manner of speaking, his object.

In spite of these parallels between him and the role of the Western critic, the magistrate is not the latter. It appears that he is unable to conclude his investigation using his familiar concepts. He admits this fact and notes that his commitment to the law has been tested and is inadequate (132, 234, 251, 253). Both his confidence in and his commitment to his field are disturbed; thus, he is not a Western critic.

The third template is derived from Saldívar's essay on Díaz's *Oscar Wao*. Some similarities can be seen between *Ancestral Voices* and the main aspects of this essay; hence, this template seems suitable. By 'main aspects' I mean structures that distinguish Díaz's text, temporally and epistemologically. The similarities between these structures, as described by Saldívar, and those

[30] Judge Lucius might fit this role, as his field is also the law (134, 206). However, there are few opportunities in which to examine him as a Western critic compared to the magistrate. Judge Lucius is the narrative focaliser in one chapter, whereas several chapters have the magistrate in this role (54-6, 134-9, 140-1, 233-5).

of *Ancestral Voices* are worth mentioning: their similarity suggests that, when this template is applied, the latter (like Díaz's novel) will be found to embody border thinking.

Parallels between Díaz's and Van Heerden's novels are seen in their respective temporal structures. Díaz shifts the perspective between time periods. The result is that the non-Western viewpoint is foregrounded. Similar shifts take place in *Ancestral Voices*. Numerous time periods are narrated and, in switching periods, the text often foregrounds non-Westerners as the point of narration (34, 57-63, 73-4, 89, 117-23, 228-35).

Another parallel is seen in their epistemological structures. In Díaz's novel, the term *fukú americanus* is used and is one that can be compared to the colonial difference. According to Saldívar, the term is "an attempt to reveal and displace the logic by which the Europeans have represented their others" (2011:134). The novel's epistemological structure is also marked by the presence of diverse knowledges (including Western and non-Western knowledges) in the discourses of the characters. In *Ancestral Voices*, meanwhile, farm labour is portrayed in a way that is anti-pastoral; as such, it challenges the logic of a Western discourse. I regard the South African pastoral as 'Western' to the degree that its depiction of farm labour favours whites over blacks: black labour challenges claims by the whites to propriety of the farm and as such, it is left out (Coetzee, 1988:5). *Ancestral Voices* challenges this logic: rather than silence non-white farm labour, it foregrounds it, in particular Jan Swaat's (65, 105-6) (Murphy, 1998:4). Various knowledges can be seen, moreover, in the discourse of Oneday: Oneday draws on knowledge from the 'West' (as evidenced by his attendance of 'Bible school' [6]) and non-West (as evidenced by his knowledge of 'Bushman' practices [179-80]) ("Bible", n.d.; Murphy, 1998:4; Mignolo, 2006:14; Mignolo, 2009:176).

A case was made for a study of *Ancestral Voices* to determine whether it is an instance of literary border thinking. Using my comments in the previous section, I showed that close parallels connect the novel with elements of border thinking. Consequently, a study of this kind seems appropriate. The suitability of three templates were gauged by comparing key suppositions of those templates, on the one hand, and features of *Ancestral Voices*, on the other hand. The comparison sought to determine which of the three templates would, when compared to *Ancestral Voices*, prove most insightful. Based on this study, the most suitable template is derived from Saldívar's essay.

4.4. *ANCESTRAL VOICES* AS AN INSTANCE OF LITERARY BORDER THINKING

To establish whether, and the degree to which, *Ancestral Voices* is an instance of literary border thinking, elements of *Oscar Wao* will be compared to those of Van Heerden's modern *plaasroman*. The 'criteria' in this section are derived from features that comprise *Oscar Wao* and are relevant to the three elements of border thinking. Each element corresponds with two or three criteria. My aim is to consider whether *Ancestral Voices* meets these criteria. In accordance with the template, I will do so by considering elements that are linked to the novel's temporal and epistemological structures.

Three criteria must be considered to establish whether, and the extent to which, *Ancestral Voices* embodies the first element of border thinking. Firstly, one must show that the temporal structure is used to explicate a specific kind of relationship involving *anthropos* and *humanitas* characters: by shifting the time periods, the novel must show a particular character(s) is made into an *anthropos*. Secondly, the epistemological structure should allow 'history' to be perceived in terms of 'dominant' (Western) and 'subaltern' (non-Western) positions. This

structure must make reference to the colonial difference. The *anthropos* should also seem to be 'victims' of the colonial difference, confirming that the latter has been rejected. Lastly, the novel should confirm that the colonial difference, which is an element of the epistemological structure, is associated with (indeed, that it originates from) the modern world-system.

Having listed these criteria, one finds that much of the first element relies, to some extent, upon the colonial difference. To study the first element, one needs a clear understanding of how the colonial difference manifests in *Ancestral Voices*. Thus, before I proceed, I will show why the treatment of *anthropos* characters parallels the colonial difference.

One of the attributes of the farm narrative (see Chapter 1) is a hierarchy that approximates the colonial race hierarchy. The Moolmans' farm is a prime example of the farm narrative as it relates to this hierarchy. Per the farm narrative, the hierarchy on the farm is one that "provides security to the white male, with the whites as masters of the blacks" (Van der Merwe, 2001:165). On Toorberg, this hierarchy can be seen in the form of racial distribution of labour and resources. As is shown, Toorberg was founded not just by FounderAbel, but also by Jan Swaat and TameBushman (3, 62, 68). Jan Swaat and TameBushman, two non-Westerners, lived as servants[31] of FounderAbel (3, 4) (Murphy, 1998:4). Although they helped to found Toorberg, the deed is given to FounderAbel ("[b]ecause he was white … [and] the other two were a poor half-breed and a step-Bushman" [179]). Oneday and Shala, his brother, also "thought that their world would forever be dominated by an Abel [Moolman]" (239). Toorberg's hierarchy is thus similar to that of the farm narrative (i.e. the colonial race hierarchy): not only do the Moolmans (whites) enjoy more wealth; in relations between them and non-whites, they are dominant.

[31] Jan Swaat's relation to FounderAbel is that of a 'bondsman' (3), a word that means 'slave' ("Meaning of bondsman…", n.d.).

Equivalence can be drawn between the colonial difference and what I call the colonial race hierarchy (see Chapter 1); thus, the non-Western characters (in particular, Jan Swaat and TameBushman) are shown to be victims of the colonial difference. As I hinted previously (see my comments on non-white labour and the South African pastoral), this revelation of how non-Westerners are impacted by the effects of colonial difference constitutes the novel's epistemological structure.

The treatment of Jan Swaat and TameBushman demonstrates how non-Europeans were created as *anthropos*. It is thus pivotal to the first criterion that pertains to the first element of border thinking. Earlier in this study, the term *anthropos* was defined as one who is non-Western and is deemed 'inferior' to the Westerner (*humanitas*). Those who assign this category believe that they are superior to the *anthropos*; they are the *humanitas* (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009:12, 13). The means whereby *anthropos* are inferiorised can be seen in Grandmother Magtilt's (FounderAbel's wife's) treatment of Jan Swaat and TameBushman. In this instance, the *humanitas* role is embodied by Grandmother Magtilt, while Jan Swaat and TameBushman serve in *anthropos* roles.

In Chapter 4, Van Heerden describes an encounter in which Grandmother Magtilt catches Jan Swaat looking at her:

> Once, when FounderAbel had ridden on ahead a little way, she caught him [Jan Swaat] looking at her with his yellow slit-eyes.
>
> 'Get away, you Hottentot!' she snarled. 'Don't stare at me. Don't you dare look at a white woman like that again, do you hear?' He turned away, split some wood and lit a fire. (25)

This encounter is relayed in flashback and as such it displays the complexity of the novel's temporal structure (24-5). Grandmother Magtilt, now a ghost, serves as the focaliser through which the passage is narrated (23-9). In this passage, her discourse evokes the logic by which the *humanitas* asserts superiority. She reprimands Jan Swaat given that she is 'white' and he is

a ‘Hottentot’ (a term that denotes membership of the Khoi population, who are indigenous to South Africa [Murphy, 1998:4]). Her words suggest that she is distinguished: her whiteness forbids him (a non-Westerner) from staring at her. In the relationship between Grandmother Magtilt and Jan Swaat, the former clearly has authority. Her authority is exercised in her command (‘get away’) and rests on her perceived racial superiority (the address, ‘you Hottentot,’ seems intended to remind Jan Swaat that, as a non-Westerner, he is her subordinate). Both reprimand and command derive their authority from the fact that she is white and he is a ‘Hottentot.’ Thus, racial difference is the basis on which she, a white, asserts her superiority over Jan Swaat, who is a non-white. In doing so, she both classifies Jan Swaat as *anthropos* and embodies the role of the *humanitas*.

She is also the *humanitas* in her relationship with TameBushman (The fact that this relationship is described after the above passage hints that it is part of the flashback too; thus, it is indicative of the temporal structure). As with Jan Swaat, this is evidenced by her discourse:

> She [Grandmother Magtilt] didn’t understand his [TameBushman’s] click-talk, but he had a ready smile. On moonlit nights he would squat on his haunches, rocking back and forth under the moon. Sometimes he would light a fire and dance round and round it like a blue korhaan in a courtship display, but all alone, constantly chewing a piece of sinew, his thoughts far away, perhaps among his own people creeping through the veld somewhere. Where, Grandmother Magtilt sometimes wondered as she watched this little yellow creature trotting tirelessly at FounderAbel’s stirrup: where would the others of his tribe be now? (26)

Although this excerpt is narrated in the third person, the discourse is that of Grandmother Magtilt: it is her thoughts and reflections (“She didn’t understand”; “Grandmother Magtilt sometimes wondered”) that are foregrounded, not TameBushman’s, though TameBushman also features (25-6). The passage is thus taken to depict her free indirect discourse. In her reference to nature, she makes TameBushman seem to be less than human: she calls him ‘little yellow creature’ and compares him to a ‘blue korhaan’; these terms paint TameBushman as animal-like, as a beast in nature (“Blue korhaan”, n.d.).

Unlike with Jan Swaat, however, whether she sees TameBushman as inferior due to his being non-Western is unclear. The reason for this is that, for the most part, TameBushman's actions (including squatting, dancing, chewing, trotting) are observed, rather than engaged with. Jan Swaat, by contrast, is found looking at her, causing her to engage him and to invoke her 'superiority.' Owing to this limitation, the way Grandmother Magtilt treats TameBushman is less indicative of the creation of the *anthropos* than her treatment of Jan Swaat.

Nonetheless, her perception of TameBushman (a non-European) as 'of nature' is consistent with the *humanitas* point of view. Earlier in this study, the rational knowledge relation was shown to comprise two entities, a subject and an object; furthermore, the role of subject was linked to the *humanitas*, while the object role was linked to the *anthropos*. Quijano adds that the subject is 'bearer of reason,' while the object is simply 'nature' (2007:172-3). Thus, in perceiving TameBushman as 'of nature,' Grandmother Magtilt frames him as an object – as an *anthropos*. Reaffirming this impression, she notes that TameBushman was 'caught,' and her father gave him to FounderAbel 'as a wedding present' (25-6). From her point of view (and her father's and FounderAbel's), TameBushman is a literal object to be given and taken, rather than a human being.

In her treatment of Jan Swaat and TameBushman, Grandmother Magtilt takes on the role of the *humanitas*. Thus, she creates *anthropos* beings out of Jan Swaat and TameBushman; in Jan Swaat's case, that process is better articulated. His being a 'Hottentot' – a term that implies a racial difference – is invoked to justify Grandmother Magtilt's perceived superiority. TameBushman is described as 'of nature' and is treated as a literal object; thus, he is perceived

as an *anthropos*. The creation of *anthropos*, coupled with a temporal shift, means that the first criterion has been fulfilled.

Yet another insight is gleaned from this chapter. This insight has to do with the third criterion: the connection between two phenomena, namely the modern world system and the colonial difference. Recollecting her travels with FounderAbel, Grandmother Magtilt uses language that evokes a specific historical period: the Great Trek. The impression is confirmed at several points, when FounderAbel is labelled an 'Afrikaner' and a 'pioneer.' This account of FounderAbel, with its evocation of the Great Trek, conjure a specific historical context from which the spread of colonialism, and thus the modern world-system, are inextricable.

At several points, FounderAbel is described as an Afrikaner and as a pioneer (89, 157, 162-3, 184). The descriptors 'Afrikaner' and 'pioneer' are illuminating: the effect is to locate FounderAbel in a specific historical setting, which is reminiscent of the Great Trek. The Great Trek took place during the mid-1800s and involved migration of thousands of predominantly Dutch colonists, many on wagons, from the Cape Colony to the southern African interior (Leslie, 1994:33; Erasmus, 1995:1; Templin, 1999:397). The Great Trek proved pivotal to the forming of Afrikaner identity, its participants dubbed 'Boers,' 'pioneers' and 'Afrikaners' (Erasmus, 1995:vi; Templin, 1999:397, 399, 408; Penn, 1996:126; Laubscher, 2005:309; Griessel & Kotze, 2010:71).

Reinforcing parallels between FounderAbel's story and the Great Trek are two testimonies: Grandmother Magtilt's and Ella Moolman's. In this passage, Grandmother Magtilt (as the narrative focaliser) describes her travels with FounderAbel:

> [W]ith their two wagons, she and FounderAbel headed into the wilderness. For months she sat through the daylight hours, jolting along

> on the chest seat of the forward wagon. […] Eventually Grandmother Magtilt wanted to scream her fear out loud so that the whole wilderness would hear and come and claim her.
>
> But on they went, thrusting deeper and deeper into the unknown. (25)

The passage conjures a setting in which FounderAbel and Grandmother Magtilt, "thrusting deeper … into the unknown", are as pioneers.[32] Their travels are marked by adversity ("unknown", "wilderness"[33]), like those of the pioneers (Penn, 1996:126; Templin, 1999:402-4); and like the pioneers, they travel by wagon.

By depicting him as a pioneer, Van Heerden locates FounderAbel in the context of a specific historical period; in this context, the impact of Western colonialism, and thus the modern world system, is considerable. Diderick Justin Erasmus argues that, in fact, the migration of Dutch colonists should be viewed in light of 'world economies' and their impact on 'the colonial periphery' (1995:2). He suggests that the Great Trek took place during "a period of unprecedented expansion" (facilitated by Britain's "annexation of the Cape" [1995:2]), and as a result, "large areas of Xhosa territory were seized" (1995:2). Ella Moolman evokes this vision. In recounting Toorberg's origins, she states: "[FounderAbel] drove out the Xhosa and the Bushmen, and with his tame Pandour at his side, he cleared this part of the country for succeeding generations" (163). With these words, Ella not only connects FounderAbel to the Great Trek; she also connects the Great Trek in history with the seizure of Xhosa territory – an outcome of Western colonialism and the modern world system (Erasmus, 1995:1, 2). The result is an image in which, as in Erasmus's study, the Great Trek is linked to the modern world system.

[32] A 'pioneer' in this context is "[a] person who is among the first to explore or settle a new country or area" ("Main meanings of pioneer…", n.d.).
[33] The term 'wilderness' is taken to describe "[a]n uncultivated, uninhabited, and inhospitable region" ("Definition of wilderness…", n.d.).

As Ella's words indicate, it is not just the Great Trek with which FounderAbel is associated, but also the origins of Toorberg (4-5, 161, 163). Hence, these origins are linked to the modern world system. The connection is mentioned owing to its implications for the colonial difference. As I mentioned earlier, due to the treatment of non-Western characters, Toorberg's origins show the effects of the colonial race hierarchy, and thus of the colonial difference. In other words, by locating these origins in the context of the Great Trek, specifically the Great Trek as outcome of the modern world system ("[FounderAbel] drove out the Xhosa and … cleared this part of the country for succeeding generations" [163]), Van Heerden links the modern world system to the effects of the colonial difference.

In the descriptions of FounderAbel, I found elements that conjure a historical context (one that is identified as the Great Trek). Furthermore, this context is linked to Western colonialism, and thus to the modern world system. Ella's account helps to associate the modern world system not only with FounderAbel, but with the origins of Toorberg. Earlier, these origins were shown to evoke the effect of the colonial difference; thus, the modern world system is associated with the colonial difference, and the third criterion is met.

I have left the second criterion for last as it requires me to explore a different chapter of the novel, namely Chapter 31. To meet the criterion, the novel must demonstrate how the colonial difference allows a character(s) to "think of … history in terms of dominant and subaltern positions in the field of knowledge (or epistemology)" (Saldívar, 2011:127). As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the terms 'dominant' and 'subaltern' can be replaced with 'Western' and 'non-Western,' respectively. In the context of Van Heerden's novel, the former can be identified with the position of whites, the latter with 'Bushmen.' In Chapter 31, Oneday describes history from the white and 'Bushman' perspectives and frames this account with the colonial difference.

The history that I am referring to is that of the farm and the land on which the farm was established. It involves two elements: the history of 'Bushmen' and Jan Swaat's involvement in the founding of Toorberg (3-5, 179). Oneday tells his wife-to-be, Meisie Pool, how Jan Swaat had worked during the founding of Toorberg (6, 117, 179, 180-1); it was not Jan Swaat, however, but FounderAbel who got the title-deeds, "[b]ecause he was white" (179). Oneday also describes 'Bushmen' who had lived in the area:

> '[…] TameBushman's people knew this Eye when FounderAbel's grandfather still lived in Holland, across the sea. And when FounderAbel's father came over the sea and landed in Table Bay, scurvy and all, the Bushmen were already living here. […] But who's got the title-deeds today? And who is stuck out on the Stiefveld with a plot of prickly-pears and a goat-pen and a few rabbits? The Riets here, the Moolmans there!' (179)

The history of this area did not start with the arrival of FounderAbel. The above passage shows that it was occupied by 'Bushmen' long before his arrival – at a time when his father arrived in South Africa (4, 5, 102-3) ("Table Bay", n.d.). The history that Oneday describes is one in which 'Bushmen' activities are emphasised; they seem to have been active in the area ("tiny hunters clustered round an eland"; "that, Oneday told her, was the way they stalked the game" [180]). The extent to which 'Bushman' are foregrounded can be seen when one revisits the first chapter, in which Katie narrates the farm's history: in her version, that is, the 'Bushmen' barely feature, and the story of Toorberg starts with the arrival of FounderAbel (3-5).

In Oneday's history of the area, the concept of the colonial difference frames his account of the 'white' and 'Bushman' positions. He invokes the colonial difference, insofar as the colonial difference impacts Jan Swaat (FounderAbel got the title-deeds "[b]ecause he was white"). Subsequent comments ("But who's got the title-deeds today? And who is stuck out on the Stiefveld with a plot of prickly-pears and a goat-pen and a few rabbits?") hint that, while he is speaking, he is also reflecting on the colonial difference: the Stiefveld is home to the

Skaamfamilie (8); thus, it seems he is reflecting on how non-Westerners were negatively impacted (The white Abel Moolman has the title-deeds, the non-white Skaamfamilie does not). Between these points (that is, the points at which he invokes the colonial difference), Oneday mentions the 'Bushmen,' in addition to FounderAbel's ancestors. When describing history from the Western (FounderAbel's father's) and the non-Western (the 'Bush-men's') positions, he therefore seems to reflect on the colonial difference.

Insofar as this history is a form of knowledge, per the criterion, the Western and non-Western positions make up the 'field of knowledge.' For example, the 'Bushmen's' paintings, which portray their practices, might be described as a non-Western form of knowledge or epistemology. Western knowledge may include stories about FounderAbel's ancestors, such as those Oneday touches on.

Oneday gives an account of history that includes both Western and non-Western positions. The former include stories of white characters, such as FounderAbel's father and grandfather. The latter, meanwhile, is represented by 'Bushmen.' In Chapter 31, Oneday conveys the history of the territory and, as he does, the non-Western ('Bushman') position is emphasised. That this side is prominent can be seen when comparing Oneday's and Katie's histories. Oneday also frames his history in terms that reflect the effects of the colonial difference; since the colonial difference makes up the epistemological structure, one can say that that structure has allowed history to be thought of 'in terms of dominant and subaltern positions in the field of knowledge.' From these findings, it appears that the second criterion has been met.

The depiction of Oneday, Meisie and Katie can help to establish whether, and the extent to which, the second element is embodied. The following criteria are used to this end: the novel

affirms the humanity of characters who make up 'family identities' (Saldívar, 2011:130) that are produced by a brutal authoritarian regime;[34] a character(s) offers an alternative to Western rationality by drawing on a range of knowledges. The social groups and family identities that are referred to in the first criterion have a counterpart in Van Heerden's text, specifically in two relationships: the relationship between Meisie and Oneday, on one hand, and the relationship between Meisie and Katie, on the other hand. Katie is then shown to ascribe to a range of discourses, and in doing so, challenge the claim of Western knowledge to universal applicability.

The first criterion is premised on the existence of what I call a brutal authoritarian regime, which gives rise to new social groups and family identities. In the novel, this regime is apartheid. Showing that it is apartheid is crucial: it is owing to apartheid – specifically to oppression, a hallmark of apartheid – that Meisie is seen to abandon her 'family identity' and accept a new social group and family identity.

Before my analysis of apartheid, however, I should note why the regime is considered to be 'brutal' and 'authoritarian.'[35] The regime is brutal to the extent that the authorities, Oneday's 'interrogators,' use torture to extract information. Chapter 35 finds Oneday in prison (201). Oneday is questioned and tortured: "his interrogators returned to ask why he, a pastor, had a complete list of the times of main-line trains in his pocket" (201); "[a]gain the iron bars, and then a man throwing a bucket of water in his face" (203); "[t]he soles of his feet were throbbing"

[34] When Saldívar speaks of 'authoritarian brutality,' no doubt he is referring to the Trujillo regime (The regime tortures Abelard after the latter disobeys a request from Trujillo; its use of brutality seems thus to be authoritarian ["Definition of brutality…", n.d.; "Definition of authoritarian…", n.d.]) (Saldívar, 2011:128-9). While Saldívar's term for this regime is 'dictatorship,' the term 'regime' is used here for convenience. The difference is negligible, however; for my purpose, the focus is less on the format of the regime as it is on its use of (authoritarian) brutality. As I will show, this brutality is resorted to by both the Trujillo regime and the authorities in *Ancestral Voices*.

[35] The term 'brutality' is taken to mean "[s]avage physical violence; great cruelty" ("Definition of brutality…", n.d.). 'Authoritarian' is a term taken to mean "[f]avoring … strict obedience to authority, especially that of the government, at the expense of personal freedom" ("Definition of authoritarian…", n.d.).

(203); "[t]he interrogators came to him again" (204). The reason for his treatment seems linked with his carrying of a complete list of main-line train times; the regime – which has Oneday tortured and detained on such trivial charges – is thus 'authoritarian.' The regime in the text demands obedience at the cost of Oneday's personal freedom: its representatives, his interrogators, imprison and torture him for no lesser 'disobedience' than having a train timetable; the smallness of the offence shows the extent to which his 'personal freedom' has been kerbed. Hence, the brutality that he faces can be described as authoritarian.

The regime that imprisons Oneday and treats him with authoritarian brutality also impacts on his marriage. That regime is apartheid. In Chapter 35, Oneday's arrest is narrated (204-5): he is caught in a township and taken inside a Casspir. The Casspir – an immense, heavily armoured defence vehicle – was a 'tool of fear' in the hands of South Africa's apartheid government (Mindock, 2018). The Casspir could be found in townships and, during the 1980s, was used to suppress those who opposed apartheid (Mindock, 2018; Rankin & Schmidt, 2009:94). Casspirs, therefore, are a symbol of apartheid. Since Casspirs are present in the townships before Oneday is arrested, this period (and the accompanying regime) is identified as apartheid.

The effects of apartheid are found to impact on his relationship with Meisie: it is due to apartheid that he is often from home. When Meisie confronts him over what she sees as his lack of congregants, he replies: "'I am an itinerant preacher … My people are everywhere, wherever there is poverty and oppression.'" (178) From this statement, it is clear that the regime impacts him since, as a preacher, the reason he travels is 'oppression' (That apartheid is seen as oppressive suggests that the term 'oppression' refers to apartheid [Brown, 2004:169]). In doing so, though, it affects Meisie: Oneday's absence is frustrating to her, to the point that she considers leaving him (178, 181, 231).

Meisie's decision to leave brings me to the matter of new social groups and family identities. In Chapter 31, Van Heerden describes Meisie's ideal of a family identity: "What she wanted was to be the Minister's Wife, with a smart, wide hat, and sit in the front pew in church on Sunday, with her children all in a row beside her wearing white knee-high socks." (178) Her reality is somewhat different from this: Oneday is a travelling preacher; he leaves his children at home (181). With her ideal family identity shattered, Meisie leaves; thus, Oneday's absence – a result of the authoritarian regime – is the stimulus causing her to abandon her ideal of a family identity (181).

In Meisie's case, though, the regime does more than to shatter her family identity ideal: it also nurtures a new family identity. This new identity is the result of her choice to return to Oneday, a choice that she justifies as follows:

> It was better to have a husband than no husband at all. […] It was better to have a Ma Katie whose chest closed up at night from living with a smoking hearth all these years than to have a drunken old mother who brewed her own beer each weekend and then lay with her swollen stomach in the air sleeping off her imprudence. (181-2)

In this passage, Meisie accepts her family identity – not her ideal, but that which originates in Oneday's absence from home. Her acceptance is seen in her choice to make the best out of her circumstances. She accepts also the social group that comes with her 'new' family identity: that group includes her and Ma Katie. Given that it was apartheid that spurred this decision (specifically Oneday's absence, which was caused by apartheid), this new social group and family identity are products of apartheid, a regime that, like Trujillo's in *Oscar Wao*, is brutal and authoritarian (Saldívar, 2011:130).

These particular parallels between Van Heerden's and Díaz's novels run even deeper, and in doing so they show Meisie's humanity. Van Heerden exhibits Meisie's humanity by treating

her as he does other characters. These others include Western characters, such as FounderAbel; thus, as per the second element of border thinking, the depiction of Meisie can be described as a case of 'liberation from oppressed layers' (The 'oppressed layer' is racial, since the regime oppressed people according to their race ["Apartheid", n.d.].)

The 'treatment' to which I am referring involves making Meisie into a narrative focaliser; this treatment in turn lets her express her motivations. As with FounderAbel, the image of her that emerges as a result is more nuanced than it might have been. FounderAbel paints a more nuanced version of himself than Katie when he notes (as the narrative focaliser [102-8]): "[i]t was for [Grandmother Magtilt] … that he had tamed his land" (102). When Katie narrates the farm's history, this point is not mentioned. Likewise, Chapter 31 describes Meisie in more detail than Katie does in Chapter 1 (of which Katie is the narrative focaliser [1-10]). From Katie's perspective, Meisie is "that slatternly wife … who kept running away to her people" (6). This phrase suggests that, when Meisie leaves, it has something to do with her being 'slatternly.' Chapter 31 paints a different picture. As the focaliser, Meisie explains why she left: she runs away, seemingly, out of unhappiness with the quality of her life (181-2).

By making Meisie into a narrative focaliser, Van Heerden shows her humanity. Meisie can thus offer a better image of herself, including her reasons for leaving. The same treatment is given to FounderAbel. However, while Meisie is a non-Westerner, FounderAbel is a Westerner.[36] In treating them as equals (as opposed to, say, as though Meisie is inferior to FounderAbel), in this respect, Van Heerden shows Meisie's humanity. Since she is also part of a 'social group'

[36] This fact is inferred from her marriage. In reality, marriage between whites and non-whites was illegal under the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in South Africa. The law was implemented from 1949 until 1985 ("Prohibition of Mixed…", n.d.); it was thus in effect for most of apartheid ("Apartheid", n.d.). With this in mind, marriage between Oneday (a non-Westerner) and Meisie seems unlikely unless both are non-Westerners. Were she white and he non-white, moreover, most likely it would be mentioned: after all, when it seems that there is an affair involving two characters who are of different races, the magistrate takes note of it (128-9).

and ‘family identity’ produced by apartheid (i.e. a brutal authoritarian regime), the first criterion has been met. I should note, though, that without a clear definition of ‘humanity,’ this reading is somewhat limited. Future studies looking to apply this template ought to define the term in a manner relevant to the template and to the text under analysis.

The second criterion is met by Katie, who by drawing on various discourses, offers an alternative to Western rationality. In this instance, the magistrate serves as a proxy for, or embodiment of, Western rationality. In the inability of Katie’s discourses to meet the demands of his investigation, as a Western paradigm, the difference in their discourses is revealed. Katie’s composite discourse is seen thus as an alternative to Western rationality.

The magistrate’s being a proxy for Western rationality is evidenced by the nature of his investigation. The magistrate tells Ella: “I am doing my best to conduct a *rational* investigation” (148, emphasis added). He does not clarify what he means by ‘rational’; however, his use of Latin phrases suggests that its meaning closely parallels that which is used in the context of ‘Western rationality.’ It is on Western concepts that he draws, firstly, including *dolus* and *culpa* (126-7, 233-4) (As Latin words they can be traced to a Western discourse [Mignolo, 2006:14; Du Preez, 2016:6].). Secondly, his role is similar to that of the subject of the rational knowledge relation. The role in question assumes that he is capable of reflection (“The investigating magistrate would have to determine which of these stories were true and which were lies.” [12]) and that he is a ‘bearer of reason’ (Quijano, 2007:172-3), since his investigation is ‘rational.’[37]

[37] The term ‘rational’ is taken to mean “[b]ased on or in accordance with reason or logic” (“Meaning of rational…”, n.d.).

Among the characters who give evidence is Katie, though her evidence proves unsatisfactory (36-8, 54-5, 95-8). The reason for its being unsatisfactory seems linked to the diversity of discourses in her own composite discourse. Her evidence will be discussed shortly; however, I wish first to use an example to demonstrate the extent to which Katie draws on a diversity of discourses.

The discourses on which Katie draws can be traced to both the West and non-West. On one hand, she is a firm believer in the *tokoloshe* (2, 230), a "powerful, usually malevolent spirit being".[38] The subject of the *tokoloshe* is often mentioned in connection with a Malay wizard, as well as "black trackers" (2, 104, 226, 229, 230, 231). On the other hand, from her language, it seems Katie is a Christian. Katie names each of her grandchildren after names in the New Testament, labelling them 'Bible-children' (181) ("Bible", n.d.). Given that the *tokoloshe* has been linked with non-Westerners (the Malay and black trackers are *anthropos*) (Murphy, 1998:9), her belief in it invokes a non-Western discourse. A Western discourse is evoked, meanwhile, in the form of Christianity, of which she is (seemingly) an adherent ("Bible", n.d.; Mignolo, 2006:14; Mignolo, 2009:176). Like Abelard, Katie draws on diverse discourses, creating a composite discourse, which is not 'Western.'

The extent to which her discourse – and the range it embodies – is opposed to Western rationality is revealed by her meeting with the magistrate. Katie tells him that, before Noah died, she felt that "[h]e was dead already" (36). Her foresight confuses the magistrate (36). Her inability to explain why she felt Noah[39] was already dead then is described in Chapter 1:

> [S]he was unable to explain to the magistrate just what had given her second sight that morning. Perhaps it was the tales about FounderAbel the night before, or her thoughts about the *tokoloshe*, or even Shala

[38] The full definition can be found in the glossary that appears in *Ancestral Voices* (see Van Heerden, 1989).
[39] As elsewhere, the name 'Trickle' is used instead of 'Noah' (52, 107).

> Riet's sullenness. Perhaps it was all the rumours her clever son Oneday had picked up at Bible school. […] Even afterwards, when they explained to Katie that Trickle had died three days later, she still maintained that she had seen him standing there already as dead on the footpath, listening to the cries of the wild geese. (6-7)

This passage lists a range of discourses, all of which may have contributed to the 'second sight' (a term I understand as meaning Katie's knowledge of Noah's imminent death [6-7]). Among these are two discourses that are worth mentioning: first, the farm's history ("tales about FounderAbel") (4-5) and second, her belief in the *tokoloshe* ("her thoughts about the *tokoloshe*"). Seeing as the *tokoloshe* is missing from the farm's history – that is, Katie's version of that history (3-5) – these discourses are separate, or discrete, from each other. In this extract, Katie's discourses also seem incapable of explaining 'second sight' ("she was unable to explain"). Thus, they are at odds with the discourse that informs the magistrate's 'rational' investigation.

Katie's composite discourse is based on discourses that originate in both the West and non-West. To describe it as 'Western' is inaccurate; thus, in this respect, her discourse is like Abelard's in *Oscar Wao*. Katie's composite discourse also features in a meeting between her and the magistrate. Per her account, Katie cannot say why she felt Noah had already perished (as evidenced by the repeated use of 'perhaps' [6]). Moreover, this account hints that her inability is linked to the discourses that make up her composite discourse. The fact that she confuses the magistrate suggests thus that these discourses and his investigation are incompatible; seeing as the basis of his investigation is Western rationality, her discourse also seems incompatible with Western rationality. As per the second criterion, these discourses make up her composite discourse, which in turn offers a non-Western alternative to Western rationality.

Two other criteria are used to assess whether the third element of border thinking – a double critique of Western and non-Western languages and/or traditions – is articulated. These criteria, as derived from *Oscar Wao*, are as follows: a character(s) must draw on literature of both the Global North (i.e. the West) and the Global South (i.e. the non-West); non-Western history must be reinscribed to allow the histories of both the West and non-West to frame the narrative. To gauge whether these criteria have been met, I will focus on the way Oneday is depicted. Oneday is chosen because, on one hand, his attendance of 'Bible school' suggests he is familiar with Western literature ("Bible", n.d.; Mignolo, 2006:14; Mignolo, 2009:176), while on the other, his allegiance lies with non-Westerners, who are oppressed by apartheid ("Apartheid", n.d.). The histories of two non-Westerners, Jan Swaat and TameBushman, are also narrated in chapters of which Oneday is the focaliser (in TameBushman's case, however, this history seems somewhat speculative).

Two of Oneday's discourses can be traced to origins in the West and non-West. They include Christianity, which is Western (see earlier), and the 'Bushmen's' history, which is non-Western. The fact that Oneday is a Christian is evidenced not only by his attendance of 'Bible school,' but in his language too: "come to the Lord God who sent His Son Jesus Christ" (230); "Jesus Christ is with us, to liberate us" (238). In his claiming that Jesus Christ is 'with us,' Oneday echoes the view, held by "the vast majority of Christians", that he is a "present reality" ("Christianity", n.d.). From his history of the 'Bushmen,' moreover, it is clear that they are important to him. He explains that "when FounderAbel's father came over the sea and landed in Table Bay … the Bushmen were already living here" (179). The importance he attributes to them is evidenced by his view that their history is worth remembering – as much, it would seem, as the Moolmans' history (120-1).

Based on their inclusion of Christianity, on one hand, and the history of the 'Bushmen,' on the other, Oneday's discourses are attributed to both the West and the non-West. With that said, whether that means Oneday draws on the *literature* of the West and non-West is unclear. The issue is whether or not paintings, specifically 'Bushman' paintings, can be said to be a form of literature.

When one takes 'literature' to mean 'written works,'[40] as a Christian, Oneday does draw on Western literature: Oneday is clearly literate ("Oneday … would look up from the book he was reading" [254]) and, having gone to 'Bible school,' is familiar with the Bible; in this instance, 'Western literature' refers to the Bible. When literature is defined thus, however, the paintings of the 'Bushmen' do not qualify. As such, one cannot say that Oneday, by citing these paintings, is drawing on non-Western literature. His reference to the paintings is critical to the history that he attributes to the 'Bushmen.' It is while showing Meisie these paintings that he describes this history (3, 4, 57, 179-80); as the main focaliser (177-83), Meisie describes them and the history he conveys thus:

> […] tiny hunters clustered round an eland; semi-circles of dancers; a herd of ostriches, but look more closely and you saw they had human legs – that, Oneday told her, was the way they stalked the game – beautiful kudu with proud horns; delicate gazelles darting across the roof of the cave […] (180)

The absence of any 'writing' shows that these paintings are visual. In other words, they are not 'written works' in the way that the Bible (to use a relevant example) is 'written.' When one defines 'literature' as 'written works,' one excludes these paintings and as such, the literature on which Oneday draws then excludes that of the non-West (i.e. the 'Bushmen'). Hence, this criterion is not met.

[40] The definition of 'literature' that is referred to here is "[w]ritten works, especially those considered [to be] of superior or lasting artistic merit" ("Meaning of literature…", n.d.).

Having said that, I should note that there are several issues with this reading. There is the matter of literature – namely, its definition and what one thinks of as forms of 'literature.' The problematics of this term (which is of European origin) are implied by the connection between 'literature,' on one hand, and what Mignolo calls 'European imperial languages,' on the other (2006:7-8). By using a different meaning, studies may find that the literature on which Oneday draws includes that of the non-West. The second issue is my choice of Oneday. While this choice was justified, that does not mean other characters should be excluded from one's consideration. In future, other characters might be studied when considering this criterion.

The depiction of Oneday is more promising when it comes to the second criterion under consideration. Per this criterion, non-Western history must be 're-inscribed' so that the narrative is framed by histories of both the West and non-West. While he is in prison, Oneday imagines a version of the Great Trek that he sees from TameBushman's perspective (a perspective that, admittedly, seems somewhat speculative). This history, which is 'Western,' is portrayed through a character who is non-Western; thus, non-Western history is re-inscribed into the history of the Great Trek.

The version of 'Western' history that is narrated involves the capture of TameBushman. His capture is first mentioned in Chapter 4, a chapter of which Grandmother Magtilt is the main focaliser (23-9): "[s]he was more at ease with the tame Bushman her father had *caught at a river-crossing on one of his forays* and had given to FounderAbel as a wedding present" (25-6, emphasis added). As I mentioned earlier, FounderAbel's story is shown to take place during the Great Trek, a direct consequence of the modern world system. Since FounderAbel features in this excerpt, the capture of TameBushman can be linked to the Great Trek. Reinforcing this link, moreover, is the fact that Boers often killed 'Bushmen,' and the children who survived

"could … be apprenticed" (Erasmus, 1995:iv, 94). Similar hostilities are evidenced in the novel, such as the capture of TameBushman. The capture of TameBushman is thus set during the Great Trek and, in turn, the history of the modern world-system.

The capture of TameBushman is told differently in Chapter 35, of which Oneday is the main focaliser (201-5). The start of the chapter finds Oneday in detention (as evidenced by the 'cell,' the 'graffiti' and his 'interrogators' [92-5, 99, 201]). In spite of the setting, the chapter shifts in perspective between the cell and the 'Bushman' cave: "Oneday … stared at the graffiti on the walls: diminutive ostrich-men hunting a herd of yellow antelope" (201); "[h]e crawled over to the mouth of the cave … but bumped his face against the bars" (201). The effect of these shifts is somewhat hallucinatory, suggesting parts of the chapter take place within Oneday's imagination. At one point, he imagines a visit by TameBushman (TameBushman is already dead: Oneday imagines himself moving "in the direction of TameBushman's grave" [201]), who then tells him how he was captured (201-3).

TameBushman's account of his capture is fairly detailed when compared to the one in Chapter 4. The effect of this detail is to foreground the 'Bushmen,' and thus the non-Western, perspective. In Chapter 4, the details of his capture are fairly minimal, confined to the mention of a 'foray' (see earlier). However, in Chapter 35, TameBushman describes a community that includes women and children (202); these 'Bushmen' take up the majority of his testimony, including how they hide from, fight and are killed by white farmers (201-3). Little time is spent, by comparison, in descriptions of the farmers, their actions and their motivations. The main viewpoint from which the incident (during which TameBushman is captured [202-3]) is relayed is thus that of the 'Bushmen.' Insofar as this incident mirrors actual 'Bushman' killings, a feature of the Great Trek, moreover, it can be described as 'non-Western' history.

I showed that the incident during which TameBushman is captured takes place during the Great Trek. TameBushman's capture is therefore viewed as part of the history of the modern world-system. Oneday's account of TameBushman frames this incident from the non-Western perspective (i.e. the 'Bushman' perspective). Since the same incident is told from the Western point of view, specifically Grandmother Magtilt's, one may argue that the narrative is framed by Western and non-Western histories. Thus, the (re)telling of this incident allows *Ancestral Voices* to meet the second criterion.

4.5. CONCLUSION

Prior to my study of *Ancestral Voices* and its expression of literary border thinking, this chapter showed that it is a modern *plaasroman*. To establish this fact, I considered four characters – namely Abel, OldAbel, FounderAbel and Oneday – through which both racist, nationalist ideals and the ideals of the early *plaasroman* are undermined. The characters Abel, OldAbel and FounderAbel are an embodiment of the line of farmer-fathers, or 'transindividual figure,' an attribute of the early *plaasroman*. The manner in which this line is disrupted – firstly, due to a decline in prosperity and, secondly, by the end of the lineage – shows that this trope has been undermined; hence, insofar as this line represents the ideals of the early *plaasroman*, its counterpart in Van Heerden's work challenges those ideals. The depiction of Oneday, meanwhile, challenges the view that excludes black Africans from 'spiritual life': through a shift in perspectives, Van Heerden shows that Oneday, an intellectual, draws equally on qualities linked to his politics and his spirituality. In doing so, he confronts ideals that one might call 'racist,' and that stem from Afrikaner nationalism.

The next step of this research involved choosing one of the three templates of literary border thinking. Thus, each template was studied and compared to *Ancestral Voices* with the goal of determining which one is best suited to this investigation. The templates based on Mignolo's and Herlinghaus's essays are inadequate: in the case of Mignolo's essay, the main issue is a lack of prominence of characters who embody a 'transition' (namely from one social role to another); moreover, the fact that the magistrate (who in some respects parallels the Western critic) recognises that his Western perspective is restricted means that the usefulness of Herlinghaus's essay as a model for literary border thinking is thus limited. The template that is derived from Saldívar's essay proved most suitable due to the parallels between *Oscar Wao* and *Ancestral Voices*. In its shifting between time periods, it was shown that the temporal structure of Van Heerden's novel highlights the non-Western perspective. By showing black labour, the text not only highlights, but subverts, the logic of the South African pastoral (i.e. 'Western logic'). The novel's similarities with *Oscar Wao* in terms of the temporal and epistemological structures implied that, when used to examine *Ancestral Voices*, the template would prove illuminating.

The chosen template was used to derive various criteria that correspond to the three elements of border thinking. These criteria were then used to assess *Ancestral Voices* and thus to determine whether, and the extent to which, it is an instance of literary border thinking.

In the case of the first element, all three criteria were met: the process whereby *anthropos* are classified is demonstrated by the treatment of Jan Swaat and TameBushman; the depiction of FounderAbel was also shown to connect the modern world-system and the colonial difference; in his 'history' of the 'Bushmen,' finally, Oneday sees history in terms of Western- and non-Western perspectives. Both criteria were met in the case of the second element of border

thinking: Van Heerden shows Meisie's humanity as one who is part of a social group and family identity produced by a brutal authoritarian regime; the composite discourse on which Katie draws is discordant with that which informs the magistrate's investigation – thus, one might argue her discourse is a non-Western alternative to Western rationality. Regarding the third element of border thinking, only one criterion is fulfilled. Two of Oneday's discourses can be traced to the West and non-West: his adherence to Christianity and his knowledge of the 'Bushmen.' The former suggests that the literature on which Oneday draws includes that of the West; however, the same does not follow for the 'Bushmen' and the non-West. The second criterion is met due to the (partly speculative) account of the capture of TameBushman. The context he is captured in is the Great Trek; in addition, in his capture, parallels are perceived in terms of the actual historical treatment of 'Bushmen.' In its foregrounding of the non-Westerner, this incident (as imagined by Oneday) helps frame the narrative in terms of Western and non-Western histories.

CHAPTER 5:

CRUELTY, CULTURE AND CONSERVATION IN NADINE GORDIMER'S *THE CONSERVATIONIST*

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will apply literary border thinking to a study of Nadine Gordimer's *The Conservationist* (1974). Given that it is an English novel, its inclusion may seem somewhat peculiar: in Chapters 3 and 4, the primary texts were translated from editions in Afrikaans; in addition, the *plaasroman* is a genre with roots in Afrikaans literature (see Chapter 1). Much criticism of *The Conservationist* has focused on its connection to the farm novel or *plaasroman*; thus, in viewing it as a modern *plaasroman* I am simply following and developing on trends within existing scholarship.

Close analysis of this novel shows that not only does it resemble the early *plaasroman*, but it is a modern *plaasroman*. In showing why it is a modern *plaasroman*, I explore two types of relationships that pertain to the ideals of the early *plaasroman*, on one hand, and traditional Afrikaner ideology, on the other hand.

As in Chapters 3 and 4, prior to my study of *The Conservationist*, I will review each template so as to determine which one is best-suited to my investigation. The subsequent study will use criteria that are derived from that template to examine *The Conservationist*. The purpose of doing so is to determine whether, and the extent to which, *The Conservationist* is an instance of literary border thinking.

5.2. *THE CONSERVATIONIST*: A MODERN *PLAASROMAN*

The Conservationist is unlike Leroux's and Van Heerden's novels insofar as, of its main characters, none are Afrikaners (11, 48-9, 62-5, 96, 114-23, 164, 214-9) (Murphy, 1998:6, 10-1).[41] Mehring, the protagonist, is not even a farmer; per descriptions of him, he is a 'pig-iron dealer' and a 'millionaire' (22, 42, 249). Mehring bought his farm, seemingly, to obtain 'tax relief,' rather than for its productivity (22, 24). With that said, he and the farm grow close in due course: the farm serves him as an escape from social engagements; he even buys Spanish chestnuts – a "[s]pecially imported variety" – to have planted on the farm (202-5, 221-7). The farm also houses a group of black farm labourers (10-2, 23, 32-4, 57-8, 66-7, 87-9, 96, 227, 236-8, 243). The chief herdsman, Jacobus, is among them and is charged with overseeing them and their 'dependants' (11-12, 37, 238-9). The narrative point of view shifts between Mehring's and that of the other characters, including Jacobus (40, 48-50, 62-5, 164).[42]

The first chapter of the novel sees the discovery of a corpse that is found lying on the property (9, 12-3, 15). The body is that of a black man who is unknown to the farmworkers (13, 15, 17) (Murphy, 1998:4). Rather than taking it, the police dig a hole in which the corpse is then buried (26-7). Mehring is first angry when he learns what the police have done rather than "dispos[ing] of" the man's corpse (27); however, the body is not recovered (110, 200). During a storm, the farm is flooded causing the corpse to re-surface (232-7, 242, 245). Mehring then flees the farm, seemingly for good (69, 75, 248-51, 264-5). The farmworkers then give the dead man a proper burial (12-5, 266-7).

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[41] In-text citations of *The Conservationist* include page numbers only.

[42] Among the perspectives is that of 'the farmer,' who I understand to be Mehring (10-1, 16-7, 26, 224-5). In doing so, I am choosing, like Nicole Devarenne, to read this term as emanating from Mehring's 'self-perception' (2009:634).

Although *The Conservationist* is an English novel, the parallels between it and the *plaasromans*, texts that are traditionally in Afrikaans, are significant. The link between this text, on one hand, and the farm novel and *plaasroman*, on the other, is well-documented (Van der Merwe, 2001:176; Viljoen, 2004:109-10; Barnard, 2007:76-7; Devarenne, 2009:634; Blair, 2012:488). The connection is further reinforced with regards to the early *plaasroman* by a brief excerpt from the text. In this excerpt, Mehring has spent the night at the farm and is surveying the landscape (176, 183). His feelings of awe are described thus:

> Look at the willows. The height of the grass. Look at the reeds. Everything bends, blends, folds. Everything is continually swaying, flowing rippling waving surging streaming fingering. […] All this softness of grasses is the susurration of a slight dizziness, hissing in the head.
>
> Fair and lovely place. From where does the phrase come to him? (183)

Mehring's reaction in this passage is comparable to one that Gustav, the protagonist of *Groei*, has when he too is close to nature. According to J.M. Coetzee, *Groei* is one of C.M. van den Heever's *plaasromans* that explores the relationship between land and character in terms of 'natural language' (1988:90-7). However, Coetzee notes, "nature has no words of its own" (1988:96), and so it must speak in Gustav's words, "words that lie hidden in him". As Gustav is falling into a reverie, "lines of verse" come to him; seemingly, they are a response to nature, specifically doves' circling overhead (Coetzee, 1988:96). In this excerpt, however, Mehring is the one who experiences an epiphany that is a response to his natural environment: not only is the land seen as almost anthropomorphic ("Everything is continually swaying … fingering"), but it has a direct impact on him ("All this softness of grass is … hissing in the head"). Like Gustav, he recalls words that lie 'hidden' within him (He does not know from where the phrase 'fair and lovely place' comes to him.) The above passage thus demonstrates how Gordimer's novel parallels works in the early *plaasroman* genre, specifically Van den Heever's farm novels: a shared theme is the language of nature. One might conclude that the *plaasroman* is

among other genres (such as the imperial romance [Chrisman, 2012:242]) that influence *The Conservationist*.

Having shown how this novel mirrors those in the early *plaasroman* genre, one can go even further: one can show that it is a modern *plaasroman*. To do so, it is necessary to explore two types of relationships – first, the relationship between Mehring and his teenage son Terry (56-9, 136-7, 143), and second, the relationship between Mehring and Jacobus. The consequences that these have are significant not just for the ideals of the early *plaasroman*, but in terms of racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals.

It is through Mehring and Terry's relationship that the novel challenges ideals linked with the early *plaasroman*. These ideals include those that are associated with the farmer-father (see Chapter 4), a role that includes maintaining the lineage and making the farm prosperous. Mehring is no farmer, and yet, as time passes, he and the farm grow close. In the planting of chestnut trees, he exhibits something of the farmer-father – that part which is dedicated to prosperity. However, in that same act, the farmer-father is undermined in terms of another of its functions – the maintenance of the lineage. While overseeing the trees' planting, Mehring tells Jacobus that the trees will be big only when he is very old; in reply, Jacobus says that, when Mehring's son is old, he (Terry) can appreciate them (223-5). The response is poignant since Mehring just learned that Terry left South Africa for the United States (94, 143, 164-6, 220-1) ("South Africa", 2020; "United States", 2020). Terry also shows no interest in the farm (94-5, 99-100, 135). Thus, whether he will come to appreciate the grown chestnut trees, as Jacobus says, is unclear. Terry's disinterest in the farm, indeed with South Africa, spells doom for the lineage: there is no one to whom Mehring, an aspiring farmer-father, can bequeath his

farm (including the chestnut trees, the signs of prosperity). Thus, the ideals linked to the farmer-father, a hallmark of the early *plaasroman*, are undermined.

The relationship between Mehring and Jacobus, on the other hand, challenges ideals that are associated with traditional Afrikaner ideology. According to C.N. van der Merwe, the farm is a "cornerstone of [that] tradition" (2001:65). Thus, 'traditional Afrikaner ideology' frames the farm in terms of a specific racial hierarchy: "the whites … [are] masters of the blacks" (Van der Merwe, 2001:164-5). The farm in the text exhibits a similar hierarchy: Jacobus calls Mehring 'master' (16, 18, 57); Mehring seems distrusting of Jacobus's ability to manage the farm in his absence (71-5, 78-82, 89-90, 94-7, 176-8, 235-7). In his distrust especially, Mehring subscribes to traditional Afrikaner ideology: the implication is that Jacobus, a black farmworker, cannot be 'master' of the farm. These notions are challenged, though, when, after a storm, Jacobus is stranded on the farm (232-8, 241-3). In taking charge, he proves that, in fact, he can be a master of the farm: not only does he go about ordering the necessary "reconstruction and repair", but he also vows to "get everyone busy … digging the irrigation canals free of the muck that blocked them" (238, 239). When Mehring arrives, to his shock, Jacobus has even managed to treat an animal with mastitis – a job for which a doctor is required (241-3). Jacobus is portrayed as a competent farmer and as such his depiction serves as an indictment of Mehring's racist perception – one that is consistent with a racist, nationalist ideology (Van der Merwe, 2001:164-5, 183).

A study of two types of relationships was done to determine whether *The Conservationist* is a modern *plaasroman*: the relationships between Mehring and Terry and between Mehring and Jacobus, a black farmworker. Through his disinterest and by leaving South Africa, Terry shatters any chance Mehring has of being an ideal farmer-father. This point is clearly made in

the planting of chestnut trees (an act that may symbolise Mehring's wish to be a farmer-father), trees that Terry cannot appreciate. Without Terry, there can be no lineage; thus, the ideals of the early *plaasroman* are conjured only to be undermined. Mehring and Jacobus comprise a relationship based on the tenets of traditional Afrikaner ideology. Mehring doubts Jacobus's ability to be a 'master' of the farm, a role that (in accordance with traditional Afrikaner ideology) is reserved for the white male. When a storm strikes, Jacobus takes care of the farm, perhaps better than Mehring would have (having done what, seemingly, only a doctor can do). Having thus proven that he is a master of the farm, the depiction of Jacobus subverts ideals that are associated with the farm in traditional Afrikaner ideology – and, as such, with a racist, nationalist ideology. By challenging not only the ideals of the early *plaasroman*, but also racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals, the novel meets criteria for being labelled a modern *plaasroman*.

5.3. SELECTING A SUITABLE TEMPLATE: *THE CONSERVATIONIST* AND LITERARY BORDER THINKING

Among the elements that I have mentioned, several of them hint that the novel is an instance of border thinking. The depiction of Jacobus clearly points to the injustice that is a vital aspect of the colonial race hierarchy (i.e. the colonial difference). The implication that he, a black farmworker, is incompetent is undermined; hence, ideals linked to traditional Afrikaner ideology (which in turn mirrors the colonial race hierarchy) are undermined. In other words, it would seem that the novel embodies the first element of border thinking. By painting Jacobus as competent, contrary to Mehring's view, the text also confronts discourses in which beings who are like Jacobus are inferiorised (i.e. Western discourse). As well as challenging these discourses, through the corpse's re-burial, the text also hints at the 'liberation of oppressed layers': "He [the dead man] took possession of this earth, theirs; one of them" (267). His re-

burial is framed as a reclaiming, the beneficiary of which was oppressed racially: the dead man is taking possession of the earth that was seemingly taken from 'blacks' (Mehring remembers a discussion about his farm [71-5, 176-7] in which the following is conveyed: "O Mehring … [t]hat four hundred acres isn't going to be handed down to your kids"; "[t]hat bit of paper you bought yourself from the deeds office … [will] be worth about as much as those our grandfathers gave the blacks when they took the land from them" [177]. The implication of this comment is that, in the exchange mentioned, the treatment of 'blacks' was unfair.) Based on these features, it would seem that the second element of border thinking is embodied. The third element – a double critique – is a prospect in the text given that the point of view shifts between Mehring, a Westerner, and Jacobus, a non-Westerner (80, 135-43, 235-7).

As my comments thus far indicate, Gordimer's novel is not only a modern *plaasroman*, but a prime candidate for a study regarding border thinking. However, for the purpose of this research, these comments do not prove that it embodies literary border thinking. Gauging whether it does so requires me to examine certain elements of the text with a template, which is chosen based on its suitability. Hence, my next step will be to consider each template of literary border thinking to establish which one is likely to yield the most insightful conclusions.

Two factors must be considered when one is gauging the suitability of the template based on Saldívar's essay (a study of *Oscar Wao*). These are the novel's temporal and epistemological structures. When one looks to *The Conservationist*, only one of these key structures are seen to exhibit the requisite elements, which would make the use of this template a worthwhile undertaking.

What I call the epistemological structure is premised, in the case of *Oscar Wao*, on the *fukú americanus*. The purpose of this concept, as I mentioned (see Chapter 2), is "to reveal and displace the logic by which the Europeans have represented their others" (Saldívar, 2011:134). A comparable structure is seen in *The Conservationist*. Not only does it show how a Westerner (i.e. Mehring) perceives his 'other' (i.e. Jacobus), but as a result, the inaccuracies of that perception are unveiled. More specifically, it is the view that Jacobus, a black farmworker, would make a poor 'master' of the farm that represents 'Western' logic (see earlier). One case where that logic is expressed takes place in the tenth chapter: "On the farm it is the time for conservation – buildings to be repaired, fire-breaks cleared, he must go round all the fences with Jacobus. The sort of jobs they'll never think to do unless you push them to it." (74) The use of 'they' implies that Jacobus, like the other farmworkers, is incompetent ("on the farm", "jobs", "unless you push them"). However, they are shown later to be quite competent at ensuring that the farm is in good order. The farm is damaged during a storm and, without Mehring, Jacobus drives the farmworkers "hard about the reconstruction and repair necessary" (26, 57-8, 238-9). That he does so challenges the view to which I have just alluded (namely, that he would not carry out the vital repairs). In other words, the Western logic that is used to represent Jacobus has been 'displaced.'

The temporal structure of *Oscar Wao* was shown to comprise shifts in the time periods of the narrative; the effect is to foreground the non-Western point of view. Similar shifts are absent from *The Conservationist*. Of course, there are points when the non-Western viewpoint is more prominent (For instance, the tenth chapter consists mostly of memories and experiences that are Mehring's, but a brief interlude shows a discussion of farmworkers, from which he is excluded. [69-82]); however, whether this emphasis stems from a shift in time periods is a matter of debate (32-7, 62-5, 66-8, 80-1, 87-92, 114-25, 164-73, 214-9, 237-40, 266-7). The

order of events seems to be chronological: the corpse is first buried between the first and third chapters of the novel (16-29); it then resurfaces in the twenty-fifth chapter (26-7, 239-40, 248-51); in the twenty-eighth chapter, it is re-buried properly (266-7). Although similarities are seen between *Oscar Wao* and *The Conservationist*, in terms of their epistemological structures, there are inadequate parallels between their temporal structures. Thus, for my study of *The Conservationist*, this template will not be suitable.

In order to apply the template based on Herlinghaus's essay, one must show that a character is a Western critic. However, only one 'Westerner' features to an extent that is enough to warrant the use of this template – Mehring (9-29, 40-59, 69-82, 94-111, 133-161, 174-91, 194-211, 220-9, 235-7, 241-6, 248-65). As a 'pig-iron dealer,' Mehring does bear some similarities to the Western critic; his disinterest in pig-iron, however, suggests that this label does not apply to him.

Previously, the term 'Western critic' was shown to describe a scholar in a particular field of interest. That critic is a 'subject' in the rational knowledge relation, the field an 'object.' The purpose of the Western critic was shown, moreover, to involve commitment to the field in question. In Mehring's case, 'pig-iron' is what one might call the 'field' in question: the term 'pig-iron dealer' is used to describe Mehring on several occasions (42, 69, 106, 157, 222-3); "I've sold enough of it … for several lifetimes" (175), he notes, and in doing so, frames himself as a rational subject (As a pig-iron salesperson, no doubt he is a 'subject' – i.e. bearer of reason – while pig-iron, that which is bought and sold, is his object.) Although Mehring is framed as a subject in relation to his field, in fact, that field does not interest him particularly: "[p]ig-iron really doesn't interest me that much any more" (175); "I really don't care a bloody damn about pig iron. I leave most of that to my partners these days" (178). His lack of interest contrasts

heavily with a main feature of the Western critic – commitment to the field in question. Mehring is not a Western critic; thus, this template is not suitable.

The template that is based on Mignolo's essay posits a shift in social roles, from a non-Western social role to one that is influenced by Western epistemology (In Mignolo's study, that social role is the Kilkaycamayoc). The character Jacobus is found, on close inspection, to evoke this transformation – if not the process, then the new social role that it results in. Moreover, as a main character (i.e. one whose perspective is often emphasised [32-7, 62-5, 80, 88-91, 167-9, 238-9, 266]), he appears frequently, meaning he is prominent enough to warrant a study of the 'new social role.'

The Kilkaycamayoc and Jacobus are comparable in that their roles are both associated with the needs of non-Westerners. In Jacobus's case, that role is 'protector.' Specifically, it is to protect those who are non-Westerners and who, like him, live on the farm (10-2, 23, 32-4, 87-9). It is with them that he is speaking in this passage (32-3):

> [Jacobus] could not encourage this talk too much – he was himself half on the side of the authority it mocked, he earned his privileges by that authority and also protected *them* against its source. He had told the women to warn the children not to collect eggs where they could be seen; he had remarked to *him* that there were plenty of guinea fowl about if you had to be up at work early enough to see them. (33)

In its reference to 'sides,' the passage suggests that there is a kind of binary setup that includes non-Westerners ('them') and Westerners ('him'). 'Him' is Mehring, the Westerner. Mehring previously told Jacobus to ensure that the collecting of guinea fowl eggs is stopped (11-2, 19-20, 26-8). Jacobus replied then, as is noted, that there are "plenty guinea fowl here on the farm, early in the morning" (28). Shown in the previous episode, the response seems to imply that he, Jacobus, shares Mehring's concern for the guinea fowl (The implication is that, if the guinea fowl were in danger, then Jacobus would take the necessary protective measures). In his

response, he invokes the discourse of conservation.[43] The origins of that discourse are Western: the one who is actually concerned about the guinea fowl is Western; the farmworkers seem uninterested in whether the guinea fowl are conserved (32). In this excerpt, though, it is revealed that the discourse of conservation has been used to protect 'them,' the farm dwellers. The farm dwellers are non-Westerners (The so-called 'farm people' are his people [32-3]. They are not white, a fact that is suggested when the narrator notes: "Jacobus did not talk to the Indian as he did to a white man, nor as he would to one of his own people" [34]); in other words, while the discourse on which Jacobus draws is Western, those whom that discourse benefits are not.

How Jacobus employs language also hints at a similarity between him and the Kilkaycamayoc. The Kilkaycamayoc draws on Greek/Latin authority as well as the traditions of the non-West. Jacobus, meanwhile, uses English (a language of Greek/Latin origin [Mignolo, 2006:35]) and 'their language' (a language of non-Western origin). To show why 'their language' is non-Western, one must show that it is the Zulu language. No name is given to 'their language' when it is spoken by Jacobus (34-5, 74, 203); hence, it must be inferred.

The term 'their language' is used to describe that which is spoken by black/non-white characters, both on the farm and outside (34-5, 74, 80-1, 119, 203). 'Their language' is neither English nor Afrikaans: at one point, while he is with some of the farmworkers (57, 64-5, 237), Jacobus is shown "[s]peaking English, which not all of them could do" (64); Afrikaans, meanwhile, is a "white man's … language" (17). Given that 'their language' is neither English nor Afrikaans, most likely it is the Zulu language. A sign on the farm has three languages on it: "English, Afrikaans and Zulu" (140). A conversation between workers (20, 168-9), meanwhile,

[43] When used in this study, the term 'conservation' denotes the "[p]reservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment and of wildlife" ("Meaning of conservation…", n.d.).

includes ‘the amatongo,’ a concept with ties to Zulu culture (Thorpe, 1983:185). In his use of ‘their language,’ Jacobus is seen thus to invoke a non-Western tradition in addition to Greek/Latin authority.[44]

Having ruled out the templates based on Saldívar’s and Herlinghaus’s essays, this section showed that the template that is based on Mignolo’s essay is most suitable for a study of *The Conservationist*. The main issue, when it comes to Saldívar’s essay, is a lack of comparability between the temporal structures of *Oscar Wao* and *The Conservationist*. The character Mehring fails, moreover, as a potential Western critic, a key part of the template based on Herlinghaus’s essay. Thus, the latter template is not suitable. A better argument was made for the template derived from Mignolo’s study due to the similarities between Jacobus and the Kilkaycamayoc. Hence, this template will be used to determine whether, and the extent to which, *The Conservationist* can be considered an instance of literary border thinking.

5.4. *THE CONSERVATIONIST* AS AN INSTANCE OF LITERARY BORDER THINKING

As in Chapters 3 and 4, various criteria are used to establish whether, and the extent to which, *The Conservationist* is an instance of literary border thinking. Per the template, these criteria are derived from the work of Waman Puma de Ayala. Of special interest are his critique of abuse suffered by Aymara- and Quechua-speaking communities (i.e. the non-West) at the hands of the Spaniards (i.e. the West), and the shift whereby the Kipucamayoc becomes the Kilkaycamayoc. These matters inform the criteria, which are used to assess whether the novel embodies the three elements of border thinking.

[44] Ana Maria Monteiro-Ferreira describes ‘Zulu people’ as “a multicultural society bound together by similar languages … and common *African* systems of beliefs” (2005:349, emphasis added). This definition, in addition to what Monteiro-Ferreira describes as the origins of the Zulu people, implies that they are African (2005:348-51). What is ‘Zulu’ is seen thus as ‘non-Western,’ per my use of this term.

Whether or not *The Conservationist* embodies the first element of border thinking can be gauged through a study of two criteria. These criteria are as follows: first, the text offers a critique of 'abuse' of the non-West, which is inflicted by the West; second, that critique is shown to invoke the traditions of the non-West. I will consider these criteria in terms of the treatment of non-white farm dwellers (i.e. non-Westerners), and farmworkers especially. Specifically, I will expand on earlier comments in which the treatment of farmworkers is linked to traditional Afrikaner ideology, and thus to the colonial difference. The treatment of Quechua- and Aymara-speaking communities, on the one hand, and of farmworkers, on the other hand, are both influenced by the colonial difference; for this reason, they are comparable.

Earlier in this study, I noted that the depiction of Jacobus serves as a critique of the view that black farmworkers are incompetent. However, I did not show whether this view can be considered a form of 'abuse.' For this reason, my first aim is to consider whether this view is a form of abuse. If it is, then one may argue that the critique of this view includes abuse of non-Westerners and, as such, the first criterion has been met.

Abuse is understood mainly to be a form of cruelty.[45] Evidence of Mehring's cruelty is seen when, after the storm, he returns and inspects the farm property (235-9, 241-5). At the farm, he remarks that the level of the irrigation furrows has risen ("they're hardly that – all little overflowing rivers, now" [244]). Reflecting his perspective, the scene goes on:

> One of the women is doing her washing conveniently in one of them, a heap of bedraggled grey blankets. Everything probably got quite a soaking, up at the compound; but the rooms are cement blocks, they should have been fairly waterproof. The picannins are enjoying

[45] The verb 'abuse' is defined thus: "[t]reat with cruelty or violence, especially regularly or repeatedly" ("Meaning of abuse…", n.d.). The noun form is defined as the "[c]ruel and violent treatment of a person or animal" ("Meaning of abuse…", n.d.).

> themselves. The game is to float plastic beer containers – some sort of race.
>
> – They know they mustn't leave those things lying about when they've finished playing, eh, Jacobus. – (244)

Mehring's cruelty is previewed in his disregard for the farm dwellers, who are represented by the woman and children (The latter are called 'picannins,' which is a "demeaning word used for black children" [Levine, 2006:126]) (12, 23, 32-4, 146-7, 154, 175, 210). In this passage, Mehring suggests that, in spite of the storm and its severity, the farm dwellers are unscathed ("they should have been fairly waterproof"; "[t]he picannins are enjoying themselves"). However, this is not true. The previous chapter showed that the compound was flooded: "the walls [of the compound] … [were] solid with damp"; "rain had found those places … where sheets of corrugated iron did not overlap properly or rust had filed through, and water had overflowed the pots and buckets placed to catch it"; "[u]nder the sun, all that the inhabitants possessed was spread out" (237). When compared to the proof of their suffering, the fact that his main concern is his farm – specifically the state of the irrigation furrows – highlights the 'cruelness' of Mehring's disposition.[46]

A sense of irony is generated when, despite proof to the contrary, Mehring thinks that the storm had no impact on the farm dwellers – that they did not suffer as a result thereof. The irony not only paints Mehring as cruel, however, but also discredits him as a source of narration. In other words, Mehring is framed as the subject of a critique that considers him cruel and unreliable.

The critique of Mehring that is formed in the above passage prefaces a shift in emphasis, namely from the farm dwellers to Jacobus. That shift links Mehring's perception and, thus, the subject of the critique, to his treatment of Jacobus. Having first noted the woman and children, Mehring tells Jacobus what he must do to drain the farm properly:

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[46] Here, 'cruel' is defined as "[w]ilfully causing pain or suffering to others, or *feeling no concern about it*" ("Meaning of cruel…", n.d., emphasis added).

> Jacobus has said that all the pasture on the vlei side of the farm is useless at present, the cattle will get foot-rot if they are allowed to graze down there – but probably that's all nonsense, what's needed is to drain the land. – That's all right: you can get the boys to dig more irrigation canals – you make some more furrows, then the water runs away. –
>
> Jacobus considers a moment. – Is too much water. Too much. – He goes through the motions of pitching a spade, lifting earth, and then standing back, the imaginary spade has dropped, he is dismayed: – As soon you digging, the water's coming again. Even in that camp up there, not so near the river, when I'm start dig, is filling up. –
>
> – No, no, that doesn't matter. That's nothing. If you find the proper place, the proper slope, after a day that big water will have flowed away. Then slowly every day the earth will drain, it'll dry – come I'll show you where. – (244-5)

This passage also makes Mehring into the subject of critique, specifically as regards his reliability. The focus of the critique, however, is Jacobus, specifically distrust of Jacobus as a competent farmworker ("probably that's all nonsense"). In this extract, what Jacobus says is discarded for no reason, seemingly, other than Mehring knows better. Whether he does know better, though, is a matter for debate: notably, Mehring does not give the promised advice regarding irrigation furrows (245-6, 248-51). This fact, and his dismissal of Jacobus, who has actual experience in digging (by his own testimony, and in promising to "get everyone busy … digging the irrigation canals" [238, 239]), suggest that his distrust is unwarranted. Jacobus is the more knowledgeable, or at least seems to be, contrary to Mehring's perception. Thus, one may argue that the critique started in the previous passage includes the perception of Jacobus.

This perception leads to treatment that one may call 'abuse.' After saying 'come I'll show you where', Mehring goes with Jacobus to the third pasture (245). There, he tells Jacobus to "find out how deep or shallow this ground-water is" (245); Jacobus does so, but, as the narrator notes, once again from Mehring's perspective, "he's not too keen, doesn't want to slosh around in the muck, no doubt he's had enough of it, but that's too bad" (245). In this phrase, one finds further evidence of his cruelty, the result of his racist treatment of Jacobus. Mehring dismisses Jacobus's efforts to maintain the farm as 'sloshing around in the muck'; his tone is

condescending, as it was earlier ('probably that's all nonsense'). Jacobus has suffered for the farm, yet in in this passage, that suffering is simply disregarded. Mehring's lack of concern for it proves that, in his racist treatment of Jacobus, he is indeed cruel.

In Mehring's return after the storm, groundwork is laid for a critique of his cruelty and unreliability: Mehring is worried about his property, not the farm dwellers (non-Westerners); he decides, without evidence, that the farm's occupants got through the storm unscathed. Hence, in the text's critique of Mehring, he appears cruel, and thus abusive, in his treatment of farm dwellers.

The treatment of Jacobus is more relevant than that of the farm dwellers as it reflects the colonial difference. By 'treatment' I mean the view that he is an incompetent farmworker, a view that the text criticises. Through its criticism of that view, one finds that the critique of Mehring's reliability is continued and applied to his treatment of Jacobus. Closer analysis shows that that treatment is indeed cruel and is therefore a form of 'abuse.' The critique of Mehring is thus comparable to that of abuse suffered by Quechua- and Aymara-speaking communities, as that abuse is dealt by a Westerner against a non-Westerner. In the treatment of Jacobus, the text is shown thus to fulfil the first criterion concerning the first element of border thinking.

For the second criterion to be met, the critique must draw on traditions of the non-West. When one studies the above excerpts, the role of non-Western traditions seems negligible, if not absent. Neither passage mentions non-Western traditions (e.g. Zulu traditions) that are associated with Jacobus (244-6). Nor are they mentioned in the scenes that, when compared to these excerpts, set up a critique of Mehring (I am referring, firstly, to the farm's earlier repair

and reconstruction, and secondly, to the flooding of the compound [237-40.) Non-Western traditions play no part in the novel's critique of abuse of Westerners; thus, the second criterion is not met.

There are three criteria that are associated with the second element of border thinking. These criteria are based on the shift of a non-Western social role (the Kipucamayoc) to a role that is Western-influenced (the Kilkaycamayoc). They are as follows: first, due to the West's influence, the new social role is 'closer to' the Western subject; second, the new role's purpose is similar to that of the original non-Western social role; third, the new social role is associated with a non-Western language or discourse. Having met these criteria, the novel would show that the origins of this social role are non-Western needs and epistemologies (representing 'liberation of oppressed layers'), and that those needs are met not through a Western tradition but one with roots in a non-Western discourse.

Given that I previously linked the new social role with the depiction of Jacobus, when studying this element, I will focus on him. As I mentioned, similarities between Jacobus and the Kilkaycamayoc include, firstly, their proximity to Western and non-Western discourses (in Jacobus's case, English and Zulu languages); secondly, both serve the needs of a non-Western community (the farm dwellers, in *The Conservationist*). Notwithstanding these similarities, further analysis shows that Jacobus does not parallel the Kilkaycamayoc in its full relevance to literary border thinking. The main issue is that there is no discourse that is 'non-Western' with which Western discourse can be compared.

Of course, an argument might be made for the text's meeting of the first criterion. Compared to other farm dwellers, Jacobus is 'closer' to the Western subject. He speaks English, unlike

some of them (64-5, 236-7). He is also a translator between Mehring and the other farm dwellers (202-3, 224). Armed with such evidence, one might describe him as 'closer' than the other farm dwellers to the paradigm of the Western subject, just as the Kilkaycamayoc is closer than the Kipucamayoc. In this reading, the novel would meet the first criterion relating to the second element of border thinking.

An issue with this reading is the fact that the terms 'Western' and 'non-Western' are not easily applied to the roles of the non-Western characters. To transplant the logic of the Kipucamayoc-Kilkaycamayoc shift would mean that both Jacobus's and the others' roles are based on their proximity to English and Zulu discourses (Jacobus's being a mixture while the others' are Zulu-oriented); in other words, Jacobus would be the 'new social role' (a la the Kipucamayoc) and the others the original *non-Western* social role (a la the Kilkaycamayoc). Whether these terms are applicable is not clear, for two reasons. Firstly, the others are not like the Kipucamayoc in that no common role is distinguishable. For example, Jacobus forbids Izak from going to the 'drinking-place' (6-7). Secondly, many of them work for Mehring, who is a Westerner; whether their roles are not influenced by 'the West' is thus debatable (57-8, 33-4, 87-9, 237-8).

The fact that other farm dwellers are not 'non-Western,' at least as the Kipucamayoc is non-Western, means that no relevance can be ascribed to this reading. Jacobus might be 'closer' than they are to the paradigm of the Western subject; however, this is true only where language – specifically his knowledge of a Western language (English) – is concerned. Other factors might be considered that suggest he is not 'closer.' The latter prospect seems likely, given that not only are their roles varied, but the West's impact on them is significant.

This same issue arises when one tries to establish whether the second criterion has been met. Per this criterion, one must show that the purposes of the new and the original social roles are similar to each other. In addition, the 'new' social role is Western-influenced, while the latter is non-Western. These categories are not relevant to Jacobus and the other farm dwellers; therefore, one cannot compare Jacobus's and their roles using the logic of Kipucamayoc-Kilkaycamayoc, and the second criterion is not met.

The third criterion was covered earlier in my motivation for this template. The previous section showed that the 'new social role' – embodied by Jacobus – can be linked to a non-Western language/discourse, which is Zulu (specifically Zulu language and culture). In other words, the third criterion has been fulfilled.

In this template of literary border thinking, the third element, or 'double critique,' has two criteria: the first posits that the role of non-Western discourse(s) is critical to the new Western-influenced social role; the second is that, in its restrained use of Western discourse, the novel highlights the limits of Western knowledge's applicability.

Whether a non-Western discourse is key to Jacobus's role is unclear, yet it seems unlikely. One need only consider how his role (i.e. the protector of farm dwellers) is explicated. Thus, one would note that no mention gets made of a discourse that is distinctly non-Western (In this instance, that would be Zulu discourse.) (32-3) Further evidence is found later, in a conversation between Jacobus and Alina (a farm 'servant') (20-1, 168-9). Alina is explaining what is wrong with one of the farmworkers' wives:

> – You know, don't you? She feels the amatongo in her shoulders. It's the disease that means you're going to get the power. –
>
> Jacobus drew snot through the back of his nose into his throat, tasting something unpleasant. He circled his forefinger, pointing it

> stiffly at his right temple. Alina's face wanted to laugh, but she was afraid to. – She says she's not surprised – they tell me. It's true she always knew about plants for medicines. –
>
> – I will buy my Epsom from the India. –
>
> And now she could laugh. (169)

This passage paints Jacobus as sceptical in matters concerning the discourse of Zulu culture. Zulu culture is signalled by the term 'amatongo' (Thorpe, 1983:185). Alina presents Jacobus with a theory that is based on Zulu discourse ('She feels the amatongo in her shoulders'). This theory features a reference to the 'medicines' that will presumably treat the 'disease.' Jacobus dismisses this theory. His last comment is meant seemingly as a rejection of these 'medicines,' since Epsom Salt is a 'therapeutic agent' (the use of which dates back centuries) (Birrer et al, 2002:187).[47] Jacobus is implying that he distrusts these medicines and that he would rather use Epsom Salt. As these medicines are linked to Zulu discourse, Jacobus's scepticism may reflect his views on that discourse in general. While no mention of his role is made here, the way in which he is framed vis-à-vis Zulu discourse is significant: the passage puts distance between him and a non-Western discourse. Thus, the first criterion is not met.

A better argument can be made for the second criterion. To this end, I expand on a point that was made earlier with respect to conservation. This is done for two reasons: as it is linked to a Westerner – Mehring – I consider the discourse of conservation to be a form of 'Western knowledge';[48] furthermore, as I showed, that discourse is mentioned in the passage that defines Jacobus's role as 'protector' (33). For these reasons, I will explore how, in his partial use thereof, the depiction of Jacobus shows the limits of this Western discourse.

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[47] The adjective 'therapeutic' is taken to mean "[a]dministered or applied for reasons of health" ("Meaning of therapeutic…", n.d.).

[48] The link between Western knowledge, on one hand, and the discourse of conservation, on the other, is reinforced by an argument by Rita Barnard. According to Barnard, discourses that were used in apartheid to justify the mass relocation of non-whites (non-Westerners) include 'conservation' (2007:70-1, 73). Barnard also uses this term in her study of *The Conservationist* (2007:78-82). As such, the discourse is taken to be a form of Western knowledge.

That Jacobus draws partly on 'conservation' discourse is shown in the passage outlining his role as protector (see earlier). That passage associates this discourse with its impact on non-Westerners, and as such, the limits of that discourse are revealed. In order to 'protect' the other farm dwellers, Jacobus must mimic the conservation discourse: "He had told the women to warn the children not to collect eggs where they could be seen; he had remarked to *him* that there were plenty of guinea fowl about if you had to be up at work early enough" (33). The fact that he does so implies that protection of guinea fowls does not interest him; if it did, he may have asked that the children stop collecting guinea fowl eggs altogether. Thus, Jacobus's use of conservation discourse can be seen as 'partial.' This excerpt also hints that, from the farm dwellers' perspective, that discourse is a threat or a source of danger (11-2, 19-20, 26-8, 33-4). The implication it bears is that, if they are found collecting eggs (that is, in contravention of conservation discourse), then there will be negative consequences for them.

In this account of Jacobus's role and his partial drawing on the conservation discourse, *The Conservationist* shows that, from a non-Western perspective, that discourse has limited applicability: Jacobus is not interested in ensuring that the guinea fowl are protected; the conservation discourse is also shown as a threat to the non-Western farm dwellers (12, 23, 32-4, 146-7, 154, 175, 210). In other words, the text meets the second criterion that is related to the third element of border thinking.

5.5. CONCLUSION

By applying my definition of the modern *plaasroman*, this chapter showed that *The Conservationist* is an instance of this genre. Mehring and Terry's relationship was shown to challenge ideals that are associated with the farmer-father role, and thus the early *plaasroman*.

The depiction of Jacobus was shown to subvert ideals that are associated with traditional Afrikaner ideology; thus, the novel is shown to challenge racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals.

A review of each template that was derived in Chapter 2 showed that those based on Saldívar's and Herlinghaus's essays are ill-suited to this investigation. Unlike *Oscar Wao* (the subject of Saldívar's essay), *The Conservationist* does not shift between time periods in order to foreground the *anthropos* perspective, at least not conspicuously. In the case of Herlinghaus's essay, the main issue is Mehring's lack of interest in the 'field' of pig-iron; his disinterest means he is not a Western critic, a key aspect of the template that is based on Herlinghaus's analysis. The template that was chosen is based on Mignolo's investigation. Its selection was based on clear similarities that were identified between Jacobus and the Kilkaycamayoc.

Using the criteria in this template, I explored aspects of the novel to determine whether, and the extent to which, it is an instance of literary border thinking. In doing so, I found that most of the criteria were not fulfilled. One major issue is the fact that the two social roles Kilkaycamayoc and Kipucamayoc are not easily imported. Hence, future research should look into expanding these terms' definitions, or focus on different aspects of the novel.

When it comes to the first element, the text meets one of the two criteria that are related to this template of literary border thinking. Jacobus's treatment is subject to a critique and is a form of abuse; the novel therefore meets the first criterion as the critique includes abuse suffered by the non-West. The second criterion was not met as this critique is not based on non-Western traditions.

A study of the second element is hampered by the issue to which I just alluded, namely the trouble in transposing the Kipucamayoc and Kilkaycamayoc. For this reason, I was unable to compare the roles of Jacobus and the other farm dwellers using the logic of the Kipucamayoc-Kilkaycamayoc, and the first and second criteria were not met. The third criterion was met due to Jacobus's proximity to Zulu discourse, which is non-Western.

The degree to which Zulu discourse informs Jacobus's role is unclear, as evidenced by a short excerpt from the novel. In that excerpt, Jacobus mocks concepts that are linked to Zulu discourse. Thus, the first criterion that is linked to the third element of border thinking is not fulfilled. The second criterion is met in the passage that gives some insight into Jacobus's role as protector. Jacobus is shown thus to draw partly on (Western) conservation discourse; moreover, that discourse is framed as a source of danger or a threat to the (non-Western) farm dwellers. Taken together, these insights point to the limits of Western knowledge with respect to its applicability.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

One of the broad conclusions one may draw is that border thinking, when used as a critical framework, is a rich instrument for studying the modern *plaasroman*. A study of three novels has shown that that richness is manifold, stemming not just from parallels between the farm narrative and decolonial criticism (the critical contexts of the modern *plaasroman* and border thinking, respectively). In addition, it was shown that, in the texts that are studied, numerous parallels are found with the three elements of border thinking; whether or not the criteria were fulfilled, the potential for meaningful analysis and engagement in the selected novels was considerable. An explanation for this richness in potential may be that, in South Africa, the 'white' pastoral genre is imbricated with the history of colonialism (Coetzee, 1988:3-5). Coetzee phrases this point in a way that is fittingly devastating: "Blindness to the colour black is built into South African pastoral." (1988:5) Possibly, it is with that blindness that border thinking, with its interest in racial injustice, finds the most resonance.

A number of major limitations were found to inhibit this study with regards to its efficacy, as well as the confidence one might have in its conclusions. Future research might benefit, and yield better insights, were the researchers to take note of these limitations. First, criteria that were used to define modern *plaasromans* meant that the scope of primary texts was considerable. No doubt many texts challenge ideals linked to the early *plaasroman*, as well as racist-nationalist Afrikaner ideals. Given that the *plaasroman* was impacted by a range of historical factors, it may be that a study like this would do better were the primary texts limited by a particular time period. Alternatively, one's goals could change to highlight one text in particular, representing the modern *plaasroman*. Second, one might argue that confidence in

these research findings are damaged due to the use of several templates; a more consistent approach would have been to apply one template of literary border thinking across all of the primary texts. Doing so would mean one could circumvent the process of selecting suitable templates.

Minor limitations were found at times to prevent meaningful engagement on issues (for instance, whether 'Bushman' paintings are in fact 'literature'). Unfortunately, I was unable to explore many of the nuances of these limitations due to the limited scope of the present study. In the future, these nuances and others could be explored in greater detail.

The aforementioned limitations are seen as challenges to be addressed in future criticism of the modern *plaasroman*. There may be benefits to addressing them; for instance, in future, it may be that border thinking lets scholars of the modern *plaasroman* discern better the different types of *plaasroman*. There is also potential for such research to explore and distinguish facets of the *plaasroman* genre that have not been identified.

Such criticism of the *plaasroman* seems likely to remain deeply relevant. One need only to consider two instances to see that the potential within the farm novel to explore issues – be they social or literary – is considerable: *Agaat* (2004) by Marlene van Niekerk and *Horrelpoot* (2006) by Eben Venter. The former text has been labelled "an encyclopaedic recapitulation of the [farm novel] genre" (Olivier, 2012:321). In *Agaat*, writes Devarenne, Van Niekerk explores the "relationships between land ownership and colonialism, white supremacy and the abuse of women, and genre and ideology" (2009:640). *Horrelpoot* invokes elements that are found to reflect Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* – a text that, perhaps somewhat incidentally, has been criticised for its treatment of Africans (Achebe, 1977; Olivier, 2012:321). With these two

examples of the farm novel, one finds that the potential for social and literary criticism is a trait that defines the farm novel of the twenty-first century. For this reason, in studies of the modern *plaasroman*, it would seem that the uses of literary border thinking are far from exhausted.

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