The Representation of the Ghost in Contemporary South African Novels by Black Writers

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DLDASA001

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts,

English Literary Studies,

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my family, eternally. Thank you to Dr. Barbara Boswell and Dr. Polo Moji for guiding the way forward in this thesis from its beginning to its completion.

ABSTRACT

The thesis reads the representations of the ghost in South African novels by black writers. The reading is specific to the context of the ghosts haunting South Africa. I ask: how has the ghost been represented by black South African novelists, and what does it signal/tell? The thesis finds that there is a relative paucity of critical studies on depictions of ghosts haunting South African novels as written by black writers. Depictions of ghosts by black South African novelists proliferated after 2000. Black South African novelists writing ghosts emerged as a proliferating current of novel writing after 2000. I account for the representational strategies, functions, effects, and meanings the novelists use to produce the vitality of the depictions of their ghosts to the novel's work. For this study, I read the uses of the ghost in Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* (2006), Vera the Ghost in Kagiso Lesego Molope's *This Book Betrays My Brother* (2012), and Senami Tladi's ghost in Niq Mhlongo's *Way Back Home* (2013). It is in the ghost that I sustain a hermeneutic interest in the novels cited. It is an interest in what the ghost is doing to thinking, reading, and interpreting the work of the black novelist's text that it haunts. There is a sustained interest in the ghost commonality across the works, the ghost representations across the novel texts. These are corresponding efforts: to sustain the hermeneutic interest in the ghost, the interest in interpreting the particularity of the work through the depiction of the ghost that haunts it, and sustaining the interest in the ghost commonality haunting across the novel works. The interpretative implications of the represented ghosts of the dead pulled me to say: I am watching the ghosts of the South African novel.

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INTRODUCTION

Inside what used to be the Doomed Spies block, there were mounds of dried animal dung. As he stood in the middle of the room, a wave of nostalgia passed over Kimathi as his eyes darted around. Suddenly, he noticed a mist drifting through the broken windows. As it reached the corner of the room, it took on a human form. Filled with fear, he collapsed to the ground. It was at that moment that the ghost of Lady Comrade Mkabayi appeared in front him.

"Comrade Pilate," she said, "where do you want me to live now? You and your sangoma have chased me out of my parents' house in Soweto."

"But you are dead," Kimathi said, fear creeping into his voice. "That is why we are here, to fetch your spirit."

"Comrade Pilate, I thought you knew that a person does not simply disappear when they die," Lady Comrade Mkabayi said to him. "They go to another world, just like Ganyani did when you killed him two days ago."

"Why?" Kimathi asked, his eyes glowing with fear. "Why can't you leave me alone?"

"Because you did not tell the truth about what you did to me."

"What do you want me to do now?"

—. *Way Back Home,* Niq Mhlongo, p. 204

There exists an unexplored world. I have not yet found a language that best does it and its complexities justice. Its random surfacing and the disquieting noise it produces. It's a haunting world that I feel can only be communicated through a language spoken by iziporho or izithunzela.

—. "The Unlanguaged World: Reflections on Contemporary South African Fiction", Unathi Slasha, p. 434

The question precipitating the thesis

Looking at the South African novel is enriched by reading *the ghost* of the dead in South Africa as written by black novelists. I started this thesis from the question: how has the ghost been represented or depicted in South African novels by black South African writers? Prior to proposing writing this thesis, I had been reading novel fiction from literature outside South Africa. I was interested by how the ghosts in them are written. I then wondered how black writers of the South African novel have approached writing the ghost. What is represented to be the significance of the ghost for black novelists? What is the ghost's significance to black

novel writing in South Africa? How do black writers view the ghost? How does the ghost function in the black novelist's work? In its representation by the black novelist, could it also signal certain underlying implications for South African and black society?

Defining what I mean by the ghost

I am reading ghosts that are "the manifestation of the souls of the dead before the living" (Davies 2). I mean the ghost represented as a possible actual entity (Blanco and Peeren 1), the one the novel illuminates as the emanation "in some form or another, of the returning dead" (Blanco and Peeren 1). I am focusing on the depiction of the actual, literal ghost of the dead demonstrably returned among the living according to black South African novelists. The ghost "is not a faded residuum" (Hsiao 4) but is rather "a fully manifest entity, different but analogous to the living" (Hsiao 4). I use this thesis to analyse this figure of the ghost in Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* (2006), Kagiso Lesego Molope's *This Book Betrays My Brother* (2012), and Niq Mhlongo's *Way Back Home* (2013). I have selected Molope and Mhlongo's novels for their cotemporary depictions the woman ghost, and Christiansë's novel for it's historical representation of ghosts in the setting of Cape Colony slavery.

A readiness to mind the South African ghost

In *Ghostly Matters* (2008 [1997]), Avery Gordon writes "The whole essence, if you can use that word, of a ghost is that it has a real presence and demands its due, your attention" (Gordon xvi). In "Attending to Ghosts: Cultural Analysis, Close Reading and the Cultural Imagination," (2019) Esther Peeren suggests that "Attending to ghosts, then, requires for them to first be acknowledged" (Peeren 8). But, Peeren asks, "what if that does not happen?" (Peeren 8). What if acknowledgement or recognition of the ghost does not happen? And what reason or condition drives this? "What if," Peeren says, "impending environmental disaster is not seen as a haunting requiring a response, but as a figment of the imagination or a distant problem that can be endlessly deferred?" Moreover, "What if the trouble is not stayed with or attended to because it is not recognized as trouble?" (Peeren 8) What if ghosts are present, and – to take this further - even (well) known, seen, even experienced, but are simply just not recognised or acknowledged as trouble? Peeren avers that "certain preconditions need to be met before a repressed or unresolved social violence can make itself known in a way that produces a sense of what [Avery] Gordon calls 'something-to-be-done'" (Peeren 8). A certain quality of attention

– a certain readiness to heed the ghost, to mind the ghost – is "required on the part of society (or at least a critical mass within it)" (Peeren 8). Otherwise, Peeren asks, "how can it be explained that not all unresolved pasts, disavowed presents or catastrophic futures make themselves known with equal force?" (Peeren 8)?

I propose that, Christiansë, Molope, and Mhlongo are ghost-watching South Africa in their novels. To paraphrase Maria del Pilar Blanco's *Ghost-Watching American Modernity: Haunting, Landscape and the Hemispheric Imagination* (2012), looking for ghosts as a reader of literature is "to vigilantly account, as a reader, for the spatiotemporal coordinates that merge to produce a site of haunting" (Blanco 1). The interpretation of a ghost is commenced in its "specific locale" (Luckhurst qtd in Blanco 9). "Ghost-watching" Blanco says, "is a particular way of reading perceptions of space within a given text": "within the action of a literary or cinematic text, to ghost-watch implies a vigilant perception of the landscapes depicted within it, as they may reveal a different, and haunted, dimension" (Blanco 1). To watch the ghost is a particular way of reading given perceptions of this different, haunted, unlanguaged, unexplored absent-present dimension. "[G]hosts need to be read in their specificity" (Blanco 8). Ghosts "are embedded in the story about a place" (Blanco 8). This embedding stays on track with "the locations or even histories that give ghosts their specificity" (Blanco 8). The development of haunting within a novel text is read as a "phenomenon that says something about the formal solutions writers discover and deploy when evoking the experience of perceiving specific locations" (Blanco 9). As Blanco asserts: "Indeed, what may seem like a very simple question — Why does this author introduce haunting precisely here, and how does s/he go about it? — may well prove to be a more useful exercise in understanding the particular anxieties of the living who are reacting to the spatial manifestations of modernization around them" (Blanco 9). Attention to ghost must touch ground, to borrow from Judith Richardson's *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley* (Richardson 4). One "explores how hauntings rise from and operate in particular, everyday worlds" (Richardson 4). This "builds arguments, quite literally, from the ground up, cordoning off a territory and a stretch of time, and examining hauntings as they work *in place*" (Richardson 4).

Literature review

Black novelists writing the ghost

Unconfessed by Yvette Christiansë was published in 2006. There has been wide critical acclaim of Christiansë's debut and only novel (Samuelson 2008, 2010, 2014; Baderoon 2009, 2011, 2014, 2018; Lenta 2009, 2010; Murray 2010, 2011, 2012; Morris 2011; Johnson 2010, 2011, 2012; Olaussen 2011, 2012, 2016; Geustyn 2013, 2021; Ellis 2014, 2023; Dunton 2015; Kaoma 2016; McCorkle 2016; Nehl 2016; Cloete 2017; Young 2017; Negri 2018; Kasembeli 2018; Still 2019; Boswell 2020; Tayob 2020; Boer 2022). The ghost in *Unconfessed*, the ghost of Baro, is significant to much of the novel. It is rare that a novel set in early nineteenth century Cape Colony slavery, when written by a black South African novelist, centres ghosts at all. This novel arrival of the poet [*Castaway* (1999), *Imprendehora* (2009)] and scholar Christiansë is the entry of a writer who has in the twenty first century cultivated an art communicating with ghosts of the pre-twentieth century Southern African setting. Generally, the sustained reception of Christiansë's writing of the ghost in *Unconfessed* is averted.

Vera-the-Ghost in the novel *This Book Betrays My Brother* by Kagiso Lesego Molope, published in 2012, followed. There is good reception of Molope's novel (Nkealah 2017, 2017, 2018, 2021; Frost 2018; Boswell 2020; Meghdadi 2022; Binder 2022). Molope's third novel depicts two ghosts. It presents a version of the Johannesburg urban folk tale of Vera-the-Ghost. The novel composes its centred ghost Vera-the-Ghost and a very briefly written avenging woman ghost (p.168-173) into Molope's novel oeuvre: *Dancing in the dust* (2002), *The Mending Season* (2005), *This Book Betrays My Brother* (2012), *Such a Lonely, Lovely Road* (2018). However, besides Barbara Boswell's chapter "Black Women Writing 'New' South African Masculinities: Kagiso Lesego Molope and Zukiswa Wanner" (p.171-198) in *And Wrote My Story Anyway: Black South African Women's Novels as Feminism* (2020) looking at (p.188-190) Vera-the-Ghost in Molope's novel, Molope's representation of the dead woman's ghost tends to be neglected. The ghost of Senami Tladi followed in the novel *Way Back Home* by Niq Mhlongo, published in 2013. There is critical reception of *Way Back Home* (Dlamini 2015; Rafapa 2018; Blanton Jr 2018; Frenkel 2019; Kenqu 2019; Inarmal 2019; Duvenage 2020; Loimeier 2020; Grogan 2021; Chapman 2022; Alvarado 2023). The novel depicts the ghost of Senami Tladi, also called Lady Comrade Mkabayi. *Way Back Home*, like *This Book Betrays My Brother*, presents a version of the Johannesburg urban folk tale of Vera the Ghost. The novel

conjures the ghost of Senami into Mhlongo's novel oeuvre: *Dog Eat Dog* (2004), *After Tears* (2007), *Way Back Home* (2013), and *Paradise in Gaza* (2021). Sustained reception centred on Mhlongo's composition of the ghost has not happened.

In brief scenes there is a shadowy, ghostly figure in the novel *The Yearning* (2016) by Mohale Mashigo. Of the reception that centres exclusively on Mashigo's debut novel, sustained reception of Mashigo's writing of the spectral shadow figure appearing in the narrative in brief moments now and then is averted. Then *Jah Hills* (2017) by Unathi Slasha emerged. The novel's sole extensive, sustained critical reception comes from Marzia Milazzo's "To Grasp the Gaping Grave:" Blackness, Death, and the Afterlife of Slavery in Unathi Slasha's *Jah Hills*" (2020). Lesego Rampolokeng's *Bird-Monk Seding* also emerged in 2017. Unathi Slasha's "Partaking in the Séance: Preliminary Remarks on Lesego Rampolokeng's *Bird-Monk Seding*" attends to *Bird Monk Seding*'s ghost work. Then emerged *The Broken River Tent* (2018) by Mphuthumi Ntabeni. Ntabeni's *Broken River Tent*, both regarding the novel's ghost work and the novel itself at large, is neglected. The recent novel *Still Life* by Zoë Wicomb was published in 2020. Regarding attendance to its ghosts, there are passages in Andrew van der Vlies's "Zoë Wicomb's Angels of History: Literary Historiography and Historical Materialism in *Still Life*" (2022).

This Book Betrays My Brother and *Way Back Home* represent ghosts of dead black women. *Unconfessed* is haunted by, among its ghosts, Baro's ghost figure as the child ghost. The ghost of Baro is also the novel's addressee ghost to the novel's protagonist and speaker, his mother Sila. *Unconfessed* has other ghosts in the Cape Colony, be they ghosts of the enslaved, or the ghost of a dead slaveowner called *Oumiesies* (p.170-179), a woman who was in her life one of the slaveowners of the protagonist. In *Way Back Home*, the ghost of Senami Tladi, known as Lady Comrade Mkabayi during her anti-apartheid liberation war days when she was alive, becomes a vengeful ghost of the Southern African 1980s anticolonial liberation war dead haunting Southern African spaces (Soweto, Johannesburg, Angola) and consciences in the novel. Ghosts are present in South African novels written by black writers. The ghosts themselves are not in the margins of these novels they are depicted in. Their presence is sustained and foregrounded in these novels. At the same time, neither fascination, nor ambivalence, or scepticism, enthusiasm, or even outright rejection of the ghost is done in discussing black South African novelists' conceptions of ghosts. The ghost has not been – and remains yet to be - a prominent subject in talking about the work of black South African novelists, even regarding the few who have bothered to write about them. The criticism that has

been done, sparse as it remains, emerged entirely after 2015. This is understandable. Black South African novelists writing the presence of the ghost emerged as a current of writing after 2000. Black South African novel writing of the ghost is a twenty-first century emerging practice in the South African novel field. I did not choose the post 2000s black South African novelist period of writing ghosts at random. These novels representing ghosts were all published after 2000, and the critical reception of the ghosts, sparse as it remains today, appeared after 2015. The representation of the ghost as represented by black novelists writing in English is an entirely contemporary, post-2000s practice in the South African novel field.

The provocation of the novelists: why write the ghosts now

The recent emergence of the ghost suggests a transition in the post 2000s attitude on the ghost among black novelists. One could say that such a sudden proliferation is a response to something that has clearly become significant in the South African fiction field. But what is it, exactly? For the past 20 years, black novelists have been approaching a way now to live with the ghosts haunting the present. In an interview with Jenifer Berman published in 1995 in BOMB magazine, Ariel Dorfman said: “On the one hand, there’s a deep longing for stability, for what I call the anchor, for a country, for wholeness, a desire for integrity. In the characters and in the language there’s a desire for integrity. On the other hand, there is this ghost sense of the world, which has to do with the fluctuation of the personality, of the stories. It’s as if we are inhabited by a narrative voice that we don’t find entirely reliable” (Dorfman and Berman, “Ariel Dorfman”). The current literature is coming to terms with the latter hand, the ghost sense of the world.

This ghost sense of the world of the present haunts the black novelists’ attempts at crafting stability, anchor, country, wholeness, integrity, reliability in reading contemporary South Africa. This twenty-year (2000-2020) proliferation of attending to ghosts means that the novel moment is slowly becoming an accommodating place for ghosts. South African literature by black writers has not always been an accommodating place for ghosts. Answering why this was the case is not in the scope of the current thesis. It would be a novel history project for another time. What is important to know is that it is in this period that the ghost gains a currency in the novel’s language and thought. Why does this novelistic ghost turn happen now, and no sooner? What literary factor is driving the approach to the ghost among black novelists? What

has changed the attitude toward ghosts among black novelists? What has happened to catalyse this change in the black writer's look between the dead and the living? There is something after 2000 - more so after 2010 (given that this is when most of the literature was published) - suddenly specific to contemporary South African fiction such that it is a moment cultivating the ghost's power to haunt the work of black novelists.

What is actually growing is the ghost's presence in the black South African novelist's writing, and not the ghost-producing conditions themselves. These conditions have been here before and present in the daily foreground. A condition presented as conducive for producing the ghost in the novel now is a condition that has troubled South Africa long before this contemporary novel ghost turn. The dramatized reason (for example violent death and unburial in the wake) for how the ghost has come to be here in the first place is a premise that was present in South Africa, marking the experience of the lives of those who lived prior to this current moment. People did not suddenly begin to die and suffer improper burial only after 2000, or after 2010. The conditions, the problems, in the literature cited, issues involved in producing the novel's ghost, being highly productive grounds for the presence of the ghost, have been present throughout South Africa's centuries. Yes, the dead return "*because they were not properly buried*, i.e., because something went wrong with their obsequies" (Davis 2). This is a common motivation for the ghost's presence in the novels themselves. Yes, the ghost evokes that the "return of the dead is the sign of a disturbance in the symbolic rite, in the process of symbolization" (Davis 2). Yes, the ghost claims for itself a quest for retribution for the stated purpose of achieving what is just (such as in *Way Back Home* and *This Book Betrays My Brother*). Yes, the "stories of the supernatural reproduce quite faithfully the 'unfinished business' model of the commerce between the living and the dead" (Davis 3). Yes, the "rituals of burial, commemoration and mourning have not been properly completed" (Davis 3). Or that "they [the ghosts] know a secret to be revealed" (Davis 3). Or that there is "a wrong to be righted, an injustice to be made public or a wrongdoer to be apprehended" (Davis 3).

The ghosts of past catastrophes here, and their sedimented anxieties still present that produce ghosts, have been recognised in South Africa before the twenty-first century novelist's ghost turn. There has been here "what Morrison sometimes just calls *the thing*, the sedimented conditions that constitute what is in place in the first place" (Morrison qtd in Gordon 4). And in knowing this *the thing*, the "ghostly tale has enjoyed popularity" (Varnado 3) for a long time as a "special way of knowing what has happened or is happening" (Gordon 63) in South Africa. I reference, in my Chapter Two and Chapter Three for example, that Vera-the-Ghost in *This*

Book Betrays My Brother and Senami Tladi's ghost in *Way Back Home* are sourced from "the presence of a BLACK FEMALE ghost" (Holland 2) who haunted Soweto in the 1950s. The woman ghost of the dead was involved in how black people came to know or experience an ending that was not over in 1950s Soweto. In *Haunted Presence* (1987), S. L. Varnado wrote that "If, in the past, the ghost story has occupied a peripheral position in literature, however, it has never suffered from neglect by the public" (Varnado 3). The discourse between the living and the dead shaping a continuous community has been present in African life and thought in languages like Zulu, Xhosa, and Sotho and so on (Brink 26) and there has been the "acknowledgement of a more holistic way of approaching the world" (Brink 25).

In a sense of "the notions of a ghostly everyday and an everyday ghostliness in the African context" (Peeren 115) means that there has been a discourse between the ghost and the everyday in the African context that looks at "these realms as more or less intertwined" (Peeren 115). Novelists like Christiansë, Molope, Mhlongo, Mashigo, Slasha, Rampolokeng, Ntabeni and the recent Wicomb are acknowledging the previously neglected consciousness of "a rich oneiric stratum" (Brink 25). After all, the ghosts of the dead do return for a reason. I argue that, these novelists are trying to develop telling a certain attitude during this period of time around the reason for return, which is to make us see ghosts which allude and precipitate a relationship with the South African reality. I think, for example, that *Way Back Home*, *This Book Betrays My Brother*, and *Unconfessed*, and the other cited novels in review are so direct in evoking this that it would be wilful misreading by me to not acknowledge the offerings. I see for example what Vera and Senami's ghosts make me see of the places and ideas from which their presence is made or born, and the intrinsic workings of the novels into which their ghosts move. The black female ghost in *Way Back Home* becomes a vengeful angry ghost and the one in Molope's novel is not. What appears to have taken over in its place is the ghost sense of the world, a fluctuation of personality and of stories, inhabited by a narrative voice that we don't find entirely reliable. It is not for nothing that *Way Back Home*'s ghost of Senami Tladi, known as Lady Comrade Mkabayi during her anti-apartheid liberation war days when she was alive, becomes a vengeful ghost drawn from the Southern African 1980s anticolonial liberation war dead haunting Southern African spaces (Soweto, Johannesburg, Angola) today. Mhlongo is situating the ghost sense of the world within the projects that claim to pursue the deep longing for stability, for the anchor, for a country, for wholeness, a desire for integrity for all. Molope does too, in a way, when the protagonist and narrator in *This Book Betrays My Brother* seems

to accede, at the end of the novel, that the rapist in the book could become the president of the nation one day if he wants to (Molope 185).

It could be that black novelists are coming to consider that the deep longing and ghost sense of the world drive each other. But to what purpose? In the past, the fiction's direction of language to activism and resistance had a point of eventual fulfilment. Clear enemies and allies, clear boundaries and heroes and antagonists and so on. Post-2000s writers are finding out that the deep longing for the stability, the anchor, for a country, for wholeness, a desire for integrity for all, are a complex longing to fulfil that still remains lingering like haunting. It gives rise to a sense of disappointment grown by disillusion with the ideal and "this disappointed consciousness of a spiritual and moral void has become a public issue" (Mack 134). It affects "in haunted ways traditional separations between past and present" (Mack 135). I note that writing about ghosts appears to proliferate in black writing in the wake of the ideal projects that appear to have failed, for example post-apartheid malaise in post-2000s and more so post-2010s South African fiction. The favoured mode of the rational and the realism thought to be its suitable companion seems to falter when the ideal has not been reached. The age of disappointment after transition grows ghosts it seems, just as the improper burial of the dead does. It is beyond my scope right now but David Scott's *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice* and Sharon Patricia Holland's *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (2000) would be useful to use to help theorise understanding the current ghost emergence in the South African novel.

Chapter Outline

What has been produced is interesting that as critically acclaimed as Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* is, Christiansë's writing of ghosts and the supernatural remains underrated when it comes to scholarly attention. The protagonist and narrator Sila uses much of the novel to talk to the ghost of her dead son Baro. I use Chapter One to focus on the representation of the ghost in this book, imagining ghosts of the dead during Cape Colony slavery in early nineteenth century South Africa.

In Chapter Two I examine how Kagiso Lesego Molope's *This Book Betrays My Brother* (2012) has written the woman ghost. In Chapter Three, I read how Niq Mhlongo's *Way Back Home* (2013) has depicted the woman ghost. I have chosen Molope and Mhlongo's novels for

their variation on how they have represented the woman ghost. I use this chapter to work with the representation of the woman ghost, Vera-the-Ghost, in Kagiso Lesego Molope's third novel *This Book Betrays My Brother*, published in 2012. When gender is an important factor to the ghost, it mirrors some notions about gender and gendered norms. Jeannie Banks Thomas (2007) said that at times gender plays a role in supernatural legends (Thomas 82). However, the woman ghost is rarely written in novels by black South African novelists. In contemporary novels written by black South African writers, a ghost like Vera-the-Ghost in *This Book Betrays My Brother* was unwritten prior to the 2000s. Still, it is very rare that black South African writers go to extensive lengths to foreground this ghost in a novel. The existential sense of haunting by gender-based violence, on the other hand, is a ubiquitous predicament that has mostly been written without the representation of the souls of dead women figures returning before the living.

In Chapter Three, I study Niq Mhlongo's *Way Back Home,* published in 2013, which is another novelistic rendition of the woman ghost, Senami Tladi. Vera-the-Ghost and Senami Tladi's ghost are present in the context where black South African novelists seem rarely interested in a female ghost figure tradition. The paucity is interesting. "The ghost of gender-based violence" Boswell (2020) says, "is the spectre that haunts contemporary South Africa as much as it did during slavocratic and apartheid times" (Boswell 189). It is known that gender-based violence has haunted South Africa since slavery through to the contemporary moment but representations of this violence very rarely portray a South African with a dead woman's literal ghost. Writing feminine literal "apparent spectral embodiment" (Thomas 82) was not being done among black South African novelists before this millennium. Both novels, published in 2012 and 2013 depict the black female ghost figure in contemporary South Africa. Senami and Vera were both murdered.

CHAPTER ONE

The Representation of the ghost during Cape Colony slavery in Yvette Christiansë's novel *Unconfessed*

Unconfessed representing conversing with the ghost while on Robben Island during Cape Colony slavery

I use this chapter for the ghost, primarily the ghost of Baro, in Yvette Christiansë's novel *Unconfessed*, published in 2006. The novel develops the ghost figure during early nineteenth century Cape Colony slavery in South Africa. Besides *Unconfessed* and Rayda Jacobs's *The Slave Book* (1998), and Zoë Wicomb's recently published *Still Life* (2020), it is rare that black South African novelists publish novels occupying the Cape Colony slavery setting. It is as rare that a novel set during slavery in the Cape Colony is written by a black South African novelist who represents ghosts in the book. The ghost of the person who in their life was enslaved in South Africa is generally not a figure explored by black novelists. When it appeared, *Unconfessed*'s ghost, then, was unprecedented in black South African novel writing. *Unconfessed* is a unique effort in the field to look at, in having been the novel to develop this. Baro's ghost even has a significant effect to this novel's very movement, such that his ghost transforms the novel's shape of form when his ghost enters from page 35. Upon his ghost's entry, the novel narration begins to flow entirely from the first-person voice of Sila van Mozbiek/ Sila van de Kaap, the protagonist, Baro's mother, an enslaved black woman abducted as a child from Mozambique ["a Mozbieker like me […] Mozbieker, from all the way up the coast in that direction" (p.112)] and sold into slavery in the Cape Colony. The novel revolves around her life during slavery in the Cape Colony in South Africa. She also spends much of the novel as a prisoner incarcerated on Robben Island for the murder of her son Baro. Baro is the ghost haunting her, and in effect, *Unconfessed*. When his ghost enters the frame, Sila directs what she says in the book to her ghost companion, the ghost of her dead child Baro, now her addressee, her interlocuter, her audience, her visible listener available, from the dead. She converses with the ghost, a visible listener, while she is imprisoned on Robben Island. His ghost is what Jen Baker (2021) calls the "literary ghost child" (Baker 714) or child ghost (Baker 716).

This ghost is important to *Unconfessed* such that much of the novel's shape is arranged around Sila speaking to the ghost of Baro. It is to Baro's ghost that she tells a passage of her knowing the continuity between the living and the dead at the wake of another of her dead children, Debora:

> Tell her, your mother stood at her grave and kept a deaf ear to the preacher who makes walls between the living and the dead with his words (Christiansë 275-276).

And

> Tell her your mother is resisting this invitation to give up all singing to a belief that death is all there is to death (Christiansë 276).

It runs counter to her to conceive of death as an absolute belief that death is all there is to death. Such a thing cannot be at Debora's funeral, nor regarding Baro's own presence. Her words do not make walls between the living and the dead. In *Ghosts of Slavery: A Literary Archaeology of Black Women's Lives* (2003), Jenny Sharpe says in the past "Slaves believed that their earthly shadows lingered behind unless the appropriate burial rituals were performed" (Sharpe xi). The protagonist of this novel addresses such earthly shadows. The enslaved's stories, "particularly those of slave women" are "improperly buried" (Sharpe xi). Though, "improper burial does not mean that they are irretrievably lost" (Sharpe xi). Their presence is called and spoken to from their improper burial. In the essay "A Freedom Stolen" in *Dialogues across Diasporas: Women Writers, Scholars, and Activists of Africana and Latina Descent in Conversation* (2013) Christiansë wrote that: "My fiction is born of a speculation: what if there had been a slave narrative, and what if it was not in a familiar form?" (Christiansë 104). Given this speculation, Christiansë (2013) reads: "for how knowledge systems produce truths whose stability is not given, but which are also not to be given up or easily dismissed. I read for those traces, even rumours that are evidence of differently-abled knowledges" (Christiansë 103). For in South Africa, "in truth, the genre of slave narrative as we know it in the North American context is missing" (Christiansë 103). So, there was "no chance or even material means for slaves to develop what became the genre of slave narrative in the U.S" (Christiansë 103). As such, Christiansë (2013) says: "As a scholar, I had spent years asking a very basic question: where are the direct, first person slave narratives of the Cape Colony? What are the forms in which we may discern traces of self-articulation, and what conditions of possibility existed for

such articulation? How do people remember it?" (Christiansë 103). Sila says "The dead hear these questions and send them back to us in anger" (Christiansë 198):

> "I am a woman surrounded by spirits. These spirits are questions. These tormenting spirits are the questions we cannot answer. The dead hear these questions and send them back to us in anger, for…Why? Why would the dead be angry with us?
> I am tired. What do I know?" (Christiansë 198)

To cite Frederic Jameson from his "Marx's Purloined Letter" (1999), there is "no 'proper' way of relating to the dead and the past" (Jameson 58-59). Sila's struggles to reckon with ghosts. In working with the evidence of differently-abled knowledges, she grapples with the uncertain in the Cape knowledge, in the competing history around her life and the story that emerges out of this contest. There are the lines in *Unconfessed* when Sila, while imprisoned on Robben Island, tells the ghost of Baro, the ghost of her dead son in the novel: "You have been asleep and now you have woken, but you must open your eyes and your ears. It is time to wake up, boy, and look at the world. Eyes that are open but are still as water upon which no breeze blows do not see the world" (Christiansë 139). Why is Sila's teaching here spoken to the ghost, and why is who of the dead being spoken to Baro's ghost? Why is such speaking or address being formed? Sila speaks to not just any ghost of the dead. Who her story, and the stories of those present in her story, is passed on to not just anyone or any spirit. The cited lines are pedagogic, epistemic speech from the mother to the ghost of the son. Sila's imagination twines talking about their lives with her way of looking at the world they are in: Robben Island, the ocean, the Cape Town mainland, the Cape Colony, the courts, prisons, farm plantations, ships and boats. She passes to the ghost her alternative way to recognise a living death, telling the ghost to look at their story absented while they are present, the competing spirit of the story between the dead and the living.

Unconfessed's three movements

Unconfessed is told in three movements. There is the first movement (Christiansë 1-33). The first movement is a movement that is yet to present the novel's actual ghosts. The first movement is followed by the long second movement (Christiansë 34-238). It is in the second movement that the novel becomes populated by ghosts. This movement is followed by the brief

third movement (Christiansë 323-341). This is when the novel portrays when the Cape Colony abolishes slavery and proclaims the beginnings of a post-slavery settler Cape Colony in the novel. This chapter's concentration is the second movement, given that it is the movement crafting the novel's ghost.

In the first movement, "Slavery," as Christiansë (2013) says, "is the abduction of more than bodies" (Christiansë 101). Slavery is "the theft of freedom" (Christiansë 101). The abduction "into slavery also drew an horizon into view, an horizon of possibility that slaves immediately oriented themselves toward: the horizon of freedom" (Christiansë 101). The first movement (Christiansë 1-33) of the novel is made on this horizon. The centre point of the first movement is the death of the child and surviving in the wake of the theft of freedom among the enslaved:

> "Can you confirm that you are Sila van den Kaap, slave to the burgher Jacobus Stephanus Van der Wat?"
> Slave? Who was he calling slave? She sat up and pulled her dress into place.
>
> […]
> She thought of a freedom so close, a freedom stolen. (Christiansë 2-3)

Sila's life around this stolen freedom (stolen life) is told in daily existence, constantly quotidian. Sila van Mozambique/de Kaap is in the opening scene imprisoned in the prison cell (Christiansë 1). She spends the entire present moment of *Unconfessed* imprisoned on Robben Island or imprisoned on the Cape Town mainland. The official phrases like "superintendent", "the warden", "the guard" and "Excellency" (Christiansë 1) are evoked from the beginning. This grammar of the Cape Colony structure in the opening scene is between Sila as prisoner and enslaved and the system and its servants, its actants of the daily order driving it, anchoring it in place. She is held in the cell having been "charged with, and sentenced to death for, the murder of her nine-year-old son, Baro" (Christiansë 101). The year is 1826. Sila killed Baro in "Eighteen and twenty-three" (Christiansë 148). She has been on death sentence for three years. She cut Baro's throat, an action that killed him. It is revealed in fragments later in the novel that she killed Baro to lay him to rest from further suffering at the hands of slaveowners.

Baro is long dead (physically) by the time *Unconfessed* begins. She is imprisoned along with her child she has given the name Meisie, who was born in this Cape Town prison (Christiansë 2):

> She was a prisoner in the country of lies. Truth was a foreign language here. She rested her head back against the wall and inhaled. Soon she would be done with it all. Not even the thought of Meisie, or Pieter who still on Van der Wat's farm, could keep her in this world. The demons of this world had swallowed up her children as they had swallowed so many before them (Christiansë 2-3)

She lives in the wake of the thwarted promise of freedom, stolen manumission which was written in a will to be a free woman:

> The day after Carolina and Camies were sent away and my heartache was still fresh, that stupid daughter Susanna called to me. She said to me, you say you are a free woman? I said, *Oumiesies* gave me freedom if I worked the price off and that is what I did for more than eight years with Hancke (Christiansë 245-246).

And

> […] who will help me find a good *advocaat* who will make them see that I am a free woman freed by Oumiesies, and my children are the children of a free woman (Christiansë 70)

And

> When *Oumiesies* died and Theron came rubbing his hands like a fly over her grave, I told Theron's eldest daughter […] that *Oumiesies* had said we should be free on the day of her death. I said, Theron must let us go, we are free. I told that no-name daughter because she hated her father (Christiansë 105)

Manumission was promised in the now dead slaveowner's will for Sila and her children (also enslaved) to be freed upon the slaveowner's death. They were emancipated in the will of *Oumiesies* in the past. This was destroyed by her son, another slave-owner. They were, and still are, cheated out of it. Sila has been trying to prove this crime. She was forced to acquiesce to not being able to prove the crime in the Cape Colony's law. Again, she is told to earn freedom, which she works for years to do already, and which she is cheated out of, again. As such she says:

> "They are the children of a free woman, wrongly sold by Van der Wat
>
> […]

> It came tumbling out. Neethling to *Oumiesies*, *Oumiesies*' last will, the freedom that had been stolen by Theron" (Christiansë 17-18).

Many of her children are either dead or lost or have been sold off to a plantation. There is now "A boy, dead. A woman consigned to death. A history of living death. The archive is haunted by them all" (Christiansë 107). In the place of the previously promised freedom, the dream deferred, waits the death sentence. This affects the novel. She awaits freedom and has this stolen again, more than once. And she awaits death, execution, and the execution is stayed. Who has power over life and death? The death sentence is for three-and-a-half years, "the big town's prison" (Christiansë 12). There is systemic neglect: "extenuating circumstances of her having been allowed from some neglect" (Christiansë 16) "or other to linger in prison for three and a half years with a sentence of death hanging over her head" (Christiansë 16-17). The system had "*forgotten*" (Christiansë 2) about her. The waiting – the death sentence – ends. The execution is stayed (Christiansë 15-18), 'life spared' (Christiansë 17). She is to be taken to Robben Island. The superintendent character says this is to "pay a penalty" (Christiansë 18) for killing Baro. He says, "The law requires this" (Christiansë 18). Instead of the promise of freedom, there is being forgotten, stolen life, entries into another passage within Cape Colony slavery. The infanticide that put Sila in prison resulted in Baro's physical death. Baro's physical death resulted in his departure from these earthly passages of life in the Cape Colony space of death. His death results in Sila's placement on death sentence, another stage of passage in the death-in-life. What was experienced prior, felt across this present, is that Sila was kidnapped, stolen, from South-East Africa (Mozambique) into the Indian-Atlantic slave trade. She still remembers her childhood in Mozambique before the time of the catastrophe of the slave raiders. She remembers her people, her mother, her father. She was held in the hold of the slave ship in abduction, into the Indian Ocean-Atlantic Ocean slave trade passage from south-east Africa to the Cape Colony. She was then stolen into what she calls "the world of demons" by the Neethlings into enslavement. She was then sold to the Therons, *Oumiesies*' plantation. She was then sold to Hancke. She was then sold to Van der Wat. The enslaved and their children were moved from one plantation to another plantation to another plantation, from one place to another place, from any place to another place. There was no preparation and defence to this dispossession within and after the ship's hold. It is the instability of imposed movement and im/mobility toward the enslaved from theft to ship to land from the moment they "came out of that ship and landed in the hell that stretches from all those farms to here [Robben Island]" (Christiansë 279). In her relation to the plantation patriarch or matriarch, her reproductive mode

of life is tied to the accumulation of Cape Colony capital, forced to give birth to property, to capital as the enslaved: "Alima told me how, before she went to *Oumiesies*' farm she was made to lie with men so that she would make babies who were sold from her even though the law said no child should be sold from a mother" (Christiansë 111). When she killed Baro, he left further earthly passages in this death-driven place. And Sila, on the other hand, entered another stage in this passage, Robben Island.

The third movement (Christiansë 323-341) happens around emancipation from slavery as set in the Cape Colony. Sila hears about this news while imprisoned on Robben Island:

> A guard brought stories of slaves making a procession in The Parade and down The Market because there is no more slavery. If we could have seen it! Hey? Yes, Lys, we are free women. (Christiansë 323)

Her reception upon hearing the news is spoken in a very brief passage (Christiansë 323). The first movement complicated the emancipation up-from-slavery freedom narrative. The story that readily progresses from slavery to freedom eludes this novel. She does not merely "fill in or supplant the previously vacant spaces of historical knowledge" (Christiansë 34). She, rather, unfolds monologues about the heart and its wounds. Speaking the life narrating her life and Baro's death, a spoken world that exists – haunts rather – in the present in fragments is the work of Sila as a griot for the dead.

The ghost of Baro enters the novel to mark the second movement (Christiansë 34-283) on Robben Island:

> *Baro?*
> Baro! *Hai*, boy? My boy. Is this you? Can it be you?
> My boy! (Christiansë 35)

Sila tells Baro's ghost:

> Stay here and let me tell you what is to be seen. Let me see you.
> *You have no idea what things have happened to me*.
> This island…*Hmph*. Look at it. Look, look around you. I know your eyes must learn how to look upon this world again, and they can, they will. (Christiansë 37)

When his ghost enters, the third person mode of the first movement changes into Sila's first-person address to her ghost companion. His ghost's entry on Robben Island is a site of change for the novel's form. To enter the second movement, the narrative turns to emphasising the present, the daily, its non-linear flow, the immediate lived sense of the passage of time on the penal island: the daily with the ghost of Baro. It is Baro's ghost to whom she directly receives, imagines, and passes events on to. The ghost son has come back and is listening to what is to be seen and that the eyes must learn how to look upon this world again, and they can, they will. Sila tells the ghost to be careful of the dwellings of other ghosts to be avoided in the novel. An example she gives is a ghost of what she calls the demon dead. A part of this to-be-avoided demon dead consists of ghosts of dead slaveowners. She warns Baro's ghost: "*When demons come with honey, be careful*" (Christiansë 172). Some people are as dangerous dead as they were in their lives. She tells Baro's ghost to avoid the space that the ghost of *Oumiesies* [the name is italicised in the book], their former slaveowner now dead, haunts:

> The world is full of demons and this island has more than its share. They would chew down on your bones and suck them dry. You will become like *Oumiesies*. She wants you for her family. Is that what you want? Be careful. Naughty boy. You will be joking on the other side of your face if *Oumiesies* hears you. Do not be fooled by her cooing and calling. She is no dove. She only uses the language of wood pigeons to fool us. Listen. For the difference. Which is the wood pigeon, which is *Oumiesies* squeezing herself into a wood pigeon's throat? Be careful. And think of me. I do not want to see that old woman looking at me with your eyes. I had enough of her when she was covered with flesh (Christiansë 177).

Sila tells the ghost: "Eyes that are open but are still as water upon which no breeze blows do not see the world" (Christiansë 139). Sila's speaking to the ghost of Baro "builds arguments, quite literally, from the ground up, cordoning off a territory and a stretch of time, and examining hauntings as they work *in place*" (Richardson 4). Her ghost pedagogy is ghost-watching Cape Colony modernity, remembering for example that wandering hungry ghosts of the demon dead like *Oumiesies* are still actively around them, even on Robben Island.

Ghost-watching the Cape Colony from the island of ghosts

She tells the ghost on Robben Island "Stay here and let me tell you what is to be seen" and "I know your eyes must learn how to look upon this world again, and they can, they will" (Christiansë 37). Ghost-watching the *Unconfessed* Cape Colony, in this case rooted on the prison island, is a particular way of reading perceptions of the space within this given place. In Sila and Baro's ghost's case, it "implies a vigilant perception of the landscapes depicted within it, as they may reveal a different, and haunted, dimension" (Blanco 1). Sila teaches Baro's ghost the Cape landscape she depicts in her speaking. As a reader of the landscape, Sila vigilantly accounts "for the spatiotemporal coordinates that merge to produce a site of haunting" (Blanco 1). Sila reads the haunted Cape from her distinct perception of its persistent ghosts. She teaches Baro's ghost, appeals to his ghost's senses, to be watchful of the space they are in, where they are. His ghost must "be awake" (Christiansë 44). Even the land has tricks: "Look. Those mountains of the mainland. They seem to be everywhere, but that is their trick, like everything on the mainland that wants to take hold of every thought. That mainland is just there, but – and this is the truth – it is not everywhere. And that is why you must use it […] Those are your directions. I give them to you because, small as this island is, you may be pulled about by the wind or the sound of the sea – oh, and sometimes it is not the sea you hear at all, but the wind sounding like the sea. So, be awake. You will hear the difference when you go near the *fynbos*, you will hear wind and think it is the sea. But, remember, the sound is thinner" (Christiansë 43-4). She tells Baro's ghost "Do you understand this? […] Are you listening to me? […] Listen to me. I am telling you things that will save us all. I am telling you what kind of place your mother has been living in all these years since last you saw her. Do not remember those old and terrible times. I do not want to think of Van der Wat's farm. See where you have found me and what I am giving to you as your own island" (p. 45-6). And as much as she teaches the son's ghost, she also asks the ghost questions too to learn: "Look at you. Baro! What is it like to be free as you are now, free to come and go? What is it like to belong to a place where there can never be another lie? What can it be like to never have your name stolen?" (p. 38). His ghost comes and goes as it pleases across the days: "Back again? Be careful. Pedder is cross today. This is not a good place for you today […]" (p. 48). It is the dead who are free. And if their ghost chooses to come back, while free, it must be careful in the world of the living, for it is dangerous, both to the living and the dead: "These men cannot hurt you. It is what moves around them that calls for care. Step wide of them, for this reason […] Their hungers go beyond all decency and bad things hang around them, sucking things that could get near you and I do not want that" (p. 53, 56). Usually, ghost narratives are of people warned to be wary of a ghost but in this case it is the ghost warned to be wary of humanity. And if not humanity and dealing with

what is among the dead, the ghost is warned to be wary of the demon dead. Nowhere is safe in this novel's world of the Cape Colony. At times there is reprieve: "Until you came, I heard demons singing. Now even demons bow before you and they leave me in peace" (p. 56). The ghost himself is to remain watchful, though he has more power in the realm than the demon dead, as his mother teaches him: "The first lot to be careful of are like *Oumiesies*. I have warned you enough about her and I am not going over that again. You better have listened or there will be holes in what you know and those holes can become the holes through which demons like her can sniff you" (p. 178). I admit I am surprised it has taken until Christiansë's novel, in 2006, for a black novelist to explore Robben Island as a location populated by literal ghosts, a densely haunted (and haunting) space in the Cape's story. And to shape a protagonist-narrator who chooses to pass the story on to the son's ghost. And not just pass it on to the ghost, but to do it as a teaching, a pedagogy of the haunting figure. As much as he is a ghost, I think it would have been interesting, in a work of a larger scope, to also address that Baro's return is that of the arrivant and ancestral presence, and that teaching the ghost has to do with her knowing that as much as it can move around early nineteenth century Robben Island listening to the mother, the ghost can cross generations and haunt the future (the space-time we occupy right now). This is why, toward the end of the second movement and in the third movement Sila constantly emphasises *generations*, and an anxiety of their fate. And so, the ghost, the arrivant, the ancestral figure to haunt across them could at least be one well taught to watch and understand the Cape Colony carefully, rather than be one of the demon dead who are useless to Sila's generative vision for the generations.

To close this, Baro's ghost has a significant effect to this novel's very movement. His ghost transforms the novel's shape of form when his ghost enters from page 35. Upon his ghost's entry, the novel narration begins to flow entirely from the first-person voice of Sila, the protagonist, Baro's mother, an enslaved black woman abducted as a child from Mozambique. The novel revolves around her life during slavery in the Cape Colony in South Africa. She also spends much of the novel as a prisoner incarcerated on Robben Island for the murder of Baro. Baro is the ghost haunting her and in effect *Unconfessed*. When his ghost enters the frame, Sila directs what she says in the book to her ghost companion Baro, now her addressee, her interlocuter, her audience, her visible listener available, from the dead. She converses with the ghost, a visible listener, while she is imprisoned on Robben Island. This ghost is important to *Unconfessed* such that much of the novel's shape is arranged around Sila speaking to the ghost

of Baro. It is to Baro's ghost that she tells a passage of her knowing the continuity between the living and the dead.

CHAPTER TWO

The representation of the woman ghost in Kagiso Lesego Molope's novel *This Book Betrays My Brother*

Depicting a woman ghost

I use this chapter to work with the representation of the woman ghost, Vera-the-Ghost, in Kagiso Lesego Molope's third novel *This Book Betrays My Brother*, published in 2012. Vera-the-Ghost is written as the black female ghost. Vera-the-Ghost evokes contemplation on contemporary wrong drawn from the history of a problem experienced by South Africans now. When gender is an important factor to the ghost, it mirrors some notion about gender and gendered norms in the novel. Jeannie Banks Thomas (2007) said that at times gender plays a role in supernatural legends (Thomas 82). The woman ghost is rarely written in novels by black South African novelists. In contemporary novels written by black South African writers, a ghost like Vera-the-Ghost in *This Book Betrays My Brother* was unwritten prior to the 2000s. Still, now, it is very rare that black South African writers go to extensive lengths to write this ghost into the foreground of a novel. The existential sense of haunting by gender-based violence, on the other hand, is a ubiquitous predicament that has, however, mostly been written without seeming to need to represent the manifestation of the souls of returning dead women figures before the living.

Alongside Molope's novel, Niq Mhlongo's *Way Back Home*, published in 2013, is another novel rendition of the woman ghost. The foregrounding of Vera's ghost in *This Book Betrays My Brother* and Senami Tladi's ghost in *Way Back Home* is a novel practice that is not, regarding both novelistic antecedents and post-2000s peers, in fruitful company. Vera-the-Ghost and Senami Tladi's ghost are present in the context wherein black South African novelists are not interested in a female ghost figure tradition. The paucity is interesting. "The ghost of gender-based violence" Boswell (2020) says, "is the spectre that haunts contemporary South Africa as much as it did during slavocratic and apartheid times" (Boswell 189). It was known in the past and known now that gender-based violence has haunted South Africa since

slavery through to the contemporary moment. Curiously, novel renditions among black novelists that represent the predicaments of this violence very rarely portray a South African with a dead woman's literal ghost. Somehow, it has come to be that woman ghosts have not and still do not, beyond Molope and Mhlongo, captivate the imaginations of black novelists in South Africa. Writing feminine literal "apparent spectral embodiment" (Thomas 82) was not being done among black South African novelists before this millennium. It remains rare today. It is intriguing. The woman ghost in Molope's novel is not being produced out of an experientially new condition for developing imagining the woman ghost in South Africa. Nonetheless, woman ghosts become a vital source of inquiry for a few now. In *This Book Betrays My Brother* the haunting presence of Vera has failed to be successfully repressed. It is a dynamic where what remains of Vera refuses to remain buried. The ghost of Vera accompanies the people's disembodied fears and hauntings that remain yet to be escaped.

Vera's ghost as a post-2000s novel figure

Vera-the-Ghost has a power to haunt *This Book Betrays My Brother*. Described from the beginning of the book is the early appearance of a ghost in the narrative called Vera-the-Ghost (Molope 27-34). Also described in the beginning, before Vera's first appearance, is the body of a dead woman, who remains unnamed, found in the woods (Molope 21-27). The opening arrangement raises the dead into the foreground in this novel narrated by Naledi, who tells a story about living as an adolescent protagonist among the living and the dead in Marapong. Marapong is where Naledi says she comes from (Molope 13), the place of her birth (Molope 13), as she says, the setting of her childhood (Molope 13). Marapong, Naledi narrates in the novel's beginning, means ""THE PLACE OF THE BONES" (this is capitalised in the book) or "where the bones are"" (Molope 13). This beginning sets up the story to live with the dead unhidden in the setting. Naledi, as the narrator, is showing us who or what is foregrounded in Marapong, and the source of the thoughts or beliefs behind how and why and by whom and by what terms who or what is foregrounded in Marapong takes place. She is observing, in turn, what is imposed on the foreground on the Marapong canvas. Naledi observes and is herself involved in the direction of the novel's arrangement of the dead in Marapong.

The story unfolds through Naledi narrating incidents lived when she was between nine and fourteen years old. In the wake of the opening figure of the dead woman, scenes of social

events in the book are arranged around – are accompanied by the sense of the knowing of – the figure of the dead woman in the woods and Vera-the-Ghost. Both introduce the novel. The ghost of one of them – the forgotten decaying body encountered in the woods opening the narrative - closes the novel. These figures render, as the novel's arrangement suggests, the social scenes that follow them in the story unable to relegate the already foregrounded figures into the novel background – outside into the margin frame in the text. This involves the individual's perception. This is not only that of Naledi but everyone else around her being narrated in her telling. For example, Naledi's brother Basimane, when talking about the dead woman in the woods, says "She's no one" (Molope 24). Naledi, in contrast, says: "I had had a lot of sleepless nights after I had first heard about it, wondering whose family she belonged to, who was looking for her (if anyone was) and what had taken her there. I dreamed about her, putting many faces to a body that I had never even seen" (Molope 25).

Naledi's attention to social life as perceived by her is arranged, known, around the body in the woods and Vera's ghost. However, what is a referent of seeing to her is not necessarily what is a centre of recognition for another, like her brother Basimane. This is a diverging way of seeing wherein a dead woman and "The female spirit", as Robin Roberts (2018) wrote, suggests a predicament "about feminine subjectivity" between Naledi and another in Marapong (Roberts 3). The image of the dead is a referent of individuation between the siblings, a growing differentiation of Naledi gradually unfolding in the text. Geta LeSeur (1995) says "each child's experience is unique because of factors within that child's culture" (LeSeur 1). The change in a shared consciousness is slowly emerging in the narrator's observations. In a way here, at least regarding the dead, the black children, to paraphrase LeSeur, do not remain childlike for long, "but are initiated into the larger problems and cruder side of life very early" (LeSeur 3-4). This first turn is portrayed around the novel's dead women. It is not that Naledi's observation of childhood in Marapong confirms, validates, or even rejects harmony and schism in the place. Nor is it that she is talking about how narratives about girls growing up could differ from those about boys. It is that the haunting feminine figure is positioned as a primary referent or source of a youth's formation of social consciousness. The way Molope has arranged this beginning renders the usually absent already starkly present. Immediately, the dead are visible in the novel foreground. The figure of the dead is an influential presence within Naledi's formation of consciousness, both toward herself and toward the community in which she is growing up. What is being risked, beside difference in perspective and fragmenting from the monolith of shared human perception, is her grounds of her belonging in Marapong and the place's

experience of commonality. Her "friend Olebogeng – or as we called her, Ole" (Molope 25) is also positioned (by her, as narrator) in this portrait. This reaches its crescendo in the novel's climax and the events that follow it, but I will get to this soon.

The point to keep in mind is that in the early stage of the book the dead haunting Naledi are not self-evidently a matter that will always be recognised by another, like Basimane. In turn, what haunts another might not necessarily be recognised by Naledi. It is a differing mode of attending to 'attention' to the body found in the woods and Vera-the-Ghost. The seething presence in the book has never appeared to not be present. The seething presence has been acknowledged in Marapong such that it never became a taken-for-granted reality. One day, early in the book (Molope 27-34), Naledi and Basimane, her elder brother, listen to their parents, their father and their mother, Dimpho, speak to them about their recent encounter with Vera-the-Ghost. The adolescent siblings' parents, driving one night, say to Naledi and Basimane that they encountered a young woman's ghost named Vera. She is a ghost said to be in her twenties (Molope 30). The ghost's clothes, as Naledi narrates the parents' report of their encounter to the siblings, are torn. The ghost's arms, the parents recount their encounter to the siblings, are bare and skinny. The ghost runs, the elders say, frantically – in an urgent tone – "along the edge of the main road stopping traffic" (Molope 30). The ghost runs into the middle of the road. The ghost bangs on car windows. The ghost begs for a lift home. The ghost cries. The ghost sobs, they recite, "like a small child or a woman in mourning" (Molope 30). There is, they tell Naledi and Basimane, blood on the ghost's blouse. The ghost holds a shoe in a hand, "waving it in the air furiously, like she was trying to tell us something" (Molope 30). Naledi's father's hair, he recounts, stood on end. Naledi's mother's skin, she says, felt taut. And then, Vera-the-Ghost, they recount, exited the scene. The ghost vanished, the mother and the father say, when they told the ghost to get into their car. They offered to take the ghost to her home. Naledi says, "People spoke about Vera-the-Ghost with such concern that one was always left desperately sad after hearing the story" (Molope 31). Naledi says: "I remembered how the year before I had been at Olebogeng's house when her parents told us about Vera. Olebogeng's mother had been folding a blanket after doing the washing. She had stood there with it clutched to her chest, shaking her head in disbelief. "Ai!" she had said miserably. "*Mara, whose* child is she?" (Molope 31). Olebogeng's mother avows the spirit of this wandering unburied figure who remains lost from a location of belonging, a family, a home. Olebogeng's mother avows the uprootedness of the ghost of someone's dead daughter ("*Mara, whose* child is she?"). In how

consistently foregrounded she is in everyday life, I would not say Vera-the-Ghost is at any point set up to be marginal or invisible to how people in Marapong texture and define daily life.

Everyday haunting

Scenes of social life like "folding a blanket after doing the washing" (Molope 31) or driving along the road or obsessing with "the school social" (Molope 27) are quotidian scenes arranged around Vera's ghost. Her ghost is normal to people's sense of quotidian scenes of everyday life. The ghost of Vera appears again (Molope 154-157). Again, the ghost is encountered by Naledi's parents, this time by Naledi and Basimane's mother Dimpho, driving alone. Moipone, narrated as being in an adolescent romance with Basimane is, one afternoon, after a party, raped by Basimane. This rape, the novel's crescendo, happens in the backroom of Naledi and Basimane's family home. Naledi witnesses this. She watches through a window, frozen in place. She does nothing but watch. News about this rape spreads, a spectacle in the aftermath. There is the reflex habit, the reactive hostile community, wherein the people's immediate reactive aftermath is unanimous. They blame Moipone for being raped, for Basimane's actions, in this aftermath. Dimpho, Naledi and Basimane's mother, says about Moipone: "I think she [Moipone] has strange fantasies" (Molope 155). Dimpho says it is what Moipone wishes would happen (Molope 155). Moipone's experience of the event is thought by Dimpho to be the creation of 'strange fantasies.' It is precisely during the scene when Dimpho says this that Vera-the-Ghost enters the narrative frame again.

It is, compared to the ghost's first appearance in the narrative's beginning, arguably the more urgent development of the novel's attention to Vera's ghost's presence. Dimpho, one "terrible evening" (Molope 155) after the rape scene is driving home from the family shop, *Tshwene's General Store* (Molope 155). Driving on the main road, Dimpho encounters Vera's ghost running across the road. It is the first time, Dimpho says, that she has encountered the ghost while alone. Usually, Dimpho says, the ghost of Vera is crossing the road, from one side to the other side. This night, however, the ghost heads straight towards Dimpho. Vera's post-death activities have changed. "Unlike traumatic repetition, after all, the ghost is a figure of surprise that does not necessarily reappear in exactly the same manner or guise" (Blanco and Peeren 13). Unlike before, her ghost now directly attacks the living. Her ghost "provokes the one it haunts to a response or reaction" as ""haunting, unlike trauma, is distinctive for producing

something-to-be-done.”” (Gordon qtd in Blanco and Peeren 13) What has caused this change? Dimpho recites that she was focused on the road: “and I saw her coming towards me” (Molope 156). Dimpho says, “I nearly had an accident. I nearly drove into someone’s house along the road. I was terrified. But as soon as I swerved, she was gone” (Molope 156).

In her way of talking about this encounter, Dimpho speaks about Vera’s ghost, Naledi narrates, “with empathy” (Molope 156). In the same turn of speaking, Naledi narrates, Dimpho juxtaposes the spite she holds toward Moipone with the “empathy” (Molope 156) (the pity, rather) she holds for Vera the Ghost. In this scene, the pity Dimpho feels for Vera as someone’s lost ghost daughter contrasts the spite Dimpho feels for Moipone as someone’s living daughter. The contrast of pity and spite in this scene is directed by the mother and daughters, both living and ghostly. It is the rape of Moipone that has brought about this contrast:

> ““*Hao*! Then why is she saying these things? Rape? *Rape*? Whose *child* is she?” Mama said spitefully. This time, her words called into question the integrity of a family, and I remembered how, just moments earlier, she had talked about the people who had loved Vera. The difference was not at all subtle” (Molope 157).

In *Ghostly Matters*, Avery Gordon wrote: “The ghost makes itself known to us through haunting and pulls us affectively into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience as a recognition” (Gordon 63). Further, “the ghost imports a charged strangeness into the place or sphere it is haunting, thus unsettling the propriety and property lines that delimit a zone of activity or knowledge” (Gordon 64). It is during this scene contrasting Vera’s ghost and Moipone that Naledi’s mother Dimpho, her father, and Basimane, speculate about Vera’s ghost’s origin. It is Naledi narrating their scene of the speculative speaking, not based on any knowledge, the scene of the indeterminate. Naledi asks them ““Why is she called Vera?” I asked the room. “Does anyone know?”” (Molope 156). Her father, “Papa” (Molope 156), responds saying “There was a woman named Vera, many, many years ago. When the location was still coming up. She was very beautiful, as the story goes. She was striking. People say that she disappeared after going out to buy vegetables on a Sunday morning” (Molope 156). However, others say, Basi says, Vera disappeared “after going to the dustbin to throw something out” (Molope 156). Other people say Vera “was killed in her own house, but the body was never found” (Molope 156). They say, as Naledi narrates, “Her husband cleaned the place until it was spotless. So she runs around looking to go back home. Looking to get a lift back home . . . or something like that” (Molope 156). The speculation on what happened to

Vera differ. What is important is that she remains the ghost haunting Naledi's narrative of Marapong, especially in this scene. Dimpho thinks Vera the Ghost moved toward her car because her ghost senses sadness: "But I was already driving with a heavy heart. I wonder if that's what brought her to me" (Molope 157). Dimpho says the ghost:

> "senses sadness, some people claim. Anyway, I was driving back from the shop, where Johanna had told me that Five Bop had just told him that this Moipone girl is spreading lies about Basi. I mean, Basi, how well do you even know this girl? She looked right at him and I saw sorrow in her eyes" (Molope 157).

Basimane denies knowing Moipone. A fight ensues. The parents tell Basimane to "handle it" (Molope 158), "*handle* the accusations" (Molope 159). Illuminated is the relationship between the scene of repression and the scene of the ghost, the former amplifying the latter. The repressive attitude amplifies the presence of this ghost. The scene is "engaged in the quest for an answer, an evanescent truth" (Blanco and Peeren 12). Such is the case with Vera's ghost arriving again from the past, "seeking to establish an ethical dialogue with the present" (Blanco and Peeren 12). And then Dimpho concludes:

> Mama was suddenly cheered up. "Look. You have a dance coming up. Let's not let this ruin the dance. Are you taking Dineo?"
> Of course not, I thought.
> "Yes," he said.
> I gasped and Mama glared at me. "Who else would he take, Naledi? What other girl would be worthy?"
> There wasn't really an answer to that (Molope 159)

Ghosts beside Vera's ghost, ones that are insidious compared to this literal ghost, are haunting this scene. Other people say Vera "was killed in her own house, but the body was never found". They say, as Naledi narrates, "Her husband cleaned the place until it was spotless." Or "she disappeared after going out to buy vegetables on a Sunday morning." Or Vera disappeared "after going to the dustbin to throw something out". The absent present figure or figures, either being Vera's husband, or strangers, are themselves spectral traces in the Vera-the-Ghost story.

Whatever the speculation, the fact is Vera suffered a violent death, at some indeterminate point in the past, by either the husband or strangers. They are present and anonymous, faceless, in this speculative scene on how what happened to Vera happened.

Sometimes it is the husband. Sometimes the husband ceases to be spoken of as a part of what happened. The word 'killed' and 'disappeared' is used when both the husband and the stranger are involved. This interchangeable husband/stranger in this scene is deliberate. This contrast is more than background noise to the ghost. It is a vision into a ruinous strangeness that is somehow simultaneously familiar. The frightening exists with the old and long familiar. The mundane, the ordinary, has become "that which is both *strange* and *familiar*" (Wallace 59).

Woman ghost haunting imagining the present

The husband at some familiar, homely point in time in the home space might have occupied the frame of the long familiar. He was of the home, what was initially homely, the place in which Vera and he were familiar, in marriage, from the threshold of the stranger, the outside. It is a false demarcation. There was in the end no threshold between the long familiar man in the home and the stranger outside. Vera's husband occupies the unhomely in their matrimonial romance narrative, as both the murderer and a person responsible for her continuing unburial. Both her husband and the stranger are the unhomely, the killing force in Vera's ghost narrative. From light to dark, pleasant to hostile, familiar to violent, transitions the everyday life space of familiar intimacy. A home, a street, a shop, a home's yard, etc – transforms. It becomes a different sign in Marapong. The familiar image is no longer familiar in the aftermath in this culture of violence producing Vera's ghost's presence. The scene speculating on this violence does not insist on differentiating between husband/stranger who disappeared Vera. What is important is that Vera's ghost, the event of the violent death and the unburial that shaped her revenant have changed the images of the prosaic, the everyday life.

Marriage, a husband, or the act of throwing something away outside the home, or going to the shop, changes into a jarring, surreal, quotidian Marapong event. The frame of visibility has changed. Vera's tale pulls a person to think about how her story is about a community that is warping its own fabric of quotidian consciousness. And Naledi orients narrating this around youthful characters because what is at stake is what kind of growing up, what kind of im/maturity develops in such a community between elders and youths. It is not Vera's ghost, even when angry, that is the dark underbelly of this scene, but the collective problem her ghost's tale ceases to hide.

The reader is not told what happened with Vera's husband thereafter: if, for example, he pursued another relationship or marriage after the murder and hiding the physical body and the evidence of what happened. Or if Vera's ghost followed his attempts at forming human relationships thereafter. Or what the ghost felt about the old house where the murder may have happened. The real origin circumstance, and the second narratives that speculate on the real first narrative, are mystified. It amplifies the novel's issue of "the *unreliability of accoun*t" (Ahmad 106). What we know is that the ghost encountered at night on the road never speaks directly to let others know of the wrongs she suffered then and suffers now. The ghost does not seek, nor obtain, justice through the punishment of the transgressor or transgressors. The ghost does not ask anyone to fulfil its desires and accomplish the deeds that might lay it to rest.

While the violent transgressor carries a spectral current haunting the ghost of Vera herself, this is deduced by reading the scene, not direct descriptive address by the ghost of Vera itself. The ghost is not interested in returning to drive those responsible for Vera's suffering to their own suffering. There is no direct offer of prayers or appeasements or rituals for the repose of the ghost. There is not a shudder of deeply explored, examined fear, or reverence, or awe, or some sustained vital sense of affect at the prospect of the ghost's presence. Yes, the ghost is the prominent symbolic apparition of gendered violence, intimate partner violence. Yet not a single male character in the novel is drawn to be affected by a sustained, extended, deep serious fear or some vital form of extended affect at the prospect of his dead wife's revenant, the spectral woman's presence. The ghost is not a malevolent spirit. Nor is it a benevolent spirit. Nor is the ghost a constantly presented observer heavily visible and assertive. Nor is this ghost conspicuously absent.

This scene's use of Vera-the-Ghost, especially when contrasted with Moipone, is that even the true, real event's denouement seems to not hold power to affect the speculation fragmenting the real event in the aftermath. A speculative feminine subjectivity and ghost femininity is being enjoined. Dimpho, the father, Basimane and Naledi know that the haunting's concealment is, at best, merely the deferral of its re-appearance to come in the drama. And this is the crux of the 'ruin' that takes hold of the story, Dimpho's anxiety, the: "Let's not let this ruin the dance" (Molope 159). It is the anxiety to not ruin the idyll. The anxiety juxtaposed with Moipone and Vera's mystified origin point foregrounds this disturbance of origins, the prior originary, haunting anteriority of the act.

It is a fear of uprootedness, loss, disorientation. The non-present presence in Vera's ghost's narrative, the ghost's origin anteriority, is also motivating the ghost's present disruption. Vera's ghost's recurring appearance and first emergence is accessible by mere speculation. The people are only, at best, inscribing second narratives, belated narratives, papering a vocal palimpsest, a speech community without rootedness, over the real circumstances of the first event. It is a communal voice that at best inscribes unreliable second narratives. It is the power that the unreliable second narrative can eventually have that arguably haunts both Moipone and Vera, and by the end of the novel, Naledi herself too. Vera's real origin, the primary, the first, the true, dissolves into the background while the figure of the dead slips into the present foreground. This is this cited scene's double movement, its tandem of interpretation. The amalgam of secondary narratives occupies the primary initial frame. That this argument happens in the family property, in the aftermath of the rape of Moipone, in their property where it happened, is *This Book Betrays My Brother*'s sleight of hand.

The secondary fragment narratives try to supersede, and repress, the first. It is an attempt to conjure the exorcism of the ghost that would otherwise haunt the current belated narrative practice after the first story. The ghost woman is deliberately arranged here to elucidate this desire to obscure in the people's narrative beginnings and endings and the trajectory binding them. This habit "carries within it the possibility of repression, the exorcising of such "ghosts" that would otherwise "haunt" the narrative and intervene with it" (Fayad 438). The ghost remains untimely, anachronous, repeating, returning. The living return over and over, alongside the entries and exits of Vera-the-Ghost, to their representation of that unknown originating time regarding Vera's death's mysterious circumstance. The origin point, the first narrative, event, is not dead, nor ever is, nor, perhaps, can be, dead, whatever the nature and power of the repressing, obliterative, secondary narrative desire is unto it. For the first haunts even the figure of the dead herself in the present too, as much as it haunts the living in Marapong. Vera's ghost is the string of repetitions. Her ghost is always the revenant, the question of repetition to the people and itself too, beyond their control, coming back again and again. Alongside this coming back, this ghost recital, is the repeating faint strand, the spectre, of Vera's husband or the other faceless unsaid hand or hands (strangers) who figure in this matter, repeated, recurring, he or they returning too, themselves a violent, transgressing revenant in Vera's own ghost story.

Usually, stories of woman ghosts tend to resolve this violator's facelessness or anonymity in a climactic scene of denouement revealing what truly happened in the past that caused the ghostly woman to be so, including where the remains are held, with the ritual

demands for laying the spirit to rest unfolded too. This does not happen in this novel. Her wrongful death results in her unsettled ghost. The haunting's concealment indefinitely remains at best the deferral of its imminent re-appearance in this spectral drama. This non-present presence, her origin anteriority, is the source of her ghost's current resistance of the living. The initial, origin event and state of the current living in Marapong generates her repetition compulsion in motion.

There is the tendency to produce the desired exorcism of the ghosts that would otherwise haunt the current narrative practice over the first story. The people speculate to determine the indeterminate, without finding, like the ghost, the end. They go back to the indeterminate, returning over and over without arriving, repeating, recurring, returning endlessly, to trying to represent that first originating time, the event in the effacing speculation scene of the living's inscription. The living and the ghost woman haunt each other. The past is undead, untimely, in Naledi's family home. This entire situation is produced by the life, the beliefs, the values of the living. A kind of hope for memory is lost. This trade necessitates a way of "history-making in which things usually forgotten, discarded, or repressed become foregrounded" (Richardson 3). Her ghost helps to "reveal about how senses of the past and of place are apprehended and created" and in turn misapprehended in life in Marapong (Richardson 3).

Gendered violence, like the ghost, lingers; both have a legacy. It is charged. A struggle is taking place. Two realms contest this community: two worlds battle in some effort at some harmonic form, mirroring one another, a sequence of ontological intrusion, each neither above nor below the other. Dimpho says, "You have a dance coming up. Let's not let this ruin the dance" anxious that a representative figure – Basimane – that coagulates a certain idyllic idea to her is creaking, breaking, an illusion decaying the contours of an idealised femininity and masculinity. The anxious desire for futurity in "You have a dance coming up" is rotating on an anachronistic spectre of the disturbing true event. Both Vera's ghost and the rape of Moipone returns and will return to Marapong despite the community's avoidance of her death and the avoidance of what has happened to Moipone by the present generation. Vera's ghost represents what ought to have remained secret, hidden and yet, her concealment is only a deferral of her re-appearance now and to come. Her ghost evokes the loss of life and the path not taken. From a vantage point, Vera's ghost, alongside Dimpho's sense of the future desired, evokes another "future possibility, a hope" (Gordon 64). For the people are in relation to this in that it has designs on them that need reckoning with it graciously, whether they choose to or not. In this case, they do not.

Vera's ghost and Olebogeng

This concern, in closing, ends up defining the break-up of Naledi and Olebogeng's friendship immediately after the scene cited above. It is about the climax of the novel. Naledi describes shuddering into a momentary awakening to her consciousness, while looking, as she says for the first time, at her best friend Olebogeng:

> "As I watched her standing there, still as a stick, I realised for a moment, and perhaps for the very first time, how terrifying it must be to be her, with the knowledge of unidentified dead bodies and Vera-the-Ghost and hearing people's contempt for her spoken out loud. And it was really shameful, I suddenly felt, that having been such close friends for most of our lives, I was only now thinking about it" (Molope 162).

For a moment, Naledi shudders awake. It is one of the most telling passages in the book. While there are other notable passages in the narrative, it is arguably this momentary shudder that is highly evocative of the novel's construction of Vera-the-Ghost. There is the act of reading and re-reading the relational bond, the close friendship, here between Naledi and Olebogeng. It is about this friendship not as an act of static being but of restless becoming, coming to see the relationship made and unmade and made again. People and their relationships are messy, complicated personhood. It is the phrasing in this passage of momentary realisation: the "how terrifying it must be to be her", the "perhaps for the very first time", the "knowledge of unidentified dead bodies", the knowledge of Vera-the-Ghost, the knowledge of "hearing people's contempt for her spoken out loud", the sudden feeling of shame upon re-reading the friendship and belatedly coming to see Olebogeng's situation in the world. Having been such close friends for most of their lives, Naledi "was only now thinking about it" (Molope 162). The point is that Naledi's position of momentarily coming to consciousness, raising consciousness, is a process of knowledge that involves unidentified dead bodies, Vera-the-Ghost, and the people's contempt for Olebogeng and Moipone expressed aloud. Talking about the living, the ghost and unidentified bodies in the same passage is the precise evocation of this. In Naledi's recognition, a predicament of the times is the condition producing the phrase of her recognition: the "how terrifying it must be to be her" (Molope 162), the "perhaps for the very first time" (Molope 162), the haunting "knowledge of unidentified dead bodies" (Molope 162),

the knowledge of Vera-the-Ghost, the knowledge of hearing people's contempt for Olebogeng spoken out loud, the feeling of belatedly coming to acknowledge Olebogeng's being in the world, the sense of how they are located in the simultaneously social and anti-social consciousness.

In conclusion, going forward, has drawing from the post-2000s moment's frame of the woman ghost had the same effect in the novel on ways of writing it in South Africa, from novelist to novelist? Has there been a difference in accounting for the significance of this figure? Have black South African novelists writing about the ghosts of dead women among the living practiced the same concept frame of this ghost in thinking literary femininity and literary masculinity in South Africa? *This Book Betrays My Brother*'s Vera-the-Ghost, the focus of this chapter, is the notable exemplar to work with in developing the subject responding to this. Another is Senami Tladi's ghost in Niq Mhlongo's novel *Way Back Home*, the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

The representation of the woman ghost haunting Niq Mhlongo's novel *Way Back Home*

As they say A LUTA CONTINUA even beyond the
serried graves.

—. *Dambudzo Marechera, "Comrade Dracula Joins the Revolution: A Wedding of Minds"*

Someone always has to pay.
What?
Time for you to grow up, boy.

—. *Yvette Christiansë, Unconfessed, p. 107*

Senami's ghost as adaptation of Vera-the-Ghost

I use this chapter to work with the representation of the woman ghost, Senami Tladi, also called Lady Comrade Mkabayi, in Niq Mhlongo's novel *Way Back Home*, published in 2013. *Way Back Home*, like Molope's novel, represents a dead woman's ghost reimagined from the Sowetan urban tale of Vera the Ghost. Both novels, published in 2012 and 2013, position in their foreground Senami's ghost and Vera-the-Ghost. Both ghosts depict the black female ghost figure in contemporary South Africa. Senami and Vera both died violent deaths. They were murdered by men, Senami by men who sought to court her, and Vera either by her husband or strangers (I address this interchangeability in Chapter Two).

The original Vera-the-Ghost story, Niq Mhlongo says in the interview "Speaking Out: In Conversation with Niq Mhlongo" (2015) with Moreillon and Stiebel (2015), is a story about "a beautiful girl who was killed in the 1950's" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263) in Soweto. "There are," Mhlongo said, "different views on how she [Vera] died. Some say that she was

killed in a car accident. Others say she was raped and killed" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). The common thing is violent death. Mhlongo said in "The Spark: Niq Mhlongo on *Way Back Home*" (2014) that: "It is not clear how she died. I don't know which one of the three versions is true. Some people believe she was killed in a hit-and-run car accident. Others say that she was gang-raped and later killed. Most people seem to believe that Vera was killed by her jealous lover who went on to throw her body into a stream. The truth is that she had died a very terrible death, and her spirit had not rested as she terrorized Sowetans after that". Out of this death, what is important, Mhlongo said, "is that she [Vera] came back as a ghost" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). In the 1950s, Vera's ghost terrorised "the Soweto community and avenged her death" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). Vera's actions after death were that her ghost targeted and seduced men at parties (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). What followed these parties was the scene of dead men at a cemetery: "The next thing those males would be found naked and dead at the Avalon Cemetery" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). The story of 'Vera the ghost' emphasised "the concept of death within the African tradition" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). For, Mhlongo said, "death does not end with the burial of the dead. In most African traditions, a ritual has to be performed to complete death so that the dead person's spirit is formally introduced to the ancestors" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). In incompletion, "Vera came back to terrorise the township because her death was not complete. Some rituals should have been performed where her death took place" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263). The telling of the story of 'Vera the ghost', Mhlongo said, "is to tell people – and I'm not offering any solutions – to look at what is happening in our country at the moment" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 263).

Senami and Vera were both murdered. In ending Chapter Two I asked: going forward, has drawing from the post-2000s moment's frame of the woman ghost had the same effect in the novel on ways of writing it in South Africa, from novelist to novelist? Has there been a difference in accounting for the significance of this figure? Have black South African novelists writing about the ghosts of dead women among the living practiced the same concept frame of this ghost in thinking literary femininity and literary masculinity in South Africa? Perhaps not. The 1950s original ghost story moment of Vera's avenging ghost changes from the background to the current post-2010 context. In *Way Back Home,* the avenging ghost aspect of the 1950s version of the story is maintained, while in *This Book Betrays My Brother* it is not. *Way Back Home* also does not keep the violent death a mystery for the entire novel. The entire novel is largely a character study of the haunting of one of the men who were perpetrators in Senami

Tladi's death. When and where she died, who was involved, and where her remains are do not remain mystified. By the end of the novel, the avenging ghost's reason for terrorising Johannesburg is eventually resolved, when her remains are found and given the proper, complete burial ritual.

Kimathi's return of the repressed

Way Back Home (2013) introduces the protagonist named Kimathi Fezile Tito. Kimathi's opening appearance in the novel is shown in violent events in his dreamscape. He begins the present waking up one late morning after "a bad dream" (Mhlongo 9-11) shouting:

> "Shut up! Shut up!"
> Kimathi woke up from the nightmare screaming. It was already eleven, on a Sunday morning. He found himself sprawled on the bedroom floor of his Bassonia mansion (Mhlongo 12)

He remembers that:

> This was the third time in a row that he'd had the same dream. Its terrifying detail had made him afraid to go to bed alone. *Shit! No matter how strong you are, the memory of something frightening always comes back to you in a bad dream*, he thought as he sat up. Not much of it made sense to him now. It had all happened more than two decades ago, while he was still in exile, and he could not even recall most of the faces, or what had happened to them (Mhlongo 12)

In *The Evidence of Things Not Seen* (1985), James Baldwin said "what the memory repudiates controls the human being" (Baldwin xii). Kimathi's memory is repudiating something. What his memory is repudiating is overwhelming him. He is unable to repress the events he wants to repress in it. His voluntary act is overcome by the involuntary return in his consciousness, in the structure of his experience. What he calls "*the memory of something frightening*" (Mhlongo 12, italicised in the book) returns when he dreams, sleeping. The images and events in the past possess him. When this happens, he is "gripped indefinitely by an anachronistic event" which "also describes the condition of being haunted" (Blanco and Peeren 11). This passage "is the haunting of the present by the past that emerges as the most insistent

narrative" (Blanco and Peeren 11) when Kimathi has awakened from his dreaming. What Kimathi "does not remember is the serpent in the garden of one's dreams" (Baldwin xii). Is it that he does not remember it at all? Or is he wilfully repressing what is coming back? In this beginning, the whole escapes him. He is a fragmented mosaic of a man out of joint. He awakes sprawled on the floor of his home. He continues having the same dream. Regarding the people in his past, from "more than two decades ago, while he was still in exile" (Mhlongo 12), "he could not even recall most of the faces, or what had happened to them" (Mhlongo 12). At the same time, it is while his "memory stammers" (Baldwin xiii) during this "eleven, on a Sunday morning" (Mhlongo 12) that his "soul is a witness" (Baldwin xiii). His dreamscape is the plane for Kimathi witnessing the past coming back when he sleeps in the present. And here sprawled on the bedroom floor erupts the serpent in the garden of his dreams, his consciousness, his life.

Kimathi's stammering memory out of joint

The novel's use of dream sequences, which are focalised through Kimathi's dream consciousness, is the sole form for exposition used to describe the novel's events from the past. These events are forgotten or repressed in Kimathi's waking consciousness in the present life in 2007 in Johannesburg. These events are described to be situated in Kimathi's experience of the 1987-1988 years. The past in *Way Back Home* is not consciously remembered. Of the past's return, "Not much of it made sense to him now" (Mhlongo 12). The past, "while he was still in exile" (Mhlongo 12), is a foreign country to him now. He says that "It had all happened more than two decades ago, while he was still in exile" (Mhlongo 12). He cannot "even recall most of the faces, or what had happened to them" (Mhlongo 12). His present life is "forgetting rationalized as tact" (Horkheimer and Adorno 178). His life "has lost all concordance, all continuity between conscious remembrance and involuntary memory – meaning" (Horkheimer and Adorno 178). In his present life, "Individuals are reduced to a mere succession of instantaneous presents" (Horkheimer and Adorno 178), including himself. To him, people "leave behind no trace, or rather, the trace of which they hate as something irrational, superfluous, utterly obsolete" (Horkheimer and Adorno 178). Yet, "*No matter how strong*" Kimathi thinks he is, "*the memory of something frightening always comes back*" to him "*in a bad dream*". Involuntary memory overcomes him. So much so that it takes over the movement of the narrative form, dividing the plot's motion into two, between post-apartheid Johannesburg

and late 1980s southern Africa. The spectre of late 1980s southern Africa takes hold of the plotting of present Johannesburg.

From Kimathi's consciousness lives the sequence of the involuntary from his unconscious, bearing events that he has repressed, now rising in the gradual undoing in his experience. This is as much a temporal struggle as it is his struggle to keep a space, an exilic place in the past, the past that is now to him a foreign country, away from him.

There is no slow plot development up to this out of jointness. His experience in post-apartheid 2007 Johannesburg is out of joint from the beginning. It is this opening portrayal of Kimathi that the rest of the novel follows. The events from Angola, developed in gradual, dream flashbacks, a denouement fragmented throughout the novel, describe Kimathi as a high-ranking figure in an anti-apartheid armed struggle liberation camp called Amilcar Cabral. The camp was based in Angola, a base for the liberation struggle's armed wing in exile for what is called in the novel "The Movement". Kimathi was born in exile in this "Movement". His entire life is rooted in 'The Movement'. His father Lunga Tito, who is already dead when the novel begins, named him by symbolic allusion to his "struggle hero, Mau Mau leader Dedan Kimathi Waciuri".

Lunga Tito was involved in The Movement. He was, like his son Kimathi, a high-ranking figure in a camp in The Movement. Kimathi's dreams of the camp always consist of violence. The novel's opening (Mhlongo 9-11) dream is a torture scene at Amilcar Cabral camp. It is revealed through dreams interjecting in the novel present that Kimathi tortured, murdered, extorted, imprisoned, raped fellow comrades at the liberation camp. Kimathi's own father "shot dead six of his colleagues in their sleep before turning the gun on himself" (Mhlongo 19) at the camp. Lunga did this, the novel presents, motivated by frustration (Mhlongo 19) or depression (Mhlongo 19) at having been suspended as a commissar, "a critical position in the camp when it came to the education of new recruits" (Mhlongo 19): "The Movement had suspended him because of allegations that he had lured new female recruits into his bed by providing them with supplies he stole from the logistics section" (Mhlongo 19).

These past fragmentary pieces also talk about a woman named Senami Tladi who was a comrade with Kimathi based at the Amilcar Cabral camp in Kwanza Norte in Angola in the late 1980s. Kimathi was, then, one of a tandem called Comrade Pilate and Comrade Idi, high-ranking figures in the camp. Senami Tladi was known as Lady Comrade Mkabayi at the time,

a soldier based at this camp. Comrade Pilate, with Comrade Idi, imprisoned Lady Comrade Mkabayi in what is called the camp's Doomed Spies block.

They impinged carceral force on her by false, forged charges of betrayal. They accused her of being a pro-apartheid spy, a lie extracted (forced, forged), under torture (the torture scene in the beginning), from another comrade called Comrade Bambata. They forged a confession about her for a crime she did not commit.

In the novel's closing scene it is eventually revealed that she refused demands for sexual favours to Kimathi. It is claimed that Kimathi "was in love with her" (Mhlongo 207): "He was in love with her. And jealous that she didn't love him back. He called her a spy before putting her into prison. The camp was nothing but The Movement's prison" (Mhlongo 207). The camp was attacked by apartheid armed forces (Boers and UNITAS [p.10]). Many people died. In the aftermath, high-ranking figures (Comrade Pilate, Comrade Idi) blamed it on comrades, who became labelled as traitors. Comrade Pilate and Comrade Idi connived to forge a forced confession through torture from Comrade Bambata, to blame the ambush on the camp by the colonial (pro-apartheid) armed forces on, among many others, Lady Comrade Mkabayi (Senami). They then imprisoned, tortured, raped, and murdered Lady Comrade Mkabayi in the cell they imprisoned her in. Thereafter, they buried her "in a shallow pit" (Mhlongo 177).

They also imprisoned, tortured, and murdered other comrades at the camp. Comrade Pilate and Comrade Idi thought they had washed their hands of it all. In the present, Kimathi says he does not remember anything. All (yes, all) high-ranking figures of authority at the camp, according to the descriptions of this particular novel, are depicted spending their days on acts of violence toward fellow comrades. Thereafter the "exiled freedom fighters like Kimathi" (Mhlongo 19) applied for and obtained indemnity "to enter South Africa legally" (Mhlongo 19) to not risk "prosecution for crimes committed as a member of The Movement" (Mhlongo 20). However, the Angolan camp's past begins to come alive from Kimathi's blind spot into his contemporary view in Johannesburg, the 'now' unveiling what had happened before.

An owl and woman ghost in the night

A young woman named Senami Tladi appears to Kimathi in 2007 one night while he is driving along Oxford Road in Johannesburg (Mhlongo 46-53). It is the first encounter in the present

between the protagonist and Senami. He has just left a meeting with his business partners about another "multi-million rand government tender that they were about to land for their company, Mandulo Construction" (Mhlongo 37), with "his three business partners, Sechaba, George and Ganyani" and "Ludwe Khakhaza, the director-general of the Department of Public Works" (Mhlongo 37). Driving home after this meeting, Kimathi is listening to "his favourite CD by the Branford Marsalis Trio, *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*" (Mhlongo 45). Kimathi bought the Marsalis album, his favourite album, "to console himself after his divorce from Anele" (Mhlongo 45). The title of the 1991 album alludes to Ayi Kwei Armah's novel *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, published in 1968. Like Armah's novel, Kimathi is in an exploration of "the trope of disappointment" (Mack 134). A destructive element gives rise to a sense of disappointment being grown by disillusionment with some ideal. And "Far from being an isolated issue for a few troubled and perhaps haunted individuals, this disappointed consciousness of a spiritual and moral void has become a public issue" (Mack 134) It affects "in haunted ways traditional separations between past and present" (Mack 135).

Kimathi "had first met Anele at the Union Buildings in Pretoria during the inauguration of President Thabo Mbeki in June 1999, eight years earlier" (Mhlongo 16). Kimathi "was working in the President's Office as an economic advisor, and she was with Mzukwana Catering Company, which was providing food for the president-elect's guests" (Mhlongo 16). Regarding his past marriage with Anele, he says to himself that he must "*Forget it. Nostalgia is always self-delusion. She is no longer yours. You have lost her forever. You have to move on, brother. She has*" (Mhlongo 18, italics in book). He tells himself to progress from his source of attachment, the source of his repetition of loss in his melancholic imagery: the exile years, the euphoria of the South African transition, his marriage with Anele. He is thinking about his romance's disillusionment with the ideal, his confrontation with his post-idealist, post-romantic life while driving along Oxford Road, repressing the nostalgia he calls delusion, his attachment to the lost subjects he desires to exorcise.

His need for 'getting over what is over' is his defining characteristic. The divorce, and the Marsalis album and the Armah novel that inspired the Marsalis album he bought "to console himself after his divorce from Anele," mirror his post-apartheid transition euphoria's fall into the current romantic disillusionment which is collapsing the divide between the present and the past. He claims that the nostalgia which he calls "self-delusion" is to be overcome. This overcoming is central to his present life in Johannesburg.

As he drives along the road with this rumination in his mind, thunder and lightning interrupt his thoughts (Mhlongo 46). His car hits an owl flying in the dark night. He is "surprised and terrified to see a dead owl on the bonnet" (Mhlongo 46):

> His heart was pounding in his chest. Moments later the car's headlamps brought a faceless, blurry figure into view. He could see the raindrops hitting the figure's body and Kimathi watched as the figure looked up as if wondering why the rain was falling. As the figure approached the car, Kimathi thought it was an old woman because of what looked like a walking stick in its hand. Threads of lightning flashed across the sky as the figure knocked on the misted passenger window. Kimathi sat frozen inside the car, his lower lip quivering. Suddenly there was complete darkness. Kimathi blinked for several seconds then tried to open his eyes as wide as possible to accustom them to the lack of light. As he did so, he heard the passenger door open and someone sat down on the seat beside him. The lights came on, and, to Kimathi's utter astonishment, the owl flew off as if the lights had just resuscitated it. Slowly, the figure took off the white cloth that covered its head and part of its face. As it did this Kimathi noticed two owl feathers in its plaited hair and fear engulfed him. When he looked at the figure again he saw that it didn't have a left eye. He fainted for a few seconds. When Kimathi opened his eyes, there was a beautiful young woman sitting next to him (Mhlongo 46-7)

After some dialogue, the "beautiful young woman sitting next to him" tells Kimathi "I'm on my way back home". She tells him, introducing herself, "I'm Senami" (Mhlongo 48). Senami says she lives in "Soweto. Protea North" (Mhlongo 48). After more dialogue, which consists of Kimathi insisting on his attraction to her, Senami tells him it is a "Big mistake" (Mhlongo 49), a "bad" (Mhlongo 49) mistake to "love someone you can't have" (Mhlongo 49). Senami tells him about political figures like him: "They are greedy, and they broke my spirit," Senami said sincerely (Mhlongo 50). Kimathi laughs at this and then notices a scar on Senami's left cheek. He thinks "It suggested to him the reason for her dislike of men and perhaps male politicians in particular" (Mhlongo 50). Kimathi postures to Senami:

> "But you must understand that we are living in one of the most challenging moments in the history of the country. It is therefore important to learn to accept

> what you cannot change. As the true sons of this nation, we must be in charge. We must not be apologetic about it" (Mhlongo 50).

"It is therefore important to learn to accept what you cannot change" is a strange sentence to hear from a former anti-colonial figurehead. Throughout the dialogue, Senami "had not yet smiled or given him any other kind of encouragement" (Mhlongo 51). Kimathi's terms, his "We must not be apologetic about it" as "the true sons of this nation" performs "the hypervisible, and self-authorising performance of patriarchal masculinity in public spaces, where such performance hints at masculine violence or a contest between forms of manhood" (Gqola 64). Motifs, songs, symbols, figures, the rhetoric, iconographs, of African liberation movements are restyled to the personal signature tunes of "the true sons of this nation" (Mhlongo 50) who, Kimathi says, "must be in charge" (Mhlongo 50) of the new African epoch. This personal pleasure-principle engulfs communal revolutionary, liberatory, anti-apartheid signs that are now restyled for the powerful individual's acquisitive signatory codes.

This new South African man, Kimathi is telling Senami, can obliviate the collective liberatory battles of the past into his own signatory quotidian desire. The society depicted in the book is the kind wherein such an act is possible in the first place, to be able to successfully posture "The Movement" entirely to one's own private desires. To this script of duplicitous anti-colonial, anti-apartheid performance, Senami expresses contempt: "There was a frown of contempt on Senami's face and distrust in her eyes. She twitched her nostrils and looked at Kimathi as if he had just farted. Kimathi changed the subject immediately" (Mhlongo 51).

An unshared horizon in Soweto

At this point, their dialogue takes a turn. Senami tells Kimathi that she lives "in another world" (Mhlongo 51): "You and I might seem to live under the same sky, but I don't think we share the same horizon," Senami said with honesty (Mhlongo 51). Kimathi says he does not "get it" (Mhlongo 51). Senami says she is no longer in the familiar seam with Kimathi's interpretation of the world in Johannesburg. There is another text she is talking about in their dialogue now. Kimathi is "really lost" (Mhlongo 51) to what Senami says. The car arrives at Protea North, at "the house Senami had pointed out as her home" (Mhlongo 51). As Senami leaves the car Kimathi proposes "to come and pick you [Senami] up here at one in the afternoon tomorrow

for lunch" (Mhlongo 52). Senami says, "You better prepare your eyes for reality the next time we meet" (Mhlongo 53).

Kimathi arrives at Senami's house at Protea North in Soweto to pick her up for their lunch. A "swarm of bees buzzed past and settled in what looked like a beehive in front of Senami's house. Distracted by the bees, it took Kimathi a few seconds to realise that Senami had opened the door and was beckoning to him" (Mhlongo 56). A man opens the door and ushers Kimathi inside the house. On a black leather sofa sits "The man's wife" wearing a black dress, her head "covered with a black cloth and the whites of her eyes were bloodshot, giving the impression that she was mourning the death of someone special to her" (Mhlongo 56). Kimathi sees "a framed picture of Senami on the wall. She was standing with an elderly woman" (Mhlongo 56). The man and woman introduce themselves as Napo Tladi and Lola Tladi, Senami's father and mother. Kimathi tells them he is there looking for Senami. Napo tells him ""Senami is presumed to have died in exile in 1991" (Mhlongo 57). She did not "return home when everyone else was coming back to the country" (Mhlongo 57). Kimathi says, "No, it can't be true" (Mhlongo 57). He says to Napo "I just saw her standing outside now and waving at me to come in" (Mhlongo 57):

> "Very strange," said Napo finally.
> "But she called me in here just minutes ago." Kimathi was adamant (Mhlongo 57)

To Kimathi now appearance is lived as not wholly representative of his reality. Senami was already a ghost when she told him, "You better prepare your eyes for reality the next time we meet" (Mhlongo 53). Senami "is precisely an intermediary 'apparition' between life and death, between being and non-being, between matter and spirit," whose separation she dissolves (Macherey 19). Kimathi's Johannesburg "living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be; that we would do well not to count on its density and solidity, which might under exceptional circumstances betray us" (Jameson 39). Kimathi "thought he was imagining things, having delusions" (Mhlongo 57).

Ritual resolution at Amilcar Cabral Camp in Angola

Napo tells Kimathi that Senami left for exile in 1987/8 to fight in the anti-apartheid liberation war and has still not returned:

> "We waited for years for her return from exile. Eventually, just over a year ago, a traditional healer advised us to have a symbolic burial and a funeral for her in Avalon Cemetery. He said that if we did this her spirit would rest in peace and not haunt us." Napo paused and glanced at Lola. "That was after my wife complained that she was seeing her ghost every day." (Mhlongo 59)

Napo tells Kimathi:

> "This past Friday, which is the day you say you brought her here, was actually the day the sangoma completed the rituals," Napo continued. "It was exactly a year after Senami's symbolic burial. We had to cleanse ourselves so that nothing disturbed the process for a period of a year" (Mhlongo 59)

Napo reasons:

> "You see, my wife and I are Christians, but we agreed that we would do anything we could to bring our daughter back. When she started having frequent disturbing dreams and going into trances, that's when we decided to consult a sangoma." (Mhlongo 59)

They use ritual to connect with her restless spirit. The trouble she evokes between Johannesburg and Angola is no longer repressed or blocked from view (Gordon xvi). Her ghost compels "a *politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations" (Derrida xviii) between Napo, Lola, Senami, the healer they consult called Makhanda, and Kimathi. Macherey (1999) wrote that "an inheritance is also that which the dead return to the living, and that which reestablishes a kind of unity between life and death" (Macherey 19). Senami who appears to be not there, disregarded, repressed, is the seething presence, "acting on" and "meddling with taken-for-granted realities" (Gordon 8) making the present waver "like the vibrations of a heat

wave through which the massiveness of the object world - indeed of matter itself - now shimmers like a mirage" (Jameson 38).

Napo and Lola turn to Makhanda for a method that can work. They have already tried the available state apparatus that has failed to locate Senami's remains, and to stop her angry ghost from troubling them. Her ghost is a constituent element of their life, "a social phenomenon of great import" to them (Gordon 7). Their life in this scene centres the Tladi family home through its ghost aspect. This trouble "requires (or produces) a fundamental change in the way" Napo and Lola produce knowing their lives (Gordon 7). It is why Napo tells Kimathi "You see, my wife and I are Christians, but we agreed that we would do anything we could to bring our daughter back. When she started having frequent disturbing dreams and going into trances, that's when we decided to consult a sangoma" (Mhlongo 59). Senami the ghost reveals to them "the limitations of many of our prevalent modes of inquiry and the assumptions they make about the social world, the people who inhabit these worlds, and what is required to study them" (Gordon 8). Lola often hears Senami's voice, Senami talking and laughing through whole nights, "especially when it was raining or there was a thunderstorm" (Mhlongo 61). Makhanda is helping them "chase the ghost away" (Mhlongo 61).

Kimathi has further dialogues with Senami/Lady Comrade Mkabayi where he asks the ghost "Why can't you leave me alone?" (Mhlongo 204). The ghost says, "it's time for you to pay for your sins, comrade" (Mhlongo 97). When Kimathi asks the ghost "What do you want me to do now" (Mhlongo 204), the ghost responds, "I want you to tell them everything" (Mhlongo 204). This 'them' the ghost refers to is Lola Tladi and Napo Tladi, her mother and father. The ghost tells Kimathi to tell Lola and Napo the truth about what happened to Senami. Kimathi is asked to tell them about what he did in what happened, his motivations driving what he did in what happened, and to reveal to Lola and Napo where the buried remains of Senami's body are. Moreover, the ghost says Kimathi must tell the Tladi family that his life as a freedom fighter in The Movement was motivated by his "dark and hidden desires" (Mhlongo 204), dark and hidden desires described in the vivid past events of violence through his dreamscape. He has long been "corrupt to the bone" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 267). He remains denying "the evil things that he has done in the past" (Mhlongo, Moreillon and Stiebel 267). The choice the ghost offers is that he tells the truth, or the ghost remains. Her violent ending in physical life, Makhanda says, is being avenged by her spirit. This is because, Makhanda says, "the proper burial rituals have not been observed" (Mhlongo 151). Ghostly vengeance, writes John Burton (1978), is between the living and the dead "a reminder of lingering enmity or jealousy between

them at the time of death" (Burton 602). Of the reminder of linger enmity, Senami's ghost "recounts a temporary interruption in the fabric of reality, a glitch in the matrix, in order that the proper moral and epistemological order of things can be put back to rights" (Davis 3). Eventually, the out of joint is put back aright in the ending scene of *Way Back Home*. This is seen in the final dialogue between Kimathi Fezile Tito/Comrade Pilate and Senami Tladi/Lady Comrade Mkabayi's ghost before Kimathi hangs himself:

> "There is always a choice. Sometimes the cost of telling the truth is greater than any heart is willing to pay."
> "There is no burden as heavy as the regret that I'm feeling right now. I want us to reconcile, Lady Comrade Mkabayi," Kimathi said, with fear clinging to his throat.
> "It's too late for that, Comrade Pilate," the ghost said, "Don't you think?"
>
> "Tell me what I must do now?" Kimathi asked seriously. "I'm willing to do anything. That is why I came here with your parents, to help put your spirit to rest."
> "My time and your time are not the same time, Comrade Pilate," Lady Comrade Mkabayi responded. "We live in a world that is out of our control, and sometimes death is preferable to the harsh life of imprisonment that we are living now."
> Lady Comrade Mkabayi gave Kimathi a searching look and then a mocking sympathetic laugh. She watched as he removed his belt from his trousers.
> "Why do you keep on manipulating my mind?" Kimathi asked, blinking several times. "My life doesn't belong to you."
> "If we live in the hearts of those we killed, we will never die," the ghost of Lady Comrade Mkabayi answered. "And that is why I am stuck with you. The best way of dealing with your pain is to acknowledge your part in causing it, Comrade Pilate."
> "I'm very sorry for what I did in the past," said Kimathi, his eyes full of tears. "I was very selfish, cruel and stupid."
> "But the man inside you knew the difference between right and wrong," the ghost said. "Remember the saying: 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'?"
> "Yes. It was the monster in me. I beg for your forgiveness. I'm a changed

> man."
> "You have just passed the point of no return, Comrade Pilate."
> "Oh, my God, please let me live," begged Kimathi, dropping to his knees.
> "Let me remind you that this is Amilcar Cabral Camp, Comrade Pilate. God is far away in the sky, leaving men here on earth alone," Lady Comrade Mkabayi replied. "It is a long way home from here." (Mhlongo 205)

Before Kimathi's death scene at the old Amilcar Cabral Camp, there were actions - rape, murder, betrayal, torture, etc - for which Kimathi was provided the avenue, the path, to make amends, a treatment of ghost expiation with Senami's spirit through her family. But this was not possible when he neither agreed that he did anything wrong nor began to comprehend how it has truly come to be that Senami's ghost haunts him in the first place.

In conclusion, the woman ghost has not had the same effect from novelist to novelist. Black South African novelists writing woman ghosts have not practiced the same approach to this ghost drawing literary femininity and literary masculinity in South Africa. *Way Back Home*'s vengeful Senami or Lady Comrade Mkabayi, the focus of this chapter, is a notable exemplar to work with in developing this subject. Another is Vera-the-Ghost in Kagiso Lesego Molope's novel *This Book Betrays My Brother*, the subject of Chapter Two.

CONCLUSION

The novels *Unconfessed* (2006) by Yvette Christiansë, *This Book Betrays My Brother* (2012) by Kagiso Lesego Molope, and *Way Back Home* (2013) by Niq Mhlongo have been used in three chapters responding to the question I set out to answer: how has the ghost been represented in South African novels by black South African novelists?' By ghosts, I meant ghosts that are the manifestation of the souls of the returning dead before the living in these novels, the representation of the actual, literal ghost of the dead demonstrably returned among the living. The ghost "is not a faded residuum" (Hsiao 4), but is rather "a fully manifest entity, different but analogous to the living" (Hsiao 4). The ghost haunting the novel's drama is considered real in the text's representation of reality.

The ghost as written by the black South African novelist has been developed by *Unconfessed* (2006) by Yvette Christiansë, *This Book Betrays My Brother* (2012) by Kagiso Lesego Molope, *Way Back Home* (2013) by Niq Mhlongo, *The Yearning* (2016) by Mohale Mashigo, *Jah Hills* (2017) by Unathi Slasha, Bird-Monk Seding (2017) by Lesego Rampolokeng, *The Broken River Tent* (2018) by Mphuthumi Ntabeni, and *Still Life* (2020) by Zoë Wicomb. The paucity of writing the ghost among black South African novelists, still a standing aversion today, was noted. The thesis was an incursion into the field of ghosts that might grow in the South African novel field in the going forward. Chapter One read *Unconfessed*'s use of the ghost of Baro. Christiansë's use of Baro's ghost affecting the novel form was the centred subject. Chapter Two read *This Book Betrays My Brother*'s use of Vera-the-Ghost. Molope's novel's use of the woman ghost in the novel was the primary focus. Chapter Three read *Way Back Home*'s use of Senami Tladi's ghost. Mhlongo's use of a woman ghost from the southern African 1980s who eventually becomes a vengeful spirit in the novel was the primary subject. Of what is written discussing the ghost representations, the critical reception, sparse as it remains up to now, emerged after 2015. Black South African novelists writing ghosts emerged as a proliferating current of novel writing after 2000. The ghost enters the stage in South African black scripted literature in English after 2000. Until 2000, the ghost of the dead in South Africa has never been a key figure in the South African novel for black writers. A provocation was observed in the dissertation. The first is the emergence of the ghost suggesting a change in attitude toward the ghost by post 2000s black novelists. The ghost has become useful to South African novel writing in the contemporary moment exploring haunting

here. Contemporary black writers are learning to live with the ghosts haunting the present. The present writing has an affinity with haunting experienced in a South Africa out of joint (though, when has the place ever not been out of joint?). What is taking place is a re-evaluation of the black novelistic approach to the imaginative apprehension of the ghost in South Africa. Contemporary black writers address the ghosts in the landscape, perhaps beckoning expanded explorations of this figure still to be done going forward.

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