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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I confirm to have conceived and written this Diploma Thesis in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references, either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors have been truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

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1. Introduction

It is claimed that Damon Galgut is "the bold, fresh voice of South African fiction" (Observer). This statement refers to his latest work, *In a Strange Room* (2010), revealing the lack of knowledge of the reviewer. Galgut has been writing plays, short stories and novels since 1983. Hence he is not a fresh, that is: a "new", South African writer. The attribute "bold" is apt in some respects, but not exclusively in connection with the mentioned novel. Moreover, the term is superficial and describes not in the least the scope of Galgut's literary work. Within this thesis, it is the aim to trace the author's development as South African writer with regard to the nation's political progress in order to disclose in which ways he might be both, bold and new, or if he is neither of it. Six of his books are the subject of analysis. These are the following: *Small Circle of Beings* (1988), *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* (1991), *The Quarry* (1995), *The Good Doctor* (2003), *The Impostor* (2008) and *In a Strange Room* (2010). *A Sinless Season* (1984) is consciously omitted, because the characters, themes and motifs developed in *Small Circle of Beings* are reoccurring features in all subsequent writings. Hence, it serves as key text for the others. The concept of place identity, which is explained in detail further down, helps to locate the characters of the short stories and novels in their political and social context. Therefore, each chapter gives a short outline of the relevant historical context, and place identity serves as theoretical background throughout all analyses. By doing so, Damon Galgut's awareness of the according political implications on individuals and the resulting difficulties regarding the negotiation of personal identity is revealed.

1.1 Damon Galgut

Only little information can be found regarding the author's person. Online resources report that he is born in Pretoria in 1963, falls seriously ill at the age of six, lives in Cape Town, receives international reputation since 2003's nomination for the Man Booker Prize and that he does yoga. The uninformative facts found on the internet tell of Galgut's "under-researched" (Frenkel and MacKenzie, 9) status. Also Sofia Kostelac notices that "[d]uring the eighties and nineties, he failed to gain much credibility as a noteworthy South African author" (54). Even after gaining international credibility, he is "unheard in [his] own land" (Cowley, 22). This is true concerning his writings until *The Good Doctor*, but this novel changes the author's status. Russel-Walling notes that "[w]hen Galgut's Booker nomination

was announced, he got a flurry of calls from South African newspapers and TV. These were the very same people who, when his book was published locally, had shown absolutely no interest at all" (42). Russel-Walling also comments on Galgut's overseas recognition:

New South African writers such as Damon Galgut, nominated for the Booker Prize for *The Good Doctor*, have been largely ignored by the UK literary establishment. "If you're not one of the Holy Trinity – Nadine Gordimer, André Brink and J M Coetzee – you're unlikely to get reviewed, asked on to the radio or interviewed on TV," says Isobel Dixon of the London literary agency Blake Friedmann, which represents a dozen South African authors. (42)

It seems that the author's degree of publicity depends on who is reviewing him. Leon de Kock offers the following explanation: "valorization is rare and dependent on what's trendy among the critics rather than necessarily what's important for the writer" (Construction, 109). De Kock's recommendation to read Galgut's novels entails that the author is worthwhile reading, because the "writing begs to be read, for the sake of writing, and the writer, and writers in general, so that particular voices can be heard in their particularity, not because they speak to a pre-ordained theme" (Construction, 111). Galgut is a South African, but his works do not focus on the issues of the struggle between black and white. Rather, he has a more personal approach, often taking own experiences as a base for his writing. Being asked by Andie Miller if personal experiences enter the stories, Galgut replies that "[s]ome of it's not far from me at all. In fact the bits of work that actually mean the most to me are the ones that are actually closest" (Miller, 142). Throughout the interview, Galgut states that only *The Good Doctor* and *The Quarry* are "purely acts of the imagination" (Miller, 144). Still, all six books in question are influenced by South African politics.

As Galgut himself has said: 'One cannot ... live in South Africa and write, without, in effect, writing about South Africa. It is a mistake to believe that only overtly political novels reflect this country. Even books that deliberately attempt *not to* deal with 'relevant' issues are a reflection of politics - after all, a refusal to face up to realities is part and parcel of our daily lives here. All literature is a record of its time' ('Reality and the Novel' qtd. in Frenkel and MacKenzie, 9)

In this respect, the short stories and novels reflect the according zeitgeist (cf. Kostelac, 2010), of South Africa, by applying it on the daily lives of individuals. The concept of place identity reveals the influence of politics on issues like family and friendship. In addition, homosexuality is a significant topic throughout Galgut's career. During apartheid, it is tabooed to write about issues aside from the struggle, therefore Galgut creates his personal writing style to refer to this specific sexual preference. His use of nature to

portray and hint at his character's divergence from the white, established, heterosexual norm starts in *Small Circle of Beings* and is applied in almost each subsequent work. In relation to this topic is the author's depiction of a specific pattern of exclusion. He focuses on sports as a means of demonstrating how deeply apartheid values are rooted in the novel's societies and in which ways sports exclude homosexuals from the dominant white society. This concept is at the heart of *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* and is, in a slightly altered way, used in *The Impostor*. However, in the latter sports serves to characterise the exclusion of the uneducated from the circle of the emerging elitism in South Africa. Hence, the nation's past has an as significant role as the present in these six texts. Consequently, Galgut offers a very personal, subjective (cf. Miller, 2006) view on South Africa's society, history and political progress contributing to the nation's highly diverse body of literature.

1.1.1 Situating Damon Galgut in South Africa's Literary Development

South African literature is defined by non-uniformity due to its history of segregation. (cf. Cornwell, Klopper and MacKenzie, 2010). Any attempt to compile a uniform body fails inevitably. Van Vuuren elucidates the situation as follows:

In organising a colloquium on "Rethinking a South African (National) Literary History" in May 1995, the Centre for the Study of South African Literatures and Languages (founded at the University of Durban-Westville in 1994), brought together in a well-nigh unprecedented way scholars from many diverse literary fields, representing most of the literatures of South Africa. The publication which resulted from this colloquium, *Rethinking South African Literary History* (1996), testifies to widespread differences in approach, and even lack of consensus amongst the scholars represented, as to the feasibility and form of a comprehensive, inclusive South African literary history. The role of political power in canon-formation, representation, and the marginalisation of certain literatures undercut all debates about an inclusive South African literary history where eleven literatures are at stake. (Van Vuuren, 190f.)

Due to South Africa's diversity regarding languages and cultures, there is no collective national literature (cf. Cornwell, Klopper and MacKenzie, 2010). Also Michael Chapman ponders over the question of "[h]ow do we delineate a field, 'South African Literature', in relation to descriptive and definitional terms that have begun to be used with some persistence" (1). Consequently, even the terms describing literary periods are confusing. Chapman names "post-apartheid literature; South African literature in/after the transition; South African literary culture 'now' as distinct from 'then'; South African literature in the transnational moment" (1) and "post-post-apartheid" (Chapman qtd. in Frenkel and MacKenzie, 2010). Cornwell, Klopper and MacKenzie differentiate between post-

apartheid, anti-apartheid, anti-post-apartheid (cf. 2010), and Frenkel and MacKenzie name post-transitional and post-resistance writing (cf. 2010). Resulting from the terms describing the period after racial segregation, there has to be the category apartheid literature. Others use colonial and post-colonial to describe literary works from South Africa, and others still modernism and post-modernism, depending on their mindset when analysing a text. Nevertheless, all these terms share two basic assumptions: a) literature under apartheid is different from the one after it, and b) South African texts are, in general, influenced by the nation's politics. In this respect, it is impossible to describe South African literature to any complete degree, especially not within the scope of this thesis. Therefore, some simplifications need to be made in order to place Damon Galgut in its context. There are four rough categories, including apartheid literature, focusing on literary production until 1994. It is followed by transition, which is subdivided by the general attitude toward the change. Hence, there is a euphoric and a pessimistic pattern within this era. From 2000 onward, critics identify another change of the nation as well as literature. Here, it is referred to as post-transitional. The final period begins approximately at the end of the 2000s, signifying a decrease in the importance of South Africa's history. In the space of these four periods, Galgut's novels are within the spirit of the time, criticising apartheid, expressing hope for the future, portraying the nation's situation and coming to terms with the past.

Apartheid's restrictive character is noticeable in all parts of living, and also in writing. It "demanded strategic opposition. Thus, of literature it was demanded to represent victimization of the oppressed in realist form" (Attridge and Jolly, 2). Attwell defines it as "literature of witness, documentary, and protest [deploying] realism of a direct and polemic kind" (169). Brink explicates the author's situation in the following way: "the forced binaries of us and them, black and white, were like prison bars to writers, although there were a few who challenged the restrictions of these binaries by becoming more subtle and resourceful" (16). Also Elleke Boehmer acknowledges the author's situation in the 1980s: "Narrative uncertainty, its suggestiveness and tease, were constrained within the deathly binaries of a long history of oppression and opposition" (45). As a result, "it [was] very difficult for writers to write about certain very ordinary human situations (love relationship without direct political connotations) without inviting accusations of fiddling, suppressing more important issues or avoiding reality. It was important what was not said" (Brink, 15). Galgut is, in this respect, one of the mentioned resourceful writers. In *Small Circle of Beings* and *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, he deploys natural surroundings to indicate

homosexuality. Also homosexuals are oppressed, and are so for two reasons. First, apartheid's predominant position pushes their issues in the background: "In 1987 Ruth Mompati of the ANC declared, 'I can't even begin to see why people want gay rights [. . .]. They have nice houses and plenty to eat. I don't see them suffering'" (qtd. in Trengove, 125). Hence, white homosexuals in South Africa experience a "typical in-betweenness of gay male existence, at once a part of the dominant and apart from it" (Trengove, 120). Second, homosexuals are seen as a danger (cf. Trengove, 117). This sexual preference is seen as "foreign to, and inconsistent with, true Afrikaner identity" (Croucher, 316). Thus, these people are also suffering victims. However, as they are subject to discrimination, it is dangerous to write about it. This is especially true if a love relationship is involved, because the author is accused of neglecting the pressing issue of apartheid. Galgut refers briefly to this issue in *The Impostor*. The protagonist, Adam Napier, writes poetry about nature in his youth. He is criticised for not taking part in the struggle. Thus, Galgut reminds the reader that writing in or about South Africa is not free of political implications. In *Small Circle of Beings*, there are two narrations exploring the difficulty of negotiating one's personal identity, of which homosexuality is a part, within the context of apartheid. The other three stories focus on independence from the confined limits of family. The two divergent texts can also be read in this way, but Galgut's use of nature clearly indicates the first reading. Intimate encounters always take place at night, revealing the need to hide the sexual preference. Moreover, the protagonists discover this part of their identity consistently in the solitude of nature. In most of Galgut's writings there is a connection between landscape and individual in order to portray homosexuality. The concept of place identity with regard to sexuality is even more present in *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. The story is centred on the first elections in Namibia in 1994. The protagonist relives his past, which results in a liberating insight at the end of the narration. Throughout the novel, Galgut characterises the main character's identity struggle via his perceptions of nature. The young man's view of his surroundings is shaped by place identity, which, in turn, is a product of the restrictive politics. Also here, the single sexual encounter takes place at night. Consequently, Galgut does engage in "littérature engagée" (de Kock, Construction 109), but he is not focusing on the predominant issue of black and white. Instead, he portrays the struggle of homosexuals and their restricted lives. In addition, *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* is, already, a novel of transition, as it copes with "the concept and practice of 'difference'" (Chapman, 3).

The period of transition starts either with "the unbannings of 1990" (Chapman, 1) with "the first democratic elections of 1994" (Chapman, 1). This era is marked by the need to create something new: a new nation, hence "new South Africa, a new constitution, a new world, new values, a new governing narration" (cf. Trengove, 2000). As Renders states, "[a] new dawn has broken" (120). Literature is used to construct "a shared nation" (Samuelson, 113), in contrast to the past, in which it is deployed to establish Afrikaaner nationalism (cf. Green, 1999). Transitional literature is "[turning] from the fight against apartheid, with its fixation upon suffering and the seizure of power, into just such stories as these: stories which then open out to transform the victory over apartheid into a gain for postmodern knowledge, a new symbiosis of the sacred and the profane" (Pechey, 58). Transitional writing is focused on "buried histories, the legacies of resistance, suppressed conceptions of identity and the deployment of nuance to describe the ordinary" (Frenkel and MacKenzie, 4). Thus, South African literature "aims at the exploration of the uses and limitations as well as alternatives to such kind of writing [apartheid writing]" (Attwell and Jolly, 7). It is also marked by the need to "*interrogate* silence" (Brink qtd. in Bell, 63).

History provides one of the most fertile silences to be revisited by South African writers: not because no voices have traversed it before, but because the dominant discourse of white historiography (as well as temptations to replace it by a new dominant discourse of black historiography) has inevitably silenced so many other possibilities. (Brink, 22; cf. Attwell and Harlow, 2000)

As homosexuals are one of the silenced voices, Galgut's works provide a revision of their struggle to be heard and to be accepted in society. *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* mirrors the "euphoria" (Renders, 120) of the "transitional moment" (Chapman, 1) by presenting a positive future for homosexuals via the protagonist's final insight. His view for the future is governed by the liberated mood of the nation. Attwell and Harlow also stress the connection of politics, culture and literature:

In the process [of democratisation] historical premises and cultural practices were established that have come to influence importantly both literary agendas and political prospects, the drafting of a narrative, in other words, that not only grounds a "new [or transitional] South Africa" different from its past, but that must come to terms with that past under the "new dispensation." [...] culture was obliged by historical circumstance to find other arenas in which, if not to struggle, at least to compete. (2f.)

Literature of transition often features the breakdown of "racial barriers and the absurdity of racial segregation is exposed" (Renders, 123). *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* also addresses this issue. The protagonist's mother is in a relationship with a black man, with

whom the main character too falls in love. However, the end of the relationship and the mother's return to colonial values already indicate the difficulties of transition.

The positive energy characterising the nation's transformation diminishes soon, and a "new realism" (Renders, 120) sets in. Crime, violence, corruption, and inequality (cf. Renders, 2005) dictate the daily lives and literature alike. There are no clear dates separating the transitional and post-transitional period, but the "[swing] from optimism to caution and even to downright pessimism" (Renders, 12) around 1995 signifies a change in the nation, hence also in literature. Therefore, the discouraged transitional phase is defined here as beginning with this date. Samuelson describes this period with the term post-transitional:

While much literature that falls under the sign of the 'post-transitional' is preoccupied with the 'now', with the effervescent and ephemeral present, this literature also draws into this 'now' a wide historical reach. Apartheid literature often found itself stuck in the urgencies of the present, and the tone for the transitional era was set by the TRC, which restricted its backward gaze to the recent past. (Samuelson, 114; cf. Cabarcos-Traseira, 2005)

However, "the past stubbornly manifests itself" (Attwell and Harlow, 2), which results in ambiguity: people must forget the past, but "social relations and even attitudes remain substantially unchanged" (Attwell and Harlow, 2). Therefore, the troubled history of the nation is a contemporary issue. Thus, it is still subject to literature, which, as quoted above, is concerned with the present. Hence, ambiguity is a major aspect of this part of transition in the field of literature as well as politics. New South Africa is a nation which, with its focus on newness, narrates itself into being (cf. Green 1999). Consequently, also authors have to contribute to the nation's innovation, and it is demanded that they do so without stirring up the past. Fiction is one example illustrating the tensions between South Africa's history and present time. Hayden White explains that "in the process of textualizing the event it is also narrativized: that is, the representations of history repeat, in almost every detail, the processes of fiction" (qtd. in Heyns, 43). Galgut's *The Quarry* is definitively influenced by this time. The title already is ambiguous, referring to the pit, which is a central location in the narration, and to the protagonist as well, who, in the course of events, becomes the second meaning of the term, namely prey. The people populating the story are enigmatic, and the setting, a township at the edge of a white settlement, is equally obscure. Toward the end of the narration, the three major characters become indistinguishable. Galgut blurs the lines between law and crime, predator and prey, and location and character. His textual design increases the

notion of confusion by referring to the protagonists only via the pronoun "he", incoherent and even completely absent punctuation, and short, incomplete chapters which depict the climax of the text. Moreover, the author criticizes the demand to forget the past. His main protagonist is a nameless stranger without a personal history. The man flees from law, thus he has committed a crime. While fleeing, he murders a priest and steals this one's identity. However, he is caught up by his past when the police find the priest's dead body. Therefore, Galgut indicates that no one can run away from history. Thus, also South Africa cannot simply forget the past.

The fourth text, *The Good Doctor*, also comments on the according situation of South Africa. By 2003, South African literature is in "a phase in which books tangential to heavy politics, or even to local interest, have begun to receive national recognition" (Chapman, 2). Following Meg Samuelson's argumentation, this is still the post-transitional period (cf. 2010), while others simply refer to it as post-apartheid (cf. Renders, 2005). Leon de Kock names the "transnational moment" (cf. 2009), indicating that South African writing receives attention beyond national boundaries:

the world had begun to flatten out laterally; national boundaries suddenly became superfluous in the wake of economic and technological flows uniting people within global networks. The Berlin Wall had come down, 'East' and 'West' were old news, apartheid had collapsed, and South Africa began to see beyond the cultural boycott. In literary-cultural pursuits the desire was to step beyond the enclosure of the 'national', the cultural- boycott hothouse, the 'struggle' terrain. (de Kock, Judging, 27f.)

The Good Doctor receives international attention due to being short-listed for the Man Booker Prize. However, there are two competing opinions on the novel based on viewpoint. Those who demand literature to narrate the new South Africa, such as Barris (2005), criticise it for lingering in the past, while others praise Galgut's refusal to forget the nation's history (cf. Titlestad, 2009; cf. María Jesús Cabarcos-Traseira, 2005). The pure existence of these viewpoints shows that there are still unresolved issues connected with the remainders of the past. Moreover, it indicates that South African writing is not yet free of politics. *The Impostor* fully embodies the transnational character of South Africa. The protagonist negotiates his identity within the context of South Africa's westernisation, entailing corruption, exploitation of the uneducated, and the emerging elitism of the wealthy regardless of skin colour. Hence, the novel depicts new forms of inequality and exclusion. In addition, Galgut comments on literature's position in the country. As Kostelac points out, the novel "indicates from the outset that the notion of the autonomous artist, independent from the socio-economic pressures of his context, is untenable in South

Africa" (56). So far, Galgut always engages in commenting on and criticizing implications of the past and present political restrictions.

His latest writing, *In a Strange Room*, is situated in the present phase of South African literary production. Frenkel and MacKenzie characterise it in the following way: "[a]fter fifteen years of democratic rule in South Africa, the transitional period, understood as inextricable from the spectacle of the TRC, has begun to wane" (4). It is difficult to define this period, as there is no "neat break between transitional and post-transitional narratives" (Frenkel and MacKenzie, 7). Established modes of writing, such as protest literature, continue to be in use alongside new trends (cf. Frenkel and MacKenzie, 2010). Ashraf Jamal characterizes this era in the following way:

Situating post-transitionality as a *zone of activity*, he argues for a rejection of the rigid categories of understanding that tended to characterize the apartheid era, as this would open up a space in which there is freedom, finally, to resist categorization - an impulse that might be a fitting response to the decades of compulsive categorization under apartheid. (qtd. in Frenkel and MacKenzie, 8)

Galgut is, in this respect, a writer "beyond protest" (Russel, Walling, 24). The protagonist is forced to cope with his own identity, in which being South African is only one aspect. He journeys through Africa, Europe and India, in order to come to terms with himself. Homosexuality is another, an unresolved, aspect of this man's personality. However, it is not apartheid's restrictive character causing the protagonist's difficulty to acknowledge it openly. Instead, the reason is found in himself. Moreover, as the protagonist is named Damon, *In a Strange Room* is "semi-autobiographical" (Kostelac, 54). Hence, it is a journey into Galgut's own personality, and therefore, the author himself copes with his personal past. Consequently, the author is freeing himself of histories restrictions.

Resulting from this contextualisation of Galgut's work, it is evident that he reaches his goal of "[reaching] *through* the politics to what lies beneath – the currents of power that play out either on a large scale (nationally) or on the tiny scale of two individuals in a room" (Galgut, qtd. in Kostelac, 54).

1.2 Identity and Place Identity

In post-modernism "the idea of a stable inner self (like a soul) which is present throughout an individual's life and which constitutes their true being, is deconstructed" (Gregson, 41). Thus, as the self is "a social and ideological construct which is endlessly in process, the identity is constituted performatively by what the self does" (Gregson, 41). In Galgut's narrations certain events have an impact on the protagonists' lives and that causes the

identities to alter. That in turn affects the other characters in the stories. Therefore, there is a circle of processes: the social surroundings of a person have an influence on the person's identity and this again has an impact on family and friends. This process deconstructs the stable notion of identity. Schachter terms this progression "postmodernity as a context" (139), meaning that "postmodernity is a social and cultural context as any other with specific influences on one's personal identity"(Schachter, 139f). He names two characteristics of post-modernity as a context resulting in unstable or multiple identities: "the characteristic of continuous and rapid social change and the characteristic of the postmodern individual being embedded in multiple contexts with multiple affiliations to different, sometimes contradicting, social groups" (141).

Additionally, every person has an ideological picture of his or her identity in mind which is constituted by the person's goals, expectations, actions and the set of values and norms specific in every cultural and historical context. To maintain a stable self-image becomes more and more problematic in a post-modern society, as a person belongs to various groups and has to keep up various roles within those groups (cf. Schachter, 141). Thus, there are always conflicting interests: the way a person perceives his or her self, how he or she wants to be perceived and in what manner a person is compelled to behave within a specific cultural context and subgroups within that context. The result is that there is a co-occurrence of multiple identities and a heightened possibility of further development of an identity and identity change (cf. Fromm 2002). Erikson (qtd. in Schachter, 149) argues that people strive to gain a stable inner self and a fixed identity which has some continuity. However, he adds that neither a totally constant nor a totally unstable identity is healthy.

One of the central aspects of Erikson's identity theory—if not the central one—is the claim that the individual is faced with the need to develop an integrative and relatively coherent sense of self. This sense of sameness spanning situations and continuity over time is considered invigorating and a prerequisite for healthy personality functioning. In Erikson's theory, this sense contributes to personal stability and therefore allows commitment (Schachter, 149)

In Fromm's (2002) identity theory a person with such a sense of sameness would be called a productive character. A person equipped with such a character is a person without a mask which ensures his or her mental health (cf. Fromm, 2002).

Post-modern theory states that in today's society it is not possible to maintain one stable identity but the approach does not contradict the necessity of stability to psychological health. Schachter links Erikson's theories with post-modernism as a context in the following way:

[...] it may be claimed that, if indeed a self-consistent and stable identity is basic to universal human nature and thus necessary for psychological well-being, and given that the contemporary social condition fails to support such an identity, then it must be recognized that, in this sense, the postmodern context does not support psychological well-being. Erikson did indeed claim that certain historical conditions, cultural contexts, and social institutions can make identity formation easier, whereas others promote identity crises. (143)

Post-modernism deconstructs the idea of a stable identity, proving that one identity is insufficient. In today's society people have more roles to play and negotiate than ever before. However, there is still the question of which effect multiple identities have on a person's psychological health. Schachter argues that a post-modern context does not promote psychological well-being (cf. 2005). On the other hand, writers such as Hermans, Kempen, and van Loon (1992), Markus and Wurf (1987), Lifton (1993) and Gergen (1991) value multiple identities as having positive, even liberating, effects on people.

Although the literary approach acknowledges the possibility of more identities according to context, it does not include the concept of place identity properly. It is more or less absent in literary theory, therefore it needs explaining. It is crucial for a person's integrity, because people assign distinctive character to their living environment. The distinguished sense of place (cf. Stedman, Amsden and Kruger, 2006) derives from the self as well as political conditions (cf. Bloemers, Kars and Van der Valk, 63). Hence, scenery is perceived uniquely in accordance with the national and personal identity of the individual. As a result, descriptions of the natural surroundings comment on political and personal development alike.

Lee Cuba and David M. Hummon (112) state that "place identities are thought to arise because places, as bounded locales imbued with personal, social, and cultural meanings, provide a significant framework in which identity is constructed, maintained, and trans-formed" (cf. Proshansky et al. 1983; Bloemers, Kars and Van der Valk, 5,15, 85). Proshansky (City, qtd. in Stedman, Amsden and Kruger, 2006) defines place identity in the following way: "Those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies and skills relevant to this environment" (cf. Ingold, 2000). Consequently, by paying attention to a character's living surroundings, Schachter's question "Who Am I in this specific context I am presently in?" (148) is answered with two further inquiries in turn: "Where am I" and "Where do I belong" (Cuba and Hummon, 112). Ingold is of the same opinion:

Persons take their primary identity from a particular named place. Throughout life, additional components of identity accrue through association with other named places, so that who one is becomes a kind of record of where one has come from and where one has been. The network of places is at the same time a network of relations between people. (54)

In addition to landscape, an individual's dwelling place is significant for integrity. A home "provides a temporal context for imbuing place with personal meanings" (Cuba and Hummon, 115). Therefore, people treasure objects displayed in their houses, because they are meaningful. Csikzentimihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (qtd. in Cuba and Hummon, 112) refer to residences as "as storehouses of life-long personal symbols, also preserve the self, serving as a mnemonic to personal identity" (cf. Manzo, 2003). Korpela states that places and objects in places serve as aids for the memory (cf. 251). Hence, past selves can be compared to the present self. This then creates continuity and coherence regarding a person's individuality. Rowles (qtd. in Cuba and Hummon 155) terms the process "autobiographical insidedness" (cf. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

Most processes involved with identity and living environment, be it a certain landscape or a dwelling place, are described in positive terms. Cuba and Hummon name "display and affiliation" (112), meaning that people "use places to communicate qualities of the self to self or other" (112) and they "use places to forge a sense of attachment or home" (112). Stedman, Amsden and Kruger differentiate among four aspects defining place identity: "setting" (landscape attributes that satisfy certain needs), "interactions and behaviour" (interactions between individuals create bonds), "place meanings" (meanings are combined with values) and "evaluations" (attachment, dependence, identity, and satisfaction) (394). Twigger-Ross and Uzzell also identify four characteristics: "distinctiveness" (people use a place to distinguish themselves from others), "continuity" (preservation of the self - concept), "self-esteem" (favourite environments support self-esteem) and "self-efficacy" (a manageable environment or setting that supports goals and purposes) (206ff.). All of these authors agree that place identity is mostly an unconscious process (cf. Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). The importance of living environment is made conscious when something - like an event or forced dislocation - disrupts the person's living habits (cf. Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). Reflecting on the changed circumstances, each one has to decide if the personal surroundings still match one's own self concept. In general, change of residence points either toward altered place identity, which no longer goes with the personal integrity, or toward personal development, which does not fit into the value system of the living area anymore.

Constrained relocation causes "grief and loss" (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 208), however, deliberate change of settlement "can represent self-concept change with the new place representing an opportunity to develop new identities" (Hormuth qtd. in Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 207). Manzo states that "active construction and reconstruction of identity is a dynamic and conscious process that includes special, meaningful places. This also illustrates the importance of having, finding or allowing space, both physically and emotionally, to facilitate self-exploration" (53f). Hence, persons choose their dwelling places and living environments according to their personal dispositions. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell stress the importance of a congruent self - concept (cf. 207f). In order to achieve continuity, people modify their setting or move to a different place which suits the sense of self better. As a result, a change of residence can indicate an alteration of identity, because "new environments are chosen to mark a new stage in life" (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 118). Moreover, if an individual does not feel "at home" (Cuba and Hummon, 113) in specific surroundings, it also means that he or she is not part of the community in this certain area (cf. Cuba and Hummon, 1993; cf. Stedman, Amsden and Kruger, 2006). This again leads to relocation, because the individual's integrity is not in line with the overall place identity. Still, sense of place is almost always connected with feelings of comfort.

Lynne Manzo (2003) explores the negative aspects. She depicts the residence as a "location for the mundane aspects of daily life" (51) in which individuals are "bound by routine" (51). The "miseries of everyday life" and "drudgery of place" (Manzo, 51) contradict the notions of comfort and rootedness in a certain place. Ahrentzen illustrates that by reference to women living in disrupted families: "for many women heads of households drooping plaster and broken windows characterize the dilapidated structures of their homes" (113). Unfavourable living conditions are not restricted to personal circumstances. Dixon and Durrheim (2000) and Manzo (2003) stress - among many other authors working on place identity - the significant influence of politics. Manzo expresses the correlation between personal self and larger structures in the following way: "Although our experiences in places are felt on a deeply personal level, they are products of a larger political, social and economic reality" (55). Riley specifies that regardless of how compound the "interior response [to a living environment is,] the landscape remains a social and political fact, designed, owned and maintained by people [it is] an external landscape of broader implications" (31). One of the presumptions is the exclusion of other groups living in an area. Pratt "argues that some people's sense of rootedness and belonging is obtained by the exclusion of others from that place" (qtd. in Manzo, 55; cf.

Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Bloemers, Kars and Van Der Valk, 2010; Ingold, 2000). Bloemers, Kars and Van Der Valk emphasize the importance of historical events connected to the living area with regard to national identity (cf.102; cf. Soja, 1989; Keith and Pile, 1993). This notion becomes more complicated if an incident infuses a stretch of land with a meaning which generates positive as well as negative associations depending on the group a person belongs to. Manzo sums up the problem accordingly: "Significant places, particularly if they are outside the residence and shared by various members of a community, can be the site of contestation over rights and the use of space, particularly when ideologies regarding who 'belongs' where clash" (55). Dixon and Durrheim (2000) analyze place identity concerning the contesting positions of black and white cultures in South Africa. They say that "apartheid, at least on one level, was all about ensuring that people kept to their proper places" (34). Additionally, the two authors discuss the joint of language and landscape: "Language becomes the force that binds people to places. It is through language that everyday experiences of self-in-place form and mutate; moreover, it is through language that places themselves are imaginatively constituted in ways that carry implications for 'who we are' (or 'who we can claim to be')" (Dixon and Durrheim, 32). Billig explains the further connection with politics: "the themes of ideology are instantiated in ordinary talk, and how speakers are part of, and are continuing, the ideological history of the discursive themes which they are using" (49).

Hence, an individual develops a self - among others - according to the living environment. This is, in turn, infused with meaning by the locals. As a result, the landscape generates its own identity, which reflects the integrity of its inhabitants. In addition, both, the living area and the residents, are influenced by politics, which shows in the perception of and talk about the region in question. The person residing in a specific area decides if the present values represented by the community and living environment alike are in accordance with one's own. He or she is able to make this choice due to experiences in other places with different communities. In general, the importance of a habitat is made conscious via unforeseen events, which disrupt or transform the known way of living in the specific area. Voluntary movement due to incompatibility with the present community and transported values, points toward change of the personal self. Moreover, the dwelling place - the actual home and not the region in which the residence is - is used to display personal attitudes. Hence, the house demonstrates the owner's perception of him- or herself. Again, deliberate relocation - if a member of the household does not conform to existing dispositions - alludes to alterations of personal identity. Rose is convinced "that place

identity derives not only from individuals' attachments to their environments, but also from their 'dis-identification' with others' spaces and from their relationship to dominant ideologies" (qtd. in Dixon and Durrheim, 24). Her extension of the concept is especially true shortly before democracy was established in South Africa. Dixon and Durrheim outline the situation in the following way: "The divided landscapes of the old South Africa are gradually breaking down (Saff, 1994), forcing its citizens to re-evaluate their place in the social order. Material and political transformation, in other words, is unsettling the old place identities"(34).

Galgut's short stories and novels depict the conflict of the protagonists' identities with the identities of their surroundings. Hence, he illustrates South Africa from apartheid up to the present time and how individuals struggle to find their places within given societies and conventions.

2. Small Circle of Beings

The book was published first in 1988 and consists of five short stories. "Small Circle of Beings", the first and the most extensive narrative, is about a family living in South Africa. The family slowly breaks apart throughout the son's jaundice and his recovery from the illness. "Lovers" focuses on James finding out about his father's secret love. As a consequence, he sets out to meet that woman. James hardly knows his predecessor, but meeting gives him insight into Ivor's character. The third, "Shadows", differs from the preceding narrations in that it focuses on friendship. A boy and his friend Robert watch the eclipse together at a lakeside and an intimate moment is experienced. In the forth, "The Clay Ox", the protagonist named Guy is forced to recapitulate his life up to the present moment in order to find his future in life. Parents play a minor role in this narration and the issue of friendship does not appear at all. "Rick", the last story in the book, combines issues of friendship as well as family. Shell, the protagonist, is sent away from his home to a boarding school. Difficult and complex friendship issues develop between him and Rick.

2.1 Issues in the Short Stories

In this collection of short stories Damon Galgut introduces topics and issues which are taken up in the subsequent novels. His writing style regarding development of the self and importance of the living environment originate in *Small Circle of Beings*. Most of lead characters are outsiders within their social surroundings, meaning that they differ from the

given norm, especially regarding "Lovers", "Shadows", and "Rick" as they obtain a tabooed sexual orientation. The common values and beliefs are transported via the concept of place identity. Hence, the people's perception of location is crucial in order to gain insight into the established principles. Furthermore, the individuals have a similar background, namely a disrupted family. The difficulties arise due to alteration of the self. Galgut takes up the post-modern belief that a person cannot have one fixed identity throughout lifetime. Hence, the author observes the main character's progress caused by the person's changing milieu.

Moreover, the author explores the issue of homosexuality in connection with evolving identity. Some of the protagonists diverge from the established value system because they obtain either a homosexual or else wise problematic sexual orientation. The sexual preference is not yet placed in political background. In *Small Circle of Beings*, Galgut experiments how to portray this issue. First and foremost, the persons' discovery of their sexuality supports the main character's personal development, because the individuals have to find a way to cope with their divergence.

The third major aspect of this thesis, the political background, is not yet as elaborate as in the following works. "Small Circle of Beings" is the only narration which features political implications of a landscape. However, Galgut does not join it with the characters' development. This is especially conspicuous regarding homosexuality. South Africa abolished "discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation" (Croucher, 315) in 1996. Therefore, before this date, the established practice of intolerance of homosexuality is traceable in communities. However, Galgut does not include this notion in *Small Circle of Beings*. He only hints at the problematic nature of this topic by consistently depicting the emerging homosexual tendencies of the protagonists of "Shadows" and "Rick" at night and in the solitude of the natural environment.

2.2 "Small Circle of Beings"

The narration centres on a family and their problems. Therefore, the main focus is on identity development of the narrator and place identity regarding the home. The person's integrity undergoes several modifications due to alterations in her milieu. This in turn results in a restrictive living environment for her husband and, in the end, especially for David. Consequently, she changes the house's identity according to her behaviour. However, the author does often not give enough information on the dwelling place,

meaning that he does not refer to the altered connotation coherently throughout "Small Circle of Beings".

Galgut begins his first story by giving background information on the narrating person, a nameless woman. She explains her origins and present living situation. The author implies criticism of colonial power here. However, his critique is not connected to the actual narration in any way. In general, the heritage is important for the establishment of a self, but in this case Damon Galgut fails to connect the colonial background of the woman with her present personality and the storyline. Still, the following text passage indicates that she is not very comfortable in the countryside, as she fears the wild jungle and the native inhabitants. The persona moves from the city to her birthplace in order to take care of her mother. She perceives the new environment in the following way:

It's a wild land, this. At the edges of the tamed space a dense wall of jungle rises, woven with leaves so that it seems impenetrable. But this is not the case: there are paths that lead into the forest, if you know where to look. I have walked most of them by now. [...]. Above the house the forest continues in successive tiers, building in dark layers toward the stony crests of the hills. I haven't been far that way; there is something truly primitive in the vegetation here. The earth too is black and secret, boiling with roots like the surface of a deep, infested sea. [...] There are pine trees here [...] It is possible to walk for a long way in the gloomy green light, under a dark roof upheld by the trunks of trees. If you go far enough, however, the trees do come to an end, and you will find yourself at the edge of a scrubby field that leads down to plantations of trees far larger than ours. Our territory ends here and the neighbouring farm begins. It's a pleasant place to stand, giving a view of cultivated lands arranged in patterns discernible only from here, so high. Labourers work there among the trees, picking the fruit as if to feed an endless hunger. But it isn't theirs. (*Small Circle of Beings*, 4f¹)

This excerpt is similar to a passage in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, which was analysed by Wittenberg (2005). He came to the conclusion, that the elevated position of the narrator represents "a classical colonial prospect: the authorial narrative performs a survey of the surrounding landscape" (11). The woman is doing the same: she depicts the surrounding environment. The heightened position, fear of the wilderness and positive evaluation of the tamed farm land suggest a colonial background. In addition, the labourers working on the plantation enforce the setting. "Endless hunger" (5) either refers to the physical need of food or the want for power. The last line, "But it isn't theirs" (5) proposes the latter reading. Neither food nor farm belong to the workers. Their workforce is exploited in order to ensure white sovereignty. The passage following this excerpt

¹ All page numbers in parenthesis in the following refer to this edition

confirms the narrator's status as a white, colonial landowner. She describes the dwelling place of "a community" (5) where she seldom goes, "though they are closer to [her] than any of the real neighbours" (6). The woman distinguishes herself from the people who are "as odd as their dwellings, with their flat bony faces and shiny black skin" (6). Describing the inhabitants of this place, she always refers to them as "*they*" (6), denying the natives a status as individuals. The narrating person even goes so far as to say "[n]o white woman, no matter how far out of town she may live, can have respect for the rituals of these inscrutable black people. It is better by far to be afraid of them" (6). However, regarding place identity, the portrayed area and its political implications are only loosely connected to the narrator's identity. Approving the colonial setting and distancing herself from the black community imply that she feels superior. Therefore, she views her servants as self-evident. The narrating person sets "her [the housekeeper] to polishing, to sweeping, to scrubbing" and "supervise[s] her in her labour" (7). Nonetheless, she is void of any other colonial practices such as "mastery and control over a pliant, subjugated colonial terrain" (Wittenberg, 11). Moreover, it is not clear in which ways the woman identifies with the land itself other than her appreciation of tamed nature. In fact, the land lacks any meaning regarding the people in the short story. Rather, intra-familial aspects such as David's illness, the parents' divorce and Cedric's - the mother's new lover - appearance become the focus of attention. Nevertheless, the author refrains from describing the actual residence. The home is the centrepiece of a family, as it is a "storehouse" (cf. Csikzentimihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981) for their memories and experiences. However, the narrating person does not refer to it in any way. Therefore, it is not known whether she likes living in this specific dwelling place, or not. Galgut's criticism of white dominance ends with the first chapter. His critique seems out of place, given that the narration continues without any further appearance of the political situation in the country and without colonial prospects.

Significant events advancing the story take place within family life, which is detached from the land they live on. The only meaningful information of the text passage above concerning the mother's character is her dislike of the jungle. It indicates that she does not yet feel at home there. Coming from town, she is used to a different living environment, which implies other beliefs and habits than the countryside. The change of location results in an evaluation of her identity. The woman compares her city-self and the new personality deriving from a living in the country by means of clothing: "There was a time in my life when I took pride in things like this: I covered my face in powders and oils. I dabbed scent on my wrists and on the back of my neck. I wore long dresses and high-

heeled shoes. I was conscious, you could say, of the way I appeared" (17). In town her outer appearance is one of her major concerns. Being in the new environment, these things do not matter anymore, because "there is no need for makeup or special clothes. There is no one to impress" (18). The woman's self - reflexive thoughts speak of the change in progress regarding her identity. As a result, the city clothes she puts on in order to do a favour to her husband, feel as "if I am only dressing up, as if I am putting on a costume in which I no longer belong" (18). Hence, the narrating person is adapting to her new living environment. Although Galgut describes the protagonist's appearance in detail, there is, however, again no illustration of her home. The author does not attach his main character to her dwelling, thus the reader does not get the impression that the woman has an emotional bond to her home.

To return to the woman's self - evaluation, clothing is used to indicate the person's shift of identity as well as an altered perception of the natural environment: "In reality, I love this place, with its wild views down the valley, the storms that come down from the hills. I have discovered something of myself in the solitude. Here I am not answerable to people or custom. I can do as I please. I am my own woman" (19). The narrator throws off completely the old identity and discovers a freedom which she has not known before. Still, she only refers to the natural surroundings. Once again, her perception of the dwelling place is absent apart from the information that it has been family-owned for a long time (cf. 19). However, Galgut does not include whether she likes her birthplace or not. Nonetheless, her new personality causes a range of difficulties. As she alone is in care of the household, meaning that she sets her servants to do the work, the narrator has full responsibility for the issues regarding the home (cf. 26). As a result, she views it as her duty to watch over her son when David falls ill. She is even jealous when others try to lighten her burden (cf. 21, 38), pointing at her selfish character. Thus, as she can do as she pleases according to herself, she does not want anybody to interfere between her and David. Her focus on the son results in tensions and silence between the married couple. Husband, mother and household are neglected. The family begins to break apart. This is also visible in the state the house is in: "There are streaks of grime on the window panes. I find traces of soap in the rinsed washing. The bushes in the garden that Moses [the gardener] should be pruning are ragged and badly cut" (26). The more serious David's sickness gets, the more disagreeable the residence's appearance and living quality become. She perceives herself and the husband in the following way: "At night, after the servants and doctors are gone, a dreadful silence falls on the house, through which he and I move

like anguished ghosts" (34f). Their home is no longer a place of comfort and security. However, because Galgut does not depict the house as a safe haven in the beginning, the impression of the residence as a terrible location is not infused with meaning. The sentence rather describes her personal feelings, but without regard to the dwelling place. However, the wife's altered behaviour changes the dwelling place's identity, which results in Stephen divorcing her. Before David's sickness, she keeps the home clean, but now there is "a pelt of dust [...] on the floor" (60), which symbolizes her dismissed duties of a wife. The neglected state of the domicile reflects the deteriorated condition of the marriage. Hence, she undergoes a change of priorities, taking the house's identity of a family home away. She does not even live there anymore because she accompanies David during his long stay in hospital. There, she reflects on her relationship to Stephen: "[...] it occurs to me, as it has before, that my husband is not the person I believed him to be" (54). However, it is not Stephen who changes, but she herself. Returning home after a longer stay in town the woman perceives her house as "strange"(60), illustrating the unfamiliarity between Stephen and her.

After the divorce, the place identity of the house is in discord with her personal self. She tries to modify her living surroundings to create a place she feels comfortable in. First, the woman takes care of the home's appearance. The following passage demonstrates the bedraggled state of the dwelling place, which is an indicator for her present situation. She is as run-down as her house. Restoring it also means refurbishing her own integrity.

In the time that I have been away, all has fallen into disrepair. [...] I set them [the housekeeper and gardener] to work. Dirt has laid siege to every corner of the house. Insects, too, have taken to living in our cupboards and cracks. There is dusting to be done, and sweeping too. The silver which I used to polish each day has become frosted over and tarnished. [...] It is necessary for me to work too. With the hard bristles of brushes, the surfaces of brooms, I hope to erase Stephen's footprints from the floor forever. (77f.)

The effort she puts in cleaning the house illustrates her wish to go on with her life. Stephen is brushed away, however, not completely. He leaves empty spaces behind, which remind the narrator that she is alone now (cf. 78). She states that "[h]e still exists as a presence in the house and I have kept, for reasons I don't understand, a picture of him above the fireplace" (87). Preserving this photograph testifies for the first time an emotional bond to the residence. Galgut also inserts David with regard to his home: "David appears to have no bad dreams that live in his bedroom of his where, for so many weeks, he tried to die" (78). For the boy the house is still a safe haven, whereas the mother feels lonely there. She

meets Cedric and falls in love with him. The new man alters the home's place identity completely, especially for David.

His mother's new lover throws the picture of Stephen into the fire, which signifies his wish to *take over* (my emphasis) the place. And indeed, Cedric rearranges the whole house according to his imagination (cf. 88). The man is now in control of the household, servants and woman alike submit themselves to their new "master" (88). The narrator does not object to the grave modifications, although she previously makes it her home. Galgut fails to demonstrate if she feels comfortable with the new arrangements and thus her personality is unclear. Indeed, her identity is confusing. The narrator accepts Cedric's violent behaviour, which is directed against the house as well as its inhabitants. On the other side, this contradicts the overly protective attitude she develops with regard to David (cf. 86, 97). Still more confusing is her own aggressiveness against her son (cf. 91, 97). In Addition, the dwelling place is once more remote from her integrity. It seems like Cedric is the only factor driving the narration. One could argue that the main character's illogical demeanour illustrates her destabilised life. After almost losing her son and the divorce she is looking for some measure of security. Therefore she clings to Cedric and defends his assaults as necessary (cf. 91, 94, 95, and 98). A family is in her opinion a warrant for stability, and so she tries to rebuild one. Cedric represents the father, she remains the mother and David has to take on the role as their child. Both, the mother and her new lover, picture the son still as a child, but David rebels against that (cf., 92, and 97). He starts to ignore his mother and Cedric as completely as possible (cf. 92). Privacy is his last hideout (cf. 111). None of the family members depicts the house as a safe or comfortable place anymore. Galgut omits it deliberately to point out the fake character of the new establishment. However, regarding David, a perception of his living environment would be useful. It is obvious that he rejects his mother's new habits, but it is unknown if his view on his home changes. It used to be a safe haven for him, but now David experiences restriction within the walls. Calling Cedric "father" (99), and thus pretending to be part of a functioning family, must alter the boy's view on his living environment, particularly because the pretence does not work. David's mother realizes that the masquerade is not convincing. It is only now that her view on the residence illuminates her personality again: "I stand on the back *stoep* and look out over the garden at the new flowerbeds, the statues I don't recognise. I turn and face into the house, in which rooms, the furniture, have been changed (102)". As if waking up, she becomes conscious of the past events. Once more the woman begins to rearrange her home, removing now Cedric from it. The narration

continues with her fighting with her son who still rebels against his mother. The young man expresses his wish to move out, which indicates that he renounces not only his mother and her way of living, but also his home. David wants to live in the city, which hints at his developing integrity. The countryside is not the landscape he identifies with, thus he seeks new experiences to come to terms with himself.

Completing the analysis of the first short story it has to be said that Galgut makes use of place identity rather frequently, but he has not yet mastered the task to combine the plot, the characters and their place identities coherently. A home is the centre piece of a family; therefore it should be mentioned more often in a meaningful connection with the inhabitants. Nevertheless, "Small Circle of Beings" is a good first attempt to link people and places to indicate their selves.

2.3 "Lovers"

In the second narration Galgut portrays restricted family life with a few sentences and does not structure the whole narration around it. James, the protagonist, reflects on his childhood after his father's death. His memories depict Lydia, the mother, as the creator of a constrained environment. She "kept a neat bathroom and would have disapproved of even tiny hairs on the floor. [...] My mother approved of shirts put away, of beds made up. She would sweep through the house in her colossal skirts, inspecting the rooms. [...] 'Clean up there,' she'd cry in a voice that could only be described as spotless" (123). Within this environment, James learns that orderliness and "[f]amily loyalty" (124) are values, to which each person in the household must adhere to. Lydia rules the family with a strict hand, therefore James feels obliged to obey her wishes, although he would normally do otherwise. He is asked to move in with his mother after the father dies. The young man agrees, however he fears this prospect. Insight into Ivor's character helps him to evolve his own personality and to achieve what his father did not attempt to do: James breaks free from his mother's rule.

James assumes that he will become like his father, therefore he searches through his belongings to find some trace of a positive trait (cf. 127). However, as this does not happen, he despairs:

I have known, I suppose, that this would be the nature of my dry and tedious fate: to return to this sombre house in which I had been born and spent my first twenty years of life, to become the father I had never begun to recognise or comprehend. I'd known this, I suppose, since he had first taken to his bed on his long, stuttering

decline into death. But now that she had made her pact with me, her pagan contract across the shining surface of the table and the steaming bowls of soup, I felt my frightened soul go into revolt. I wanted to scream and cry. I wanted to bang my head against the walls and tear at the drab, fading wallpaper, in which the dim outline of a pattern could still vaguely be seen. (128)

This extract demonstrates the suffocating effect of a life put into immaculate order. A family dinner generally portrays a picture of contempt and security. Here, however, Galgut turns the image into one of confinement. The arrangement offers a certain amount of stability, but the inescapability of the situation converts it to a form of imprisonment. James' desperation derives from this notion of restriction and is enhanced by his hatred for Lydia (cf. 125). In addition, it portrays James' inner conflict: the young man rejects his home's identity, however, due to his personality, James does not see any other possibility than to return to Lydia. By chance the protagonist finds a letter of Ivor's secret love. Meeting this woman provides James insight into his father's true self, which in turn changes the main character's view on his own future.

In the course of the narration James gradually slips into his father's personality. This is already prefaced in the letter he finds. The woman refers to a night she and Ivor spent together, describing the air: "*there was smell, a weight, you could say, of honeysuckle on the air*" (130). As the young man is not able to find any trace of his predecessor's identity, the romantic notion of honeysuckles takes him by surprise. He decides to meet this woman, who lives remote from others. Her house is surrounded by a wall of greenery through which James goes: "[a]s if [he]'d been here many times before, [he] bent under a hanging creeper and started up the narrow path that moved away faintly beneath the trees" (*Small Circle of Beings*, 132). He imagines his father doing the same thing and "he was suddenly there with me, exhaling his breath into the warm dark, stepping over the unseen roots, clambering up through the trees towards the top of the rise" (132). Still, Galgut does not provide an explanation why James can picture Ivor in this place. One could argue that the fact that Ivor treasured the letter and also the memories connected with the smell of honeysuckles is in such stark contrast with the home and atmosphere Lydia created, that the keeping of the letter alone hints at Ivor's character. Hence, he must have had a strong bond to the woman and the place she dwells in. The more the nameless woman tells of the past relationship and the places the two have been to, the more James transforms. The dwelling place of this woman is still infused with his father's personality because she preserves it in her memory. Gradually James slips into Ivor's person, indicating that this particular place identity alters the young man's self. Additionally, in the course of the

conversation, Ivor's secret lover forgets that she is talking to James. The beach's place identity unites James, Ivor and the woman (cf. 142). However, the father was not able to follow his heart in the past, an error James is about to correct. This night he sleeps with the elderly lady, and hopes that "[i]t gave her peace, and him" (144). James' encounter with his father's past helps him to understand Ivor better, and the young man realizes that his own self is built on false assumptions. Although it is not explicitly stated, one gets the impression that James envisions his future in brighter colours than before. Turning to the concept of place identity, one could say that the experience of such a different sense of place gives James insight into his own character.

Galgut demonstrates in this narration the impact of place identity. He contrasts James' childhood self and the house's identity with the newly experienced one to show that different locations imply other values and practices. As a result, the protagonist breaks free of his old self, because he evolves due to coming in touch with a different environment.

2.3 "Shadows"

This narration differs from the preceding two inasmuch as it does not focus on family, but on friendship. The identity of the protagonist, a nameless boy, gives rise to an intimate moment between the boy and his friend Robert.

The boy is very intent on his immediate surroundings, taking in every detail: "As we ride, I can see the round shape of the moon as it appears between the trees. With the angle of the road it's off to the right, above the line of the slope. The sky around it is pale, as if it's been scrubbed too long" (147). He describes the smell of the forest as "thick and green" (148) and the forest's scent as "raw and hairy"(148). The perception of the jungle gives the impression of being confident in this environment, as this description lacks the underlying fear of the one given by the woman in "Small Circle of Beings". The same attentiveness and confidence mark the young man's relationship with Robert: "[...] I can see Robert in my mind's eye, the way he must be. When he whistles, small creases appear round his lips. He has a look of severe concentration on his face. The image of him comes often to me in this way, even when I'm alone" (150). Noticing these details in such a clear manner indicates that the character's interest in Robert moves beyond mere friendship. Indeed, the boy is afraid that Robert prefers other persons to spend his time with: "In sudden alarm I think of the places he might rather be, the people he might rather be with. To confirm my fear, he mutters just then: 'Emma Brown -' [...] I begin to feel sad. I think of my anger and something in me slides, as if my heart is displaced" (153f). The nameless

narrating person reveals his - probably unconscious - love for his friend by means of his jealousy. The eclipse distracts then both of them from the girl:

We watch the moon as it sinks slowly out of sight. Its light is still coming down, but more faintly than before. On the whole valley, lit weirdly in the strange blue glow, a kind of quiet has fallen. There is nothing to say. I lower my eyes and look out over the water. Robert sits down next to me on his heels, hugging his knees. 'You know,' he says, 'there's times when everything feels ... feels ...' He doesn't finish. 'I know,' I say. (154f)

With the light fading light a close intimacy arises. The strange appearance of the surrounding environment and the darkness give Robert the courage to expose a part of his identity. Although he does not finish the sentence, the protagonist comprehends what he means. The reader is excluded from this mutual understanding, enhancing the privacy of the two boys. Their dislocation from seemingly the rest of the world gives rise to the following passage. The lead character takes off his clothes while his friend is watching, and then

[w]e're pushing at each other, and pulling. Water flies. The bottom of the lake is slippery to my feet, I feel stones turn. I have hold of Robert's shoulder. I have a hand in his hair. I am trying to push him under, wrenching at him while he does the same to me. He laughs. Nothing like this has taken place between us before. I feel his skin against me, I feel the shape of his bones as we wrestle and lunge. We're touching each other. Then I slide, the water hits my face. I go under, pulling him with me, and for a moment we're tangled below the surface, leg to leg, neck to neck, furry with bubbles, as if we'll never pull free. We come up together into quiet. The laughter has been doused. We still clutch to each other, but his fingers are hurting me. We stand, face to face. While we were below, the last silver of moon has been blotted out. [...] I can't see Robert's face, though I can feel his breath against my nose. [...] I let go. And he lets go of me. Finger by finger, joint by joint, we release one another till we are standing, separate and safe, apart. (156)

At this moment the moon emerges from the shadow, destroying the solitude of the situation. Both boys are confused, but cope with their emotions differently. The narrator asks "'What d'you think will happen?'" (157), expecting reassurance of their friendship. Robert is not willing to give him that and answers with irritation. He is not yet ready to accept his homosexuality. The protagonist on the other hand is taken aback, apparently not understanding Robert's reaction. This in turn points toward the growing consciousness of his difference and, at the same time, at an acknowledgement of his love for Robert.

Similar to "Lovers", the intimate moment takes place in darkness. Galgut thus implies that homosexuality and James' affair with a much older woman are taboo subjects. Simultaneously, because both scenes have a romantic connotation, the night and solitude of the places enhance the density. Moreover, the obscurity offers a certain amount of security,

because it prevents them from being caught. Hence, "Shadows" elaborates on the discovery of being different. Still, here the internal conflicts of both characters, Robert and his friend, are not put to paper in detail. The surrounding landscape does not give more information on the living environment, established practices, values, or the personalities of the two boys. As a result, their involvement - if there is such a thing - is not clear. The following narration also centres on homosexuality, but this time Galgut places the protagonist in a much more complex context. Therefore, the development of the character is easier to trace.

2.4 "Rick"

"Rick" is the last narrative of the book, however, it is treated here as the penultimate, because it continues the ideas developed in the previous story. The protagonist, Shell, is similar to the boy in "Shadows", as both prefer to keep by themselves and do not have many friends. In fact, Shell does not have any friends at all. He is confident with this situation, much to the consternation of his mother. His parents decide that contact with peers would be advantageous for their son. The new environment forces Shell to recapitulate his self, but mostly it is Rick's influence which causes his modification.

The main character perceives himself and his family as "normal [...] which is to say that there was nothing remarkable about them" (182). So far, he could not "conceive a future that did not in some way include being young and here [meaning his home] [and he] was happy to be so" (182). However, Shell differs from the other family members. His sister has many friends. He has none, and even avoids others, because "[he doesn't] like people" (184). The fact that his mother and father insist on their son trying to be more sociable (182ff) distinguishes him from them. In addition, their constant interference with Shell's way of living reveals that their place identity differs from his. The protagonist's status as an outsider gives rise to their worries, because, according to their values and living practices, a youth should have many friends. Again there is a description of a jungle, supporting Shell's liking for solitude. Similar to "Shadows", the jungle is a place in which people are cut off from their social surroundings. The narrator's perception of nature reminds the reader of "Small Circle of Beings", too, as both, Shell and the woman of the first narration, value the jungle's solitude. Thus, Galgut establishes wilderness as essential for some protagonists' selves. Manzo also states that "people's experiences in wilderness areas documents a process of so intensely identifying with nature that the boundaries of the self-construct shift to encompass the natural environment" (50). Therefore it is argued here that appreciation of the primeval forest and its implication of isolation not only points

toward the individual's personality, but is an important part of it. Regarding Shell, he feels to be at one with his living environment, depicting the jungle as well as himself as "intricate and convulsive" (186). Consequently, the "paths around [in the natural surroundings of his home] (he'd made some of them himself) and [knowing] where they joined" (186), represent his own mind. He also says that "there were still places that nobody else knew" (186), implying that there are parts of himself which no one of his family - and even he himself - knows about. The intense connection with his living environment - he even smells the "clean tang of water" and "the fragrance of crushed leaves" (187) - tell of Shell's introspective personality. Consequently, the boy identifies with his environment, but not with his living community. Shell's difference in comparison to his mother and sister give rise to their worries. However, it is not until the protagonist enters puberty that his parents decide to take measures.

The main character is still a child up to this point. He remembers an incident of his childhood where he thought his parents hurt each other. The boy does not realize that they were having sex until one afternoon when watching a wildlife documentary. In the programme there is no mentioning of animals mating, however,

creatures in the wild, the television informed, existed on their senses alone. Shell watched with increasing horror the movements of beasts and insects. [...] Abruptly, without warning, this square, contained vision spilled from its box; [...] The world was a forest of moving flesh that fed on other flesh; crawling and inching and loping closer or away. (193f)

Unable to tell his parents about the incident, he runs away in panic. This causes them to send Shell to a boarding school. Another reference to the emerging adolescence is a "tin of deodorant [... which] he hadn't used before" (197). Growing to be a young man and having to leave his home, Shell perceives nature differently. "He continued to roam through the forests nearby. But now everything upon which his gaze fell became illuminated by a clear white light that had its origin in him. Trees, leaves, folds in the ground; all blazed in the pure pain of his sight" (196). Quite literally, the narrator sees his environment in a different light. Everything is infused with new meaning, and "this entire landscape was pouring and roaring with inexorable force" (196). Shell does not want to leave and tries to preserve *his* (my emphasis) jungle: "He walked upright, stiffly, careful not to spill what he was carrying" (196). Hence, he is determined to uphold his self, which is threatened by puberty and relocation to the boarding school.

His will is, however, crumbling. He does not like to be the outsider anymore. When looking at pictures of "Germans marching in the Second World War. [...] Their hair was as

white as his, their eyes as blue. He longs to be marching with them" (198). The protagonist is looking for someone with whom he has something in common. Galgut inserts the pictures of the Germans to demonstrate Shell's wish for affiliation, but they do not carry any additional meaning. Similarly to the for the storyline unnecessary criticism of colonialism in "Small Circle of Beings", this image does not imply any further information on Shell's identity. Although the main character wants to be part of a community, he does not have any friends at school until Rick enters the scene. Rick is, like Shell, new at the boarding school and as frightened. The main character, however, hides his fears, whereas Rick openly admits them. Moreover, both never had friends before (cf. 203), which brings Rick to the conclusion that they are "two of a kind" (204). Still, Shell is not able to acknowledge that. He develops a love-hate attitude toward his friend, because he is infuriatingly akin. On the one hand, he comforts Rick in the night. Shell is "amazed how easily this came to him, gathered Rick up in his arms. For a very short moment there was an awkwardness between them [...]" (201). On the other hand, "[h]e was holding in his hands all that was weakest and most despicable in himself" (201). The protagonist discovers one important thing about himself that night. He is homosexual. One is able to draw that conclusion, because in the preceding stories sexual encounters always took place during night. Darkness offers enough privacy for them to hide from their roommates. During the day, however, they cannot show their affection openly. Moreover, Shell does not yet accept his sexual preference. Therefore, he hurts Rick constantly.

There were no limits to Shell's hatred of the friend he also - surely - loved. From time to time at unexpected moments [...] he would strike out at Rick with delight, hitting him in the stomach, making him double over. [...] Mostly, though, it was the mortal blows he dealt when nobody else was near: 'I wish I'd never met you.' 'You don't!' 'I do. You're boring, Rick. You make me bored.' Rick [is] abject, humble. 'I know I'm not good enough for you Shell -' 'Yes you are.' Shell crushed him. 'You're good enough for me, Rick. Nothing special about me.' They were inseparable. (207)

At first the violent behaviour seems awkward. However, Rick enlightens their relationship. He "thought he had never met anybody who understood so much. It seemed to Rick that any amount of activity was pointless when there was Shell Fynn doing something else" (208). The two boys can only come close to each other through a different powerful emotion than love, as this is forbidden in white society during apartheid. Therefore, Shell expresses his love with hate. Rick understands that, and so he "conspires" (208) for moments like the following: "[...] Only to feel it hit his back. Only to feel Shell Fynn pissing on his back. He knew before he saw what was happening to him;" (208). Thus, the two boys have a mutual understanding regarding their relationship. Silently they decide on

how to express their feelings. Shell, however, evolves during their friendship. His "vindication was finally complete" (209). Hiding behind hate instead of admitting love is not an option for him anymore. Shell accepts his homosexuality and acknowledges his difference. This is also visible in the way he perceives his family when returning home for holiday. His new personality causes complete and conscious detachment from his old surroundings (cf. 210f), meaning the family. Nature is, however, still part of his identity. Galgut describes Shell's disassociation in the following way: "They [...] were waiting for erosion to complete their collapse. As he watched, a small blizzard of leaves blew across them, so that they became fragmented and faded - as if only remembered" (212). The jungle is such an integral part of his self that he thinks in terms reserved for nature, such as the above-mentioned erosion.

"Rick" combines aspects of the narrations preceding this one. The jungle and darkness serve to indicate solitude - not only of the environment, but also of the character. Additionally, Galgut uses the forest and night as cover and security for tabooed sexual orientations. Therefore, Shell is characterised as a young, homosexual man. Moreover, all four narrations elaborate on the concept of journeying (cf. Manzo, 2003) with regard to personal development. Shell's personality modifies due to changed living conditions and altered social surroundings. The author focuses on life - altering experiences, an issue which also features in "The Clay Ox".

2.5 "The Clay Ox"

This story differs from all other narratives regarding integrity. Here, Galgut works on a more abstract level, reflecting on the importance and necessity of identity in general. The protagonist escapes restrictive environments, such as his family and military service. Thus, he has already encountered different social surroundings and living practices. However, he is not able to identify with one of these places. Presently, Guy wanders through the country in search of his personality.

This story diverges from the preceding stories also in terms of structure. The other narrations are told linearly, meaning that there is a certain point of departure and then one event after the other leads to the character's evolvment. Here, however, Galgut tries to combine two plots, namely one of Guy's past and one regarding his present. After deserting from the army, the narrating person wanders aimlessly through the country until meeting a girl. Her statement that he "must be going *somewhere*" (161) triggers the narrator's memories of childhood and military service. Hence, Galgut refers to journeying as a

concept for knowing who one is. However, Guy is defined so far as only knowing where he does not want to be, which kind of person he is not. Strangely, the storyline depicting a part of the main character's past is written in present tense:

I am terribly afraid of him [the stepfather]. [...] I sense him standing darkly at her door, folding up his thick red fingers into a fist. [...] I hear glass break. [...] Now my stepfather twists the little stub of metal in the lock and swings open the door. 'Take your son and get out,' he says. [...] Weeping, my mother stumbles to the car. I sit in the back seat, unable to comprehend why she is not as joyful as I am to be leaving. She doesn't start the engine (165).

The use of this particular tense is, nonetheless, not supported by any meaning. Galgut does not indicate in what ways this passage is important for Guy. Therefore, the present tense does not carry any significant information. Moreover, his past is only loosely connected to a dwelling place. The protagonist only says that "[a]s a child I have lived among green hills and like a hummingbird had craved the sweat of flowers. At night I walked through plantations where leaves fell quiet as scent across the moon (163). Thus, as a boy, he enjoys the freedom to go wherever he wants to. However, the again colonial background is in no relation to Guy's development. He leaves home presumably due to the frequent beatings he gets from his stepfather (cf. 164), but Galgut does not tell what kind of principles his main character follows and which values he is looking for. The narrator becomes a military man, most likely because of his father, who "is a good man" (163), and has also been in the army. Due to this, Guy chooses a life as soldier, because the military life might provide the way of living he wants. Nevertheless, military service is not what he expects:

Now I carry behind my forehead the discord of barbed wire, of boot-battered parade grounds, of human eyes like those of dogs flickering redly from the dark. Flight [has] promised to accelerate my descent towards the thrilling detonation of my own extinction. Having begun, one cannot stop. Foot before foot, wrenching the prison of the tattered soul endlessly forward, one staggers across deserts to get away. (163)

The limitations and restrictions of the military force contradict his love of liberty he develops in his childhood. Thus, being forced within narrow borders - especially borders of the mind - which is indicated by the repetitive parading and his tattered soul - he deserts. So far, his character is determined by dislike for past surroundings. So the protagonist obtains values and practices which he has not yet rediscovered in a particular living environment. The mountains he goes to with the girl help him to set his course. Guy describes them as follows:

I have never seen such mountains before. In the first level rays of sun they were huge and static and grim. Mist was moving between crags. I am quite prepared to

believe that man's lingering obsession with inhospitable regions like jungles, icelands and (dare I say it?) deserts, comes from spiritual equivalents to all these places in himself. But what barrier in me could ever equal this? (170)

The border within the protagonist is something he is not yet ready to acknowledge, because he does not tell why army and family are so much to his distaste. Additionally, the vastness of the mountains dwarfs his hesitations to admit his - presumed - difference in comparison to fellow soldiers and parents. Guy hikes across them and has an epiphany: "What right do I have to determine where the end of my road lies?" (175). He pictures the Boers crossing the Drakensberg "as they shuddered and crashed over this trivial barrier that Africa has thrown up against the consuming tread of their oxen" (176). The protagonist appreciates that simply trying to overcome difficulties also defines who one is. Hence, Guy learns that the journey is the destination, and that he cannot run away forever from himself (167).

"The Clay Ox" has weak points regarding the construction of the individual's integrity. The character's identity is revealed with regard to his past. However, the author does not give any reference to Guy's present personality. Therefore, it is difficult to determine what barrier impedes his living. It is only known that the protagonist rather runs from difficulties rather than facing them. Second, the author uses place identity to demonstrate a landscape's importance for the personal self, but only in Guy's present situation. Drakensberg and its history of colonial quest help him to resolve his internal conflict. Besides this, however, place identity and main character only have faint connections. Guy's living environments do not give detailed insight into his personality. Distain for one's past is not enough to create a plausible story line. As a result, the protagonist's epiphany does not relate to his past experiences.

2.6 Summary

Damon Galgut samples different settings in which his characters develop. He tries to support his narrators' identities with the help of their living environments. However, he has difficulties of uniting them. Hence, the values and beliefs of a certain landscape are not coherently inserted in the storylines. As a result, the protagonists do not yet have the depth of the ones following this collection of short stories. This is also due to the fact that the natural surroundings are hardly connected to politics. Still, two issues can be extracted from these five narrations. First, the solitude of a place and the security of night symbolize tabooed sexual orientations, such as homosexuality. Second, he uses the concept of journeying or relocation to indicate a person's search for and changing of identity.

3. The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs

The protagonist, Patrick, travels to Namibia to take part in the first democratic elections. This journey causes him to reflect on his past as well as present situation. He grows up in a social environment, which supports apartheid. However, he differs from the established norm by homosexuality. The main character is only free to acknowledge his divergence after Namibia, formerly South West Africa, becomes democratic. Moreover, he has to cope with a double guilt. First, Patrick feels guilty for pretending to be part of the apartheid system. Second, he has to cope with accusations for being white and fighting against SWAPO. In the end, the young man gains insight, which allows him to break free of the imposed culpability.

3.1 Issues in the Novel

In *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, Damon Galgut comments on and criticises apartheid. Via Patrick's recollections of his past, the author demonstrates the rootedness of apartheid in people's minds. The values created by the dominant, white society are expressed through their notion of masculinity. Patrick does not fit into this image. This shows especially in sports and military service. Anderson (2005) explains the connection of sports and homophobia using the example of North America. However, this concept also has credentials in South Africa. He states the following: "Sports remains so homophobic that many (ostensibly heterosexual) athletes maintain that the hyper-masculinity exhibited in sports nullifies the possibility of gays even existing in their space" (13). He further says that "homosexuality is synonymous with physical weakness and emotional frailty" (13). Anderson argues that this sexual orientation is, due to its divergence from masculinity, seen as danger for the established system (cf. 20). Devarenne (2009) explains how white culture is promoted in South Africa as a means of cementing their distinguished status. One of these cultural goods is masculinity, which finds expression in sports and military service. Thus, South African white society's concept of masculinity excludes homosexuals because they are perceived as feminine due to their divergence from masculine traits, and as a potential threat. Reef, elaborating on sports in South Africa, affirms the idea that "any missing marker [of masculinity] might indicate a loose hatch on the armoured vehicle of apartheid thinking" (72; cf. Allen, 2012). Mangan and Walvin name "physical courage, chivalric ideals, virtuous fortitude with additional connotations of military and patriotic virtue" (qtd. in Allen, 63) as markers of masculinity. Anderson rephrases those as "No

sissy stuff, Be a big wheel, Be a sturdy oak and Give 'em hell" (22f.). Regarding *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, Patrick experiences social exclusion because he does not incorporate any of these indicators marking him as masculine. As a result he is remote from apartheid ideology.

Moreover, Galgut distinguishes his protagonist not only by presenting him void of manly attributes, but also by demonstrating the gap between Patrick's personality and South Africa's place identity. The young man is an outsider in his own home, which is indicated by his inability to play rugby, fear of his father's truly masculine friends and exclusion from Howard's hunting trips contrary to his brother Malcolm. However, this process of alienation starts later. As a boy, Patrick is part of the dominant white discourse, which is pointed out by the following behavioural pattern: the author uses people's disrespectful attitude toward animals to indicate this person's political attitude. Hence, individuals who like to hunt, kill or mistreat animals, are in favour of apartheid. The protagonist adheres to this pattern in his childhood. He changes, but due to unknown reasons. Additionally, Patrick perceives pro-apartheid characters as predators; therefore, they are often described with animalistic features, such as claws. The young man is afraid of such persons, indicating his detachment from the established system. Military service proves to be an environment intensifying the above mentioned markers of masculinity, combining sports, patriotism, and the extreme exclusion of individuals differing from the norm. Patrick's anxiety to be discovered is illustrated by his perception of landscape. The young man's identity transforms during his military service, but he is not able to acknowledge his divergence freely.

The turn in politics questions these established cultural practices, immersing all people's identities in tentativeness (cf. Renders, 2005). Attwell phrases the difficulties of transition as follows:

A 'new [or transitional] South Africa' [is] different from its past, but [it] must come to terms with that past under the new dispensation. The corollary to the notion of a miracle is the continuing legacy and discomfort of compromise: the effort to rebuild a society whose underlying social relations and even attitudes remain substantially unchanged. The pressure is on to find the resources, policies, and vision to 'bind the nation together' and to take its people decisively from a traumatized past to a reconstructed future. (2f.)

Patrick also tries to reconstruct his future by coming to terms with his past. Therefore, he experiences a personal transition, visualized by his perception of the surrounding nature. Galgut structures the novel in such a way that situations in the present time of the novel

trigger memories of his childhood and military service. Hence, Patrick's past elaborates on apartheid, while the present time depicts his transition. Thus, there are, similar to "The Clay Ox", two storylines merging at a specific point. Patrick's past and present coalesce in a breakdown, meaning that his recollections of the military service end with his collapse while in the actual narration he disintegrates, too. During his final breakdown, the protagonist has an epiphany, giving him insight into his own identity.

The epiphany is used as a tool to combine both plots. He remembers his childhood, home and military service while driving to Namibia. Patrick's perceptions of his surrounding environment are influenced by these memories, which lead up to an insight. Galgut structures the observations by combining two Greek concepts of truth: "On the one hand, there is the traditional idea of truth as something that emerges through an ordeal, as the result of a struggle or battle. On the other hand, there is the newer notion of a hidden and buried essence waiting to be unveiled and brought to light, extracted from an unknown interior that knowledge attempts to penetrate" (Hemer, 22). Patrick rebuilds his identity after a battle within himself and the insight allows him to acknowledge his divergence freely.

3.2 Early Childhood and Colonialism

The novel sets out with Patrick returning to the farm of Mrs. De Bruin, the protagonist's grandmother. She belongs to the powerful, dominant class of the colonisers and is proud of her farm (cf. *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, 36²) and past, which is echoed by her frequent use of Dutch. Mrs. De Bruin's character hints at the genre of the farm novel, which "reflect[s] South Africa's experience of colonial conflict, white supremacy, gender struggle and nationalism" (Devarenne, 627). Devarenne explains that this particular kind of novel originates from the "[...]social context [...] of emerging Afrikaner nationalism; it lent credibility to a story about Afrikaners' rural origins that provided an illusion of continuity in South African history and a description of an unchanging Afrikaner identity". It also serves to "justify the disenfranchisement of blacks" (Devarenne, 627). Hence, the grandmother does not have a positive view of the changes in the nation. She constantly refers to Namibia as South West because "[i]t's always been South West Africa" (36) and to the upcoming elections as "trouble" (37). Patrick characterises her in the following way:

² All page numbers in parenthesis in the following refer to this edition

"All the lines of power radiated outwards from her. The servants were afraid of her. The neighbours respected her. She couldn't be separated from the land she lived on" (37). Mrs. De Bruin therefore, represents colonialism and its values. These give rise to a pro-apartheid environment, in which Patrick grows up. As a boy, it is perfectly normal that power lies in the hands of white people. This is reflected in his grandparents' way of handling their servants and in the manner Patrick treats animals and his black childhood friend Margaret. He remembers his boyhood days after waking to the sound of a pig being killed. He recollects his grandfather beating two mating dogs ferociously while Patrick and Margaret "were playing, going up and down in a regular, gentle rhythm" (34). The boy feels that his "*oupa*" (cf. 35) directs a warning to him. However, the children get in much closer contact than innocent play: "Without consultation, as though it was planned - and I saw now that it followed on from the dogs that morning - we started to touch each other. We put out hands under clothes and explored" (34). Nevertheless, Patrick gets frightened that his grandfather finds out, so he uses his status as a white landowner against his friend to keep her quiet (cf. 35), which he describes as "first intimation of power" (35). A further indicator that the protagonist, as a boy, is part of the apartheid system is his cruel treatment of frogs. Patrick and Margaret use to practice vivisection on them (cf. 33). Hence, as a child he follows automatically the rules of apartheid because he grows up in an established, unquestioned system, which promotes its own culture as superior. Therefore, he does not feel ashamed that he treats Margaret in this way. Regarding place identity, Patrick is not as attached to the land as Mrs. De Bruin, but he absorbs the behavioural patterns connected to the country. These norms already tell of the link between living area and politics, the roots of the conflict in South Africa.

Patrick's next memory depicts his childhood in his home, living together with his parents and brother. There, Galgut describes the fully established system of apartheid via Howard and Malcolm. They are the incorporations of the masculine markers identified above.

3.3 Childhood and Apartheid

The protagonist differs from Malcolm, the brother, and from his father Howard. This is indicated by his inability to be good at sports and his physical frailness, which is subject to constant complaint by Howard (cf. 13). Galgut portrays Patrick's divergence by his dislike for killing; however, he does not tell when and why Patrick quits mistreating animals, and

as a consequence, when and why he distances himself from apartheid ideology. Therefore, the main character's change of personality comes as a surprise. The only hint provided by Galgut is Patrick's physical weakness, which is, according to Anderson, synonymous with homosexuality (cf. 13).

Patrick's father and brother represent the values of apartheid:

Galgut is on record as saying 'the values that made apartheid possible are extremely male values...I see apartheid in its entirety as a male mythology' (Rosenthal qtd. in Heyns). There is much in his novel that may be taken to demonstrate this view: Patrick's father is recognizable as that kind of South African male that is readily available as explanation of a whole pattern of oppression. (Heyns, 113)

Both, Malcolm and Howard, incorporate the afore-mentioned markers of masculinity as defined by Anderson. The father loves to hunt and kill, is proud of his money, his heritage, and engages in male comradeship (12ff.). That includes hunting trips with his friends, "for whom the savagery of nature was a metaphorical substitute for the world of money" (16f). Thus, who succeeds outdoors, flourishes in business as well. Patrick describes the gatherings before or after a hunt as follows:

They congregated at our home sometimes, before or after these trips, wearing designer outdoor gear, drinking beer and *braaing* steaks on the lawn. They were, and behaved like, people in no doubt of themselves, laughing unrestrainedly and slapping each other violently on the back. [...] I was afraid of them and went out the back door to avoid them. (17)

Patrick is presented as detached from his father's values of masculinity, because he does not like the overly male camaraderie. Additionally, Howard is very proud of his trophies (cf. 12). The protagonist even compares him with one of them: "He would stare at me sometimes, with amazement or disapproval, from those eyes, rimmed with resin and short white hairs, like the bristles of the warthog on the wall" (13). Consequently, Howard is a "top dog" (Anderson, 22), who deprecates Patrick's missing masculinity. Malcolm, on the other hand, fits perfectly into the male value system. He is sporty in contrast to Patrick, who describes Malcolm as "strong and splendid and mean" (18; cf. 14). Howard values exercise, but Patrick "doesn't like sports" (13), which the father does not accept. He takes Patrick outside for a ball game. The boy perceives the ball as "an embodiment of all that was most frightening to me, and all I could never do" (14). Reef (2010) explains in her article the connection of sports and masculinity, and how these relate to apartheid. She identifies the devotion to rugby as a characteristic to indicate the commitment to apartheid ideology (cf. 71f.). As a consequence, male comradeship, as demonstrated by Patrick's father and brother, is another indicator for the devotion to South Africa's racism, because sports - rugby or hunting for example- demands camaraderie. Patrick's inability to play

rugby properly and his dislike for male companionship not only separate him from his father and brother, but also mark him as remote from the given ideology.

Fellowship among men is evident in sports as well as military service. In both fields, the same rules of masculinity apply: "Galgut insists on the connection between this form of male camaraderie and a political system that finds its logical conclusion in killing" (Heyns, 113, cf. Reef). Patrick has to perform military service as well. He is placed in a border post of former South West Africa.

3.4 Adolescence and Apartheid

Within this environment, place identity becomes especially important for Patrick. He begins to perceive his surroundings more closely. Galgut uses this device to indicate the protagonist's detachment from the established markers of white maleness and apartheid, and it also serves to underpin Patrick's state of mind. He fully realizes that he differs from his fellows, but is not allowed to acknowledge this. The pressure of adhering to the given circumstances and repressing his own identity becomes too much, and Patrick breaks down.

Again, the protagonist finds himself in an overly male environment "in which the overpowering *maleness* of the place started to suffocate [him]" (57). He "feels like being with my father's friends" (58) and describes his comrades as "strange to me: laughing, jostling, *testosterone-swollen animals* [my emphasis] with whom, it often felt, I had nothing in common" (58). Once more, there is a comparison of white, male men with animals, pointing out the political mindset of Patrick's fellow soldiers. The commander of the border post, Commandant Schutte, joins military service, sports and embraces the rules of masculinity and the values of apartheid. Patrick's negative experience regarding exercise comes to life again when the commander announces regular rugby games at the post as "a way of building a team spirit among the men" (62). Patrick knows that he will have difficulties to adapt to the manliness of the place. He describes the camp in the following way: "It turned into an existential test, a contest of endurance between my soul and the material world around me. None of it was real; the thorn trees and grass and termite hills and jackals and barbed wire and boredom and huge, vacant sky were just set, loaded with dangerous props and hostile extras. All of it to stage my downfall" (58). Patrick apprehends that the identity of this location is the exact opposite of his own. He is especially afraid of the commandant. The threat Schutte represents is the uncovering of

Patrick's remoteness from apartheid ideology. The following passage illustrates Patrick's thoughts after one of the daily speeches, just before a rugby game:

It became my neurotic terror that he would find me out - find the secret weakness in me. Because my weakness was the flaw in the dam wall that held the enemy at bay; I am the tiny chink in the armour through which defeat would come flooding in. [...] So I hid. I tried to blend into the ranks, did everything that I was told, so as not to be obvious or conspicuous. I didn't want him to notice me, not even for a moment. I kept my head down. I didn't foresee the spotlight searching for me [referring to rugby game] in the particular way that it did, picking me out in the middle of an ordinary, arbitrary afternoon. (61f.)

Being different from the norm is dangerous. As a result, Patrick acts according to the rules of masculinity in the rugby game: "We [Patrick and Lappis] slapped each other on the back, pretending a heartiness neither felt" (63). The immediate connection of sports and war in Patrick's mind demonstrates how deeply masculinity and apartheid are rooted in the people. In the extract, the protagonist refers to the war as well as to the game itself. He believes that his lack of belief in the righteousness of the installed white way of living would help *the others* (my emphasis) to win. Thus, being different from the white, established norm is the "flaw in the dam wall that held the enemy at bay" (61). Galgut here demonstrates the strong connection between land, values and living practices. Ideology and behavioural patterns cannot be severed, and, in addition, they infuse the environment with meaning. Commandant Schutte addresses the soldiers daily to point out the foe: "And the idea of the enemy being victorious was unthinkable. The enemy was everything that the commandant - and by extension, we - were not: he was communist, atheist, black. If the enemy won, our country was finished" (61). His speech communicates that it is their land, the country of white people. It is not only physically threatened, but also the whole concept defining the country as a white nation. Even before being sent to the border post, Patrick realises that a border serves for more purposes than simply separating one nation from the other. He knows of the ideological border, behind which "[o]ther ideas" (58) dwell. Therefore, apartheid silences voices other than the ones of white society as well as it restricts minorities within this society. Croucher confirms that "Afrikaners [maintain] that homosexuality is foreign to, and inconsistent with, true Afrikaner identity" (316). At the border post, the nullification of homosexuality is taken to extreme measures, as all four markers of masculinity define Patrick's context.

3.4.1 Homosexuality During and After Apartheid

As identified above, Patrick's inability of being good at rugby detaches him from apartheid ideology, and the rules of masculinity. In fact, he despises everything, which is too close to white maleness (cf. 17, 57, 63, 94). Therefore, "against this background, the novel's single sexual encounter [between Patrick and Lappis] figures as an act of rebellion against the [*white*, emphasis added] man's world" (Heyns, 114) and consequently, against the values of apartheid.

During the time at the border post, Patrick realizes fully his difference in comparison to others. However, the markers of masculinity prevent that he acknowledges himself as homosexual even in his own mind. Lappis is similar to the protagonist, as both are separated from the other soldiers through their inaptness in sports. Due to that, they often spend time together and Patrick "noticed the shape of his shoulders, the thin covering of almost invisible hair on his chest" (59). He even feels that "something had started" (59), but there is never a romantic moment between the two, and Patrick does not speak of love. Nevertheless, noticing these details shows a heightened awareness towards Lappis. Their sexual encounter is described as a "few seconds of gasping and tugging and pulling, like a subtle wrestling match" (68). The scene takes place at night and "[a] cuticle of moon hung over the trees" (68). Galgut uses again the solitude of darkness as a stage for the first homosexual experiences, reinforcing the necessity to hide such feelings. Therefore, the author also refrains from including any romantic notion. Moreover, neither of the characters talk about the incident afterwards. Patrick does not even reflect on it any further. By doing so, Galgut stresses the rootedness of apartheid values. Brink (15), confirms that "[i]t was important what was not said". The absence of communication between Patrick and Lappis points at the imposed silences of the established system and the danger of being discovered.

Later in the novel, shortly before the elections, Patrick does not hesitate to voice his love for Godfrey: "I sat and watched while he [Godfrey] made a few calls, feeling both near and very far from all this. I am, I think, a little in love by then" (118). The change in politics liberates him so that he feels free to consider romantic feelings towards Godfrey. Galgut refrains from - unlike the encounter with Lappis - using descriptions of Godfrey's body to hint at Patrick's feelings. Instead, Galgut bluntly uses the word love. This openness speaks of the change in progress, and the end of one silence imposed by apartheid. In fact, homosexual liberation became a synonym for a new South Africa (cf. Trengove, 2000).

However, considering Patrick's stage of transition, his understanding comes too early. He reaches the insight, which allows him to accept himself as he is, much later.

3.5 Collapse

Patrick fails the above mentioned contest between his identity and the place he is in. After an encounter during which he shoots a SWAPO soldier, the situation becomes almost unbearable. Although Galgut writes that Patrick's collapse starts with Lappis' death (cf. 98), it is argued here that it starts with Patrick's shooting of the SWAPO soldier, because he exposes shows regarding his environment.

He writes a letter home, describing this incident: "How I threw myself down in the grass and aimed and shot. I saw - from where did it rise up, that image? - a leopard on an island of wood" (67). Galgut pictures Patrick as a predator here, similar to the people favouring apartheid. Nevertheless, the image is inconsistent. The author does not give any information on how his protagonist feels being equal with his fellow soldiers. Moreover, Patrick argues that "[n]one of it had anything to do with [him]" (67), but "stared at him [a dead SWAPO soldier] with mesmerised horror" (67). Galgut does not clearly state which emotions define Patrick in these moments. Moreover, the description of Patrick's superiors taking trophies after the shooting, "[t]he corporal cut off all the WAPO ears and put them into a bag" (67), does not clarify the protagonist's emotions, as he does not comment on it. As a result, the scenes seem detached from Patrick's identity. He loses grip on reality more and more, until "[l]ife, I saw clearly, was pain. A white, molten stream, it poured without end, hardening into temporary form: the bodies around me, the beds, the tent, the ground, were the physical form of this pain. But I was melting, I was breaking the mould" (103). After that he is taken to hospital, still denying being the "girl" (105) Schutte thinks him to be. Because of his ongoing pretence, Patrick does not yet arrive at an insight. In the present time plot, the protagonist is able to gain further knowledge from his *vision* (my emphasis). First, however, we have to trace the epiphany until arriving again at this point.

3.6 Transition

As said before, events, situations or objects in the actual story line cause Patrick to reflect on past happenings. These transform Patrick's view regarding landscape, which, in the end, leads to the epiphany. Central element is the desert and the according silence. As established in "The Clay Ox", obsession with certain environments represents personal

problems. Thus, the muteness of the desert reflects the silence Patrick is forced to keep up regarding homosexuality, and the environment becomes synonymous with apartheid. Patrick feels empty inside, as void as the desert. He is as silent as his environment. Resulting from that, the protagonist comes to fear his surroundings, which causes the second collapse. Throughout Andrew Lovell's funeral, the desert changes its meaning. People congregate in fill the vacancy with life. Namibia's and Patrick's transitions begin. Regarding the young man, his transformation starts when returning to Mrs. De Bruin's farm.

Thus, the main character looks back on his early childhood and reappraises his life up to the present time. Patrick remembers Margaret, especially how he treats her as a boy. Being already on the journey to Namibia, Patrick's "[s]hame of that day, which [he] hadn't felt at the time, only touched [him] now" (35). Galgut illustrates the beginning of reassessing the past by the young man's perception of the border crossing. He feels "a sense of unease" (39) when leaving known territory, the north, to head toward the unknown, feared South. The desert is perceived in the following terms: "[...] a silence came down, inseparable from the numb, yellow, empty land outside. [...]" (40). Hence, Patrick realises that upholding the silence results in a lifeless environment. Galgut here criticises apartheid for eliminating many possibilities, one of them being the acceptance of homosexuality. By stifling any other discourse than the white, masculine one, South Africa becomes a dry and lonely place. This realization initiates the epiphany and Patrick "[has] a feeling, somewhere in [himself], of something approaching - though [he] couldn't say what" (71). After remembering parts of his time at the border post, the following observation of the desert reveals how rooted apartheid values are in the people's minds: "The heat and the dust were oppressive. The windows were closed, but a thin grit got into the car. It furred up my teeth, blocked my pores, invaded the joints of my bones" (72). The sand resembles the established values, invading every corner of living. They are still in Patrick's mind, too. Nevertheless, he knows that these are not the norms he wants to follow, that this is not the environment reflecting his personal views. Therefore, the desert is perceived as a hostile place. The vastness of the desert catches Patrick's eye, and he focuses on sand:

[...] Several hours down the road, the desert changed again. From stone it became sand, soft dunes undulating on either side, creeping into the road. There was a curiously liquid quality to it, sliding and drifting and blurring. It was moving around in the wind, rearranging itself all the time, grain by grain. If you lay still it would form itself around you, take you into itself. (74)

This passage resembles the next step toward the epiphany. Patrick comprehends that the established practices of apartheid are the prime reason for the given restrictive character of white, dominant society. For fear of being excluded from society, homosexuals have to pretend that they are part of their surrounding society by heeding the values. These serve as a cover and a further reinforcement of the established system.

Next, Patrick reflects on human existence compared to the earth in general (cf. 74). The entity of the planet visualizes the meaningless effort mankind makes to leave a lasting legacy on earth, "[h]umanity and dust, the old opposition" (77). Resulting from earth's everlasting notion, norms and values, as well as their illusion of stability, have no lasting effect: "A word here about the desert. [...] It was almost painful to see - to really see - the vast, softly hissing nullity of it. The lines of houses were like a pathetic imposition of order on something beyond rules or chaos. If you moved inwards, away from the edge of town, the illusion of permanence was greater" (77). The young man begins to question the importance white society attributes to itself. As a result, Patrick is confused by South Africa's created place identity and his own personality. His disorientation is demonstrated by his answer regarding the question whether he is the killer of Andrew Lovell or not: "*Did I shoot Andrew Lovell? Yes, I thought, I did it. But also: No, because I am him.*" [...] And it was as if there were two selves at war in me, two different people with a past and a mind that had nothing to do with mine. The fracture ran through me, through my life, down to a place where my life joined with other lives" (127). His agitation causes the second collapse. He realises that the fight between the two ideologies, black and white, represent very limited possibilities and he is part of neither. The epiphany reaches its final stage when he "saw how things could be: part of a mass, of a singing congregation, the family to which [he] never belonged... and then time fell suddenly away" (128). The protagonist is now fully aware that he never fits into one of the given establishments. Perceived loneliness triggers memories of the military camp, and his breakdown repeats itself.

The desert covered us all. Through the flickering bodies dancing and ululating down below, I saw the sand shining through. Under the joyous thunder of voices, I heard the thin, insidious wind. Years of war and ideology, all the laws and guns and blood: the whole huge tumult of history converged on a single point, and this was what it was for - for sand. Rocks and sand and air. Barren, omnipotent emptiness. We would all disappear, every one of us, and the only thing that would stay behind was the arid backdrop of earth. Dry and dead and voiceless. (128)

The sand represents again norms and values, and Patrick understands their meaninglessness in comparison to earth's entity. Moreover, the protagonist realizes the futility of war and confinement to a single ideology. As mankind will not leave a trace of

established norms and values, it is unnecessary to adhere to them if they contradict one's own personality. Therefore, it is argued that the main character just now accepts homosexuality as part of his identity. Patrick's journey is at an end and due to his insight, the protagonist decides to live on his own (cf. 141). In addition, Galgut here argues for a more diversified, tolerant society by contrasting the liveliness of the congregation with the emptiness of the desert.

3.7 Summary

This novel is much more complex than *Small Circle of Beings*. The protagonist's surrounding environment is infused with personal as well as political meaning. Galgut combines both areas by demonstrating how closely personal identity and behaviour are linked to ideology. Moreover, the awareness regarding landscape is a) coherent throughout the novel and b) even a structural element rather than an occasional support for a character's personality. As a result, the individual's evolvment is easier to follow.

The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs refines ideas established in *Small Circle of Beings*. Galgut again uses a colonial background to begin the narration. This time, however, the political background of this period is actually connected to the protagonist. Nevertheless, Galgut does not include a situation or an event explaining the main character's divergence from the established system. In addition, he hints at Patrick's homosexuality too subtle. Galgut does not state in any way that the protagonist is aware of his sexual orientation until he meets Lappis. The young man's weak bodily constitution is, according to literature, a synonym for homosexuality, but not its cause. The novel lacks the character's first awareness of his divergence regarding this topic.

4. The Quarry

In *The Quarry*, the main character is a person without identity. The protagonist does not have a name, and he lacks affiliation to any structure, such as family. This person is fleeing from law, and hides whenever somebody comes into sight. The man is still running when he meets a priest, who is on the way to his new post. In the course of their meeting, the man murders the minister and takes over the other's identity. Being a man of the church now, the stranger takes up this position in a nearby township. Due to a robbery committed by the criminals Valentine and Small, and the discovery of the real minister's body, the

nameless man has to flee again. Captain Mong, the chief of police in town, hunts the false reverend. The chase developing between these men takes on the character of an animal hunt: predator and prey.

4.1 Issues in the Novel

The most outstanding feature of this novel is ambiguity, which arises from uncertainty. Galgut passes on this feeling of confusion to the reader regarding personality and place identity. Indeed, this is a problem South Africans face after the first optimism of transition. The country attempts to change its place identity according to politics: "[f]ollowing the successful general election in April 1994, the country [undergoes] a rapid transformation from being a white, autocratic and largely repressive state to one that [becomes] more inclusive and democratic" (Breetzke, 299). Hence, the up to now valid practices of living have to be dissolved. However, people do not change their personalities, beliefs and behavioural patterns overnight. Renders defines the issue of Afrikaner integrity as follows:

[They] found themselves in uncharted territory as the nationalist ideology they had believed in for so long [has] become totally untenable. They had to redefine their position vis-a-vis the other racial groups and to come to terms with their loss of power and with their relegation to the status of a minority group. [...] The younger generation no longer obligingly accepts the traditional values of the Afrikaner people. It has come to the realisation that the nationalist ideology has led the Afrikaner to the brink of the abyss. (122f.)

As a result, there is not only a divide regarding skin colour, but also within white society alone. South Africans in general have to negotiate their selves in a totally new context. A further division is represented by the attitude toward the change - some people welcome it while others cling to the past system. Therefore,

[t]here was a growing sense that little progress toward a more egalitarian society [has] been made and even that history was repeating itself. The slow pace of change, the crime and the violence, the corruption, the dire state of the economy and a new form of racism, this time in the guise of affirmative action, all [conspire] to make the initial optimism suddenly look very naive. (Renders, 120f)

Resulting from that, apartheid's legacy remains present. Although all citizens are now allowed to live in areas of their choice (cf. Breetzke, 305), the race division remains valid in many places. This is also true for *The Quarry*. The stranger is surprised to learn that

mission churches still exist (*The Quarry*, 13³). However, Galgut blurs the protagonist's integrity as well as the township's place identity. The line between the two dwelling places is unclear, as mainly white people populate the novel, and both places are run down. By doing so, the author depicts the people's confusion regarding their own selves. Nobody knows where they belong. Thus, South Africa's place identity is not yet one of inclusion, but rather one of disorientation. Galgut reflects on this situation by centring the narration on a quarry. The double connotation of the word sums up the novel. The location is the centre of action, and it describes the relationship between Captain Mong, Valentine and the stranger. Moreover, it is a symbol for confusion, which is most notable in the last third of the narration. Here, place identity does not support the protagonist's development so much as it serves to underpin the ambiguity of the time.

The second issue aside from the confusion of people after apartheid is brutality. The old system and the struggle against it form a "culture of violence" (Breetzke, 304). He explains that violence becomes normalised in certain segments of the South African population (cf. 304). Especially townships are identified as centres of crime, as the "pass laws were deliberate attempts [...] stop black migration to the white urban core, and unwittingly 'trapped' criminals and their victims within the same spatial sphere" (Breetzke, 302). Kynoch argues that

under apartheid townships became places where social and economic deprivation, combined with repressive policing, criminal predation and a corresponding reliance on vigilantism, produced urban environments in which violence frequently became a normative means of 'pursuing material interests, resolving conflicts and seeking 'justice'. (qtd. in Breetzke, 496)

In the period of transition, black people begin to move out of townships into white settlements, while few people choose a township as a living area. As a result, "new money and wealth generated from the emerging black middle-class is not being ploughed back into the townships" (Breetzke, 307f.). Moreover, the ANC government fails to create an approach addressing the issues of poverty and poor education in these areas (cf. Breetzke, 308f.). Therefore, atrocity is still very much present in townships. The main characters - Mong, the stranger, and Valentine - meet each other in the township, but none seems to originate from this area. Mong works there, but Galgut does not state if he has a permanent residence there. Valentine is white, suggested by his use of Dutch (cf. 29, 42f. and 129). Still, it is unknown whether he lives in the township, or not. The stranger takes up residence there, but comes from somewhere else. Thus, the line dividing the township and

³ All page numbers in parenthesis in the following refer to this edition

the white settlement is blurred, illustrating again the confusion of the transitional era. Furthermore, Attwell and Harlow point out that the justice system is inadequate to deal with ordinary crime, "because it was developed as an instrument of political oppression" (2). In *The Quarry*, Galgut demonstrates this inability by Captain Mong's behaviour. This is, however, also highly confusing. He permits his officers a violent questioning with regard to Valentine, but turns a blind eye as long as possible concerning the stranger's crimes, although this one is white, too. Hence, *The Quarry* is highly ambiguous regarding the identities of people as well as places.

Finally, Galgut uses a different textual layout than in the works before. The closer the narration comes to the final hunt, the shorter the chapters are, visualizing the rising pace of events. Some of them do not even cover a page, switching back and forth between Mong, the stranger and Valentine illustrating the badgered atmosphere of the hunt. Additionally, Galgut resigns using punctuation and capitalization, depicting the stressed and frightened mind of the chased men. Adding even more confusion, the author only uses the pronoun "he". Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish the characters in the last third of the novel. There is no separate chapter elaborating on textual design, rather it is used in the subsequent passages to highlight the sense of ambiguity.

4.2 The Stranger

Galgut deconstructs the main character's identity from beginning on. He does not give background information on the nature of the man's initial crime, where he comes from and who he is before entering the narration. Thus, the stranger is completely void of a personality.

Galgut hints at the protagonist's white background, but only by means of skin colour: "[h]is body was bizarrely quilted in areas of sunburn and whiteness, cleanness and dirt" (*The Quarry*, 2). The referred to quality as a "harlequin" (2) with regard to the man's appearance blurs this racial identifier as the grime and burn alter the whiteness. Galgut uses the term "coloured" (83) to describe him later in the novel. This expression is, in itself, one of the most ambiguous racial identifiers. Hammett (2010) elaborates on this topic, explaining the difficulties of coloured people. In short, he states that "racial signifiers were mutable and the relations between the identifier and identified were fluid and constituted by self and others" (250). Galgut refers to the difficult nature of these signifiers by putting the following words in his white protagonist's mouth: "We are all [referring to being coloured]. By now. In this country" (83). Nevertheless, by others, he is

perceived as white, because, for example, Mong answers: "'No', said the policeman. 'We're white.'" (83). Hence, Galgut demonstrates that categorisation on the base of skin colour is itself ambiguous, depending on the individual perception of oneself and on being perceived by others. Additionally, the quoted passage tells of the political situation of the time. The stranger uses the term coloured as a means of equality, thus all men being the same. However, the policeman still insists on the superior status of white society by explicitly contradicting the false minister's statement.

To return to the ambiguous nature of the stranger, his clothes also do not indicate who he is, as they are all stolen, "smell[ing] of something or someone or maybe of nothing" (3). In contrast to "Small Circle of Beings", in which the dress of the protagonist reveals her changing personality, here the attire supports the lack of identity. An encounter with a black man and a short stop in a nearby town add even more confusion. When asking the other man for water, this one begins to speak "in a language the first man didn't understand" (3). Galgut changes the persona "he" to "the first man", detaching the narrator from his *non- personality* (my emphasis) even further. The protagonist proceeds to a settlement from which "the other man had come from" (3). All of a sudden, there are no communication problems anymore, as the man "parleyed with them" (4). The poor quality of the settlement (cf. 3f.) and the locals' "amazement" (4) at his appearance suggest that it is a black people's living area. Nevertheless, it may also be a white settlement, as black people are now allowed to take up residence wherever they like. In this case, the untroubled communication between the dwellers and the protagonist is completely valid. As a result of the two possible interpretations, the main character's identity is diffused once more. So far, his skin colour and lack of personality do not have any importance regarding the novel. However, as soon as he comes to town, these things begin to matter.

After murdering the real minister, he steals this one's integrity. It is not difficult to take over the identity of the godly man, because the cassock points out his profession. Moreover, as the real reverend is unknown at his destination, the stranger would not raise any suspicions when introducing himself as "Reverend Niemand" (30). At first he is directed to the wrong, the "white" (28) church. Hence, Galgut points again toward the still existing race division. Because of his skin colour, it is automatically assumed that he wants the church in the white settlement, not the one in the township. The new minister is redirected to the correct building, and another man, Valentine, takes him there. Up to this point, the stranger does not yet feel like a godly man; therefore he denies being a minister when Valentine asks him about it (29). Later, this proves to be one of many factors

constituting the man's fate. Only after he holds his first sermon, he changes his personality. Galgut indicates this alteration not by place identity, because the man does not have any emotion toward the church or the township itself. Rather, the man feels a certain kind of inspiration originating from inside him:

They listened. He told them that the world was a prison, and that they were all prisoners in it. He told them that they could escape the prison of the world and that there was freedom beyond it and as he spoke upon his theme a sort of inspiration touched him. He spoke quietly, distinctly, but a faint grey light was glimmering on his forehead and on the backs of his hands and the faces too seemed to take on this light so that the church was lambent with its glow. (55)

The protagonist's service as "*Dominee*" (52) is a success (cf. 55). It seems that the stranger experiences a kind of epiphany, but without an insight. Still, he finds an identity, namely the one of the, not a, minister. Shortly after the body is found in the quarry, and Mong takes the stranger there. Here, Galgut uses "the minister" (83) instead of "he" to refer to the nameless. The protagonist believes in his new personality, indicated by his saying that he "[is] a man of God" (83). Mong also believes in this identity (84), and thus, Galgut shows that personality is dependent to a large degree on the perception of others. This episode is, however, the only time when Galgut uses "minister" to refer to the man. It should have been continued in the next chapter, too. While burying the real priest's body, the protagonist is still convinced of his role. Only after the burial he switches back into being a man on the run. His newly discovered faith is the reason he wants to confess his crimes. As the confession is denied on Mong's accord, he breaks down. From now on, Galgut uses punctuation less and less, indicating the man's state of mind. The protagonist loses grip on reality and becomes the hunted animal. While collapsing, the man seems on the verge of an insight:

then he rose slowly again to the surface of things and he was in the bed in the room in the house He could see the black robe hanging skewly across the back of the chair and he could see its creases, its folds It was morning and a thin wash of sunlight came past the curtains, casting small pools of shadow, and he felt the edges of light acutely as though they were made out of stone. Everything had a lustre and a brilliance to his eyes that he had never detected before and he looked around with a kind of awe at the shimmer and luminance of forms. (92f.)

Similar to the passage above, light is important. Nevertheless, the illumination itself is ambiguous. It creates darkness and, at the same time, brightens objects. The double nature of it might point toward the torn quality of mankind in general. Each and everyone has it in him or her to do good as well as evil things. However, this is only a guess. Galgut does not indicate how this extract is to be understood, and, more importantly, he does not tell which

influence it has on the stranger. It would lend itself nicely to include an insight revealing the man's decision to run instead of waiting for the police to question him further after admitting that he is not Frans Niemand (102f.). His declaration goes by without consequences, as the trial is interrupted because an animal of the nearby circus breaks free. The man leaves town and "took off the burned black robe and shed it there on the verge like a skin which no longer fit him" (111), dismissing his borrowed identity once and for all. The dress itself changes meaning in the latter two excerpts. Before, Galgut uses the word cassock or frock, now it is only a robe. It shows that people assign meaning to things like attire, and that this connotation can change according to personal perception. Moreover, it is a symbol for identity and its fluid nature. People categorize based on what they see and expect from the perceived. Mong perceives a devoted, white minister, and thus he refuses to acknowledge the criminal nature of this man. This, however, is elaborated in the subsequent chapter.

4.3 Encounters

Throughout the novel, there are three important encounters. First, the stranger meets Frans Niemand, the real minister. When being taken to a restaurant by the reverend, various situations already point at the subsequent events. Galgut deploys naturalism to indicate the fatalistic advance of the novel. The stranger does not seem capable of escaping his fate, because in this very restaurant, he comes across Mong. This man later becomes his pursuer. Mong is the captain of police in the town the nameless man comes after murdering Niemand and taking over this one's identity. Third, in the township the man meets Valentine and denies being a priest. Valentine steals the man's car and finds a blue flower he immediately connects with the quarry. The quarry is the location where the stranger kills Niemand and picks the flower. The protagonist reports the car burglary, which has far-reaching complications: he sets Mong on Valentine's track, who in turn informs the policeman of the flower and, presumably, of the minister having been at the quarry. Due to its use as a drug, the police search the quarry and discover the body.

The main character meets Reverend Niemand, when this man's car breaks down. Trying to hide, the stranger cuts his finger (7). The blood already hints at the violent encounter. Moreover, Galgut indicates the forthcoming thieved identity. Wanting to clean himself up, the nameless man uses the minister's toiletries. Getting and returning the toilet bag, he is strangely drawn to Niemand's frock: "[h]e put the bag away and looked again at

that frock, that garment, on the seat. He touched it with one finger [...]" (12, cf. 10). Galgut also puts emphasis on the use of the toiletries:

He dried his face and was about to brush his teeth with his finger when he thought what the hell and used the minister's toothbrush instead. He combed his hair with the minister's comb, which had strands of the other man's hair woven into the teeth. He took off his shirt and washed himself and used some deodorant that made him smell like the other man. (11)

Thus, the author connects the man's fate with the one of Niemand, already beginning the process of taking over the minister's identity. The stranger decides to accompany the minister on his drive. They stop at a quarry and get drunk. Galgut describes their stay at this location as follows: "The hole in front of them went down into the earth and there were striations in the rock that had been made visible and the two men who were bound together by some intimate and private communion of their own that neither understood although each believed he did and that would kill both of them in time [...]" (19). It seems like the author is not sure whether he makes the connection of the two men clear enough up to this point, or not. This description explicitly refers to their strange relation and clarifies that it is more than an ordinary chance meeting. Moreover, Galgut says that their communion will turn out violently. However, he already said these things before, indicated by the blood when meeting each other in the first place, by referring to the man's attraction to the frock, the usage of the private toiletries and the man's desperation (cf. 2) which ultimately results in the minister's murder. The protagonist kills Frans Niemand when this man demands sexual gratification, arguing that the stranger "owes" (20) him. Being desperate, having to run from law already because of an unknown crime (cf. 11, 18) and fearing that the minister will tip the police (20), the protagonist cannot help but murder the priest. Galgut illustrates "the culture of violence", as all the events lead up to the killing. However, as the stranger is so completely void of a personality and background, it is impossible to know under which circumstances the man has lived so far. The reader does not know whether the man has a good education, if he is poor and of what nature his first crime is. Therefore, it is difficult to follow Galgut's criticism and the question arises whether he comments on the ready-at-hand violence in general or on the political circumstances forming this behaviour.

After hiding the body in the quarry, the stranger picks a blue flower (25). From the given description of the colour and its growth on a vine, it is assumed that it is morning glory. The flower finds use as a drug, which is also important in the novel. This plant and its purpose are known by Valentine and his brother Small, who discover the picked bloom when searching Niemand's belongings after stealing the car from the stranger. This flower

represents a further component of the man's fate. Due to the plant unmistakably coming from the quarry, the two criminals know that he must have been there (cf. 44). As a result of that and the stranger's saying that he is no minister, Valentine suspects that the man is not what he pretends to be (cf. 80). Still, this becomes important only later in the narration. The quarry itself now links the protagonist's fate with Mong and Valentine. It is the visualisation of ambiguity, as the word itself has a double meaning. Both meanings are valid for describing the persons and their relationships. In the instant the nameless man kills Niemand, he becomes a quarry hunted by Mong. The same is true for Valentine, because he grows drugs there and is also chased by the police. Both men are connected to the location by crime, and the quarry itself links the two men because of the flower picked there. Thus, it is a place as well as a symbol important for the novel. Its metaphorical character is deployed in the last third of the narration when the hunt begins.

The false minister sees Mong twice before coming to the township, once when using Niemand's toiletries and the second time just after the murder (cf. 11, 23). Thus, Mong is another element regarding the stranger's future. The police officer is, considering Galgut's use of naturalism, a sort of bad omen. Being in the police department, the protagonist sees a picture of himself, marking him as a wanted person (39). Considering this and the fact that both men have seen each other twice so far, it is peculiar that Mong does not recognize the man. As elaborated in the preceding chapter, the personality as a minister shields the man. Captain Mong does not expect that a man of church could be a wanted criminal. Once more, Galgut points toward the fluid and subjective nature of identity and racial signifiers. Hammett "noted the role of diverse factors, including class, language, political context, rural/urban location, and gender in individual's identity negotiations" (250) when speaking about South African identity. Galgut has these aspects in mind, too. Mong hints at his knowledge that the protagonist might have something to do with the murder, but refrains from taking further steps. For example, the captain seems to recognise the man (cf. 77), because after asking if they know each other, the policeman says: "'The evil leader is after flesh, [...] and there's no escape.'", on which the protagonist replies: "'Fate'" (63). It sounds like a warning, and the main character accepts the captain's position: if he finds out, he must take steps. Still, when the body is discovered and Mong takes him to the quarry, the officer refuses to acknowledge the man's criminal status. He hints at the information given by Valentine, saying that he knows the minister has been in the quarry (cf. 83). Nevertheless, the officer does not verify this information by asking the minister about his business there. His restraint is seen as "affirmative action" (Renders,

121), because he respects the minister in a certain way. Galgut implies this by the conversation between the two men at the given location. Mong says that "When I first heard your [the protagonist's] name, [...] I was expecting a coloured man" (83). The name Niemand translates to nobody (cf. Jacobs, 94), indicating the low status of the person. Thus, Galgut comments on the difficulties coloured people experience. They are not part of white society as they are regarded as outsiders due to their skin colour. The same is true for their status in black culture (cf. Hammett, 2010). Returning to Mong, he grants the protagonist the status of a white man because of his skin colour and values him due to the good services in church. Therefore, he believes the man's saying that "[he's] a man of God" (83), which is true now, but it does not deny his part in Niemand's murder. Galgut demonstrates that the newly gained status as a good, white minister protects the stranger. As long as the protagonist upholds his taken over identity, Mong refuses to hear the man's confession (cf. 88, 89, 92). His official avowal at the trial removes this cover, and the hunt begins.

As said before, Galgut follows naturalism's logic to portray his protagonist's fate. However, there is a break in the subsequent events. The stranger decides to flee after the trial, but his reasons are unclear. Galgut does not indicate which situation or realisation causes his proceeding. Above (also see: 92f.), it is stated that the man is on the verge of an insight, but Galgut does not relate the vision to the main character. Therefore, it is argued here that the quarry itself is the reason for the flight. Mong takes the minister there, and the stranger's role is revealed to himself: he is the quarry, the hunted animal, who has no other choice but to run. As a consequence, he sets aside his integrity as the minister.

4.4 The Hunt

In the general turmoil after the trial Valentine is able to flee, and the false minister leaves town, too. As the chase is now opened, Galgut blurs the individual personalities, beginning with Mong's demand to "[f]ind him" (115), meaning the minister, while his subordinate means "the prisoner" (116), Valentine. The captain knows where to find the man and drives to the quarry. Thus, Galgut stresses the importance of this location for a) the narration and b) the implied meaning of predator and prey. Again, the author does not seem sure whether he makes the latter clear enough, so he explicitly explains the relationship of Mong, the stranger and the quarry: "They were not people anymore, they were a principle in operation: law and outlaw, hunter and quarry" (121). Nevertheless, it is

not for sure that it is really the false minister running away until the last line of the chapter, in which the stranger meets Valentine in a train (124).

From now on, it is almost impossible to distinguish the men. Chapter 37 sets out with the description of a man setting the church on fire. He is limping and has a burned hand (cf. 125), but Mong is the only man of limited walking ability (118). Nevertheless, the ending of this chapter suggests that the focus in this passage is on Valentine, because "when he woke the train was stopping and then a man climbed in" (127), who is clearly the stranger. Next, it is not stated if he or Valentine leaves the train at a stop. The chapter begins with the false minister addressing Valentine, indicating that the subsequent lines refer to the stranger: "He crawled to the crate and took two more bottles out. The other man was sleeping in the corner [...]. [...] when the train stopped completely he climbed out of the car" (130). Still, when the man is seen in the town, which is the same town he flees from, it is Valentine, "the prisoner" (136). Strangely, the next chapter sets out with this man waking up alone in the train (139) and getting off it. He too finds himself in the very town he runs from. People recognise and circle him, directing Valentine to a nearby café (140). Thus, both, the stranger and the prisoner are back from where they set out. When Mong initiates his final chase in town, Valentine is in the café being beaten by an angry mob (143, 147) and the stranger runs from the police (141, 145, 149,). Both quarries are distinguishable by means of Galgut's textual layout. Valentine's parts are without punctuation or capitalisation while being attacked by the locals. Galgut highlights the frenzy of the people, and the prisoner's harassed state of mind. The stranger's chapters, on the other hand, are coherent regarding punctuation while trying to get away from the police. In the end, it is presumably the protagonist who is shot:

The metal boom hit his cheek. Then the ground. He lay there in the road with his face pressed down to the tar [...] He saw the sky with stars burning in it and the policeman's head outlined against them. The sun was a dark disk [it is the moment of an eclipse] punched out on the sky with one fiery rim still protruding and then it went out. (153)

His last moments are still coherent, while Valentine

[...] drew opposite a house there was a low fence a gate he went in through the gate there was a dustbin and he crouched down beside it on the far side of the fence in some other world altogether he heard the dries and footfalls of pursuit grow louder and then diminish and taper [...] he went down the side of the house like a blind man reading braille with his fingers there was a wall here another gate he went through and on through another garden another street and on (155)

Still, one cannot tell with certainty that Valentine is the one escaping, and not the stranger. Before, the incoherent writing style is part of the false minister's story. Therefore, it could

be him in the café. The people recognizing him and the policeman referring to him as the prisoner (cf. 136) could mistake their former man of church with Valentine. Again, the man has lost his identity and becomes indistinguishable. Also the people do no longer know whom they chase: "'He's gone.' 'What about that other one running?' 'That [is] somebody else.' 'Are you sure?' 'How do you know?'" (157). And indeed, how could one know? The subsequent chapter depicts one of the men passing through the landscape and hiding at the sight of other human beings, very similar to the beginning of the novel. However, the line "[h]e was thinner and stronger than he had used to be" (165) gives no hint who the walking man is. Also, Galgut does not reveal the identity of the dead man "buried in an unmarked grave" (167) besides Niemand in town. The author dedicates the last chapter to the quarry, depicting it as a location again. It is difficult to tell which motivation Galgut follows by ending the narration like this. Here, the following interpretation is favoured: without people, the quarry is a simple location without any ambiguity. Hence, human beings generate connotations on the base of their living forming their personality and infuse places with meaning. The same is true for identity in general. As said before, people judge and categorize according to their own beliefs.

Thus, a possible verdict of the narration is that it is in the people's power to change the present situation of South Africa.

4.5 Summary

First, Galgut's ability to generate ambiguity is truly masterful in this narration. However, he focuses so much on it that the story itself is not always coherent. Still, *The Quarry* depicts excellently the disorientation regarding identity in South Africa. Politics and place identity are pushed into the background by the vast amount of double meanings and possibilities. Therefore, the criticism concerning politics does not shine through except in very few situations. Second, the textual layout supports the intended double meaning and inner feelings of the characters nicely. The reader gets lost in the entanglements just like the protagonist himself.

This novel represents a break regarding issues and importance of place identity for the individual compared to the two works before. Galgut also changes the textual layout, which has a positive effect for the novel itself as well as for the reader, as it draws the audience right into the middle of events.

5. *The Good Doctor*

Frank Eloff, the protagonist of the novel, is a doctor in a remote hospital in a former homeland. He is sent there to replace Dr. Ngema, but remains her subordinate for a number of years. Frustration, pessimism and inactivity dictate his life. The hospital itself is caught in a state of tranquillity as nothing ever seems to happen or change. A new doctor, Laurence Waters, overthrows the old order of passivity. The young man is, in contrast to Eloff, idealistic and active, driven by the want to improve things, to help to establish the new South Africa. Frank and Laurence are forced to share a room, which results in Frank's careful optimism at the end of the narration.

5.1 Issues in the Novel

The Good Doctor is the most often reviewed novel of Galgut's works, which is due to its status as having been shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. In general, it "[is] widely received as a text typifying the South African tradition of politically engaged realism" (Barris, 24). While Barris argues that Galgut's work "fails in its attempt to position itself as a post-apartheid text" (24), Cabarcos-Traseira values *The Good Doctor* for its "staunchly realistic image of contemporary South Africa in which the past is more than a lingering influence" (46). Titlestad takes up a position in the middle by pointing out that "Eloff's inner journey is not the programmatic moral rehabilitation that Barris and others seek – his subjectivity does not conform to the meta-narrative of South Africa's political transformation" (115). All the named authors have a different approach to tackle Galgut's work. Titlestad (2009) perceives it as being in favour of subjectivity and commenting on the reinvention of white South African identity. Barris (2011) critiques its failure in helping to establish South Africa's literary canon, and Cabarcos-Traseira (2005) claims the opposite. However, none of them takes into account Galgut's allusion to Frank's homosexuality and established ideas and motifs of his previous works. Thus, by considering the protagonist's sexual preference, there are other possible interpretations. Cabarcos-Traseira's critique is basically a schematic application of place identity; therefore it is not treated further in this chapter. However, it has to be mentioned that, although she correctly assumes that the past is still present in South Africa, her conclusion is not entirely exact. She says that the nation "needs to abandon the sins of the past as swiftly as it possibly can, but *The Good Doctor* suggests that, [...], it should not do so without taking a look back" (52). Reviewing the other two critiques and developing one's interpretations of

the text, it has to be said that South Africa cannot, and not should not, progress without reference to its history.

The political situation in South Africa from 1994 onward is defined by reconstructing the country as the new South Africa, the rainbow nation (cf. Attwell and Harlow, 2). The time of transition is marked by ambiguity, which is, in some accounts, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC hence forward) doing. Shane Graham describes TRCs in the following way: "[they] are tasked with collaborative, democratic history-making but situated in a transformative process, in which history is an act of . . . vindication for the oppressed and voiceless. Truth, in this process, must take sides . . . and make moral judgments" (qtd. in Kruger, 186f.). Consequently, the critics' opinions regarding the success of the South African TRC are split. Gibson (2006), for example, values the commission for its uniting effects. He says that the TRC's hearing of white as well as black victims results in "[s]haring responsibility, blame, and victimhood [which] creates a common identity, which can provide a basis for dialogue. Finally, by building and certifying a collective memory of the past, a truth and reconciliation process can free a society from its obsession with past injustices [...]" (414ff.). Mamdani opposes his view, stating that

[l]imiting the definition of harm and remedy to individuals center-staged political activists as victims of apartheid [serves to] narrow the TRC perspective to a political reconciliation between state agents and political activists, individual members of a fractured political elite, rather than the "national unity and reconciliation "mandated by the legislation that set it up. (34)

Mamdani's (2002) critique elaborates further on the TRC's shortcomings and highlights its role as creator of ambiguity. However, the above mentioned point is one of the most important. It demonstrates that the TRC is a political tool used to unite a deeply divided nation. Literature is demanded to do the same: help to establish a common memory to rebuild the country. Similar to the opinions on the TRC, people, especially writers, have different views on how to do that. Attwell and Harlow sum up the difficulty by proposing that there is a "tension between memory and amnesia" (3). They refer to the time shortly after 1994; however, this tension is still present in South Africa due to the TRC. The commission

extended impunity to most perpetrators of apartheid. In the absence of a full acknowledgment of victims of apartheid, there could not be a complete identification of its perpetrators. To the extent that the TRC did not acknowledge the full truth, the amnesty intended to be individual turned into a group amnesty. For any perpetrator who was not so identified was a perpetrator who enjoyed impunity. (Mamdani, 34)

Thus, the TRC itself is to be blamed for the past being still very much in the memories of people. Galgut's *The Good Doctor* elaborates on the antagonism of keeping the past alive but simultaneously being forced to forget it in order to rebuild the nation. Eloff experiences this divisiveness, as he cannot put aside his personal history and is unable to create a constructive future for himself. Moreover, his repressed homosexuality complicates this unresolved conflict. He does not acknowledge it, demonstrating that white Afrikaner identity, although being in the process of change, still rejects this sexual preference.

Transition changes the perception of Afrikaner and Africans alike. The field of identity development is also charged with tensions arising from South Africa's past. Thom and Coetzee argue that

[all are] subjected to socio-political changes: they [must] form their identities in a society that is undergoing transformation. [...] According to Kilpatrick (qtd. in Thom and Coetzee, 2004) the ideal is to develop a unique identity without rejecting the cultural heritage completely. However, he adds, the traditional culture should be characterised by a reasonable degree of stability and consistency to enable the individual to identify with it. And, to attain the ideal, adolescents have to form a synthesis between their traditional and modern cultures. (184)

Resulting from that, the past remains very much alive for white as well as black people. Therefore, memory is important, as stressed by Idowu William: "It is the power to remember that is crucial to restoring or remaking African identity" (437). Still, there is the issue who is allowed to call him or herself African (cf. Matthews, 2011). Although integrities shift toward embracing transition and democracy (cf. Titlestad, 119), "the past stubbornly manifests itself" (Attwell and Harlow, 2). It also does so regarding personality and, as a result, is present in subjective stories. In this light, *The Good Doctor* reflects South African as well as individual conditions of the time, as said by Cabarcos-Traseira (2005) and Titlestad (2009).

5.2 Masculinity

As said before, all three critics have a different approach to tackle the novel. Titlestad argues that Eloff's character embraces subjectivity especially with regard to stereotypical white maleness (120). He refers to a different and more diversified mode of meaning - making (cf. 111) rather than the markers of masculinity as established in *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. Here it is argued that Eloff is still part of apartheid ideology, which is carried on by his father. The doctor adheres to the markers of masculinity; therefore this novel is not exemplary for the changing white society.

Frank's background is similar to the one of Patrick, the protagonist of *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. Eloff grows up to become a doctor because of "uneasy ambition and a need to impress [his] father" (*The Good Doctor*, 46⁴). His predecessor is a successful doctor and a people's hero (cf. 136). He "expressed opinions like truths, [and] made jokes" (144). Hence, Dr. Frank Eloff sr. is, according to Anderson's definition, a "top dog" (22). He is also a "sturdy oak" (Anderson, 22), due to having "the body and voice of someone fifteen years younger" (134). Eloff sr. becomes a public hero after he "crouched in a crumbling tunnel, setting bones, performing amputations, stitching up wounds. He saved the lives of six or seven miners [...]" (136), thus he certainly falls into the category of "no sissy stuff" (Anderson, 22). The last aspect, "give 'em hell" (Anderson, 22), is obscured, because officially apartheid is over. Eloff's father says that "[t]his country has changed so much I don't recognize it anymore. All I know is, I couldn't do it. I wouldn't mind working under a black, but taking orders from a woman..." (145). It is evident that he still lingers in the *good old days* (my emphasis), hiding the racism behind other hierarchies, such as women are inferior to men. Frank senior refers to South Africa as being "[s]till the best country in the world" (135). Consequently, Frank's father is part of South Africa's old, stereotypical white Afrikaner society. Galgut's portrayal of Dr. Frank Eloff sr. mirrors Patrick's father. A further similarity is that Patrick is urged to play rugby, and Frank has been in a team when being a boy (cf. 134). Both characters fulfil their compulsory military service. Patrick, as well as Frank, tries to supersede their experiences there (cf. 67). Even the commandants are alike. Moller, Frank's superior, is described as "[having] a reputation that spread far beyond his physical presence - for a blind and holy devotion to his job" (62), and Frank "was afraid of him and went out of [his] way to avoid him" (62). Thus there is a complete repetition of markers of masculinity as they are deployed in *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. The difference between the protagonists is that Patrick is able to break free of the given ideology, while Frank still pretends to be part of it. So far, Titlestad's assumption that white society is in the process of change (119) proves to be untrue in the novel.

However, the protagonist himself is not part of the stereotypical white identity. He is, as most of Galgut's characters, a deviation of society. Similar to Patrick, he has to hide his homosexuality, and does so even before himself, fearing the consequences of a coming out. Frank marries, but lives in separation, because his wife betrays him with Mike, his best friend. As a result, Eloff takes up his position in the remote hospital with the prospect

^{4 4} All page numbers in parenthesis in the following refer to this edition

of becoming the head. Nevertheless, he has to wait seven years before "[t]hings are moving [...] at last" (152). Thus, falling in a state of apathy and boredom, Frank begins to explore the surrounding landscape:

When I first got here I loved the landscape, the fertility and fecundity of it, the life it gave off. [...] I wanted to move closer to the lush heart of things. But over time what had compelled me most deeply began to show a different, hidden side. The vitality and heat became oppressive and somehow threatening. Nothing could be maintained here, nothing stayed the same. [...] You couldn't not clear a place in the forest and expect to find it again two weeks later. (15)

Considering the use of nature in the previous works, the solitude of the surroundings points toward homosexuality. The unpopulated area gives him room to discover, or even rediscover, this side of his, but Frank is afraid to admit it. The growing back of the trees refers to the still present attitude toward homosexuals in a specific white society: although homosexuals are officially acknowledged, people following apartheid ideology cover this fact up. And so does Frank, most likely because of his heritage. In addition, describing his room at the hospital, the doctor states that "[he] hadn't added anything" (2) and that "[t]here was no personality in the ugly, austere furniture; against this neutral backdrop, even a piece of cloth would have been revealing" (2). Thus, Eloff is as neutral as his room, covering up his true nature. The new roommate, Laurence Waters, forces the protagonist to grapple with his personal past (cf. Titlestad, 2009).

The newcomer asks many questions related to Frank's personal history, forcing him to rethink past situations. Eloff feels "[a] discontent was stirring in me. Old questions I have learnt not to ask were back with me again. Old yearnings and needs" (21). These lines refer to Frank's homosexuality and the need to camouflage it. The "questions [...] learnt not to ask" (21) prevent any other interpretation considering Frank's background. Although he has various affairs with women, the sexual encounters are motivated by Laurence's presence. When taking the new doctor for a ride, they pass Maria's shack. Frank takes up his nightly visits at her place again (cf. 20, 52, 58), but "[i]t was as if [he] was looking for something [he] couldn't get to; the closest [he] could come was by hammering, hammering, on this heavy wooden door" (58). Furthermore, his single sexual encounter with Zanele is also closely related to Laurence (cf. 114). She is the young doctor's girlfriend and jealous of Frank. Laurence mentions him in "every single letter" (cf. 97), illustrating his heightened awareness toward the older man. Zanele gets the impression that "the two of [them] are obviously in love" (101). Although spoken in anger, there is a true grain in it. The young man's "attention settled on him [Frank] only every few seconds, then flitted off to some arbitrary detail, sometimes outside the window. He seemed pent -up and distracted

for no reason that [Eloff] could see" (9). First, Frank is disturbed by the young man watching him constantly (cf. 9), but gets used to it. Hence, there is the possibility that Laurence is homosexual, too. However, there are only few pointers in this direction. When the two men go hiking, Laurence feels shy to uncover his body, whereas Frank is very self-conscious when being in their room (cf. 71). Thus, Eloff hides his sexual orientation when being in the hospital, but the natural surroundings offer enough cover to reveal a little of his personality. Laurence is the opposite. In their room "he didn't care how [Eloff] saw him" (71). Thus, Laurence fears that his true nature is detectable when being in the wilderness with Frank. Their stay in the forest at a pool resembles the scene from "Shadows" and mirrors this narration's protagonist and his friend. As a result, it is argued that both men repress their sexual orientation.

Another, not so subtle indicator for Frank's homosexuality is his feelings when entering Tehogo's room without permission: "I was entering a place inside myself, a sordid little room of my own heart, where a secret was stored. [...] My eyes fell now on traces of a hidden nature. All the magazines lying around were women's magazines, [...]. The images gave off a longing and sentiment and pathos" (124). The doctor's secret may not be represented by women's pictures, but it proves that Frank is hiding a part of his identity, which is his sexual orientation. Although Laurence has a positive influence on Frank (cf. 35, 41, 144f.), meaning that he loses some of his reservations, the doctor keeps up his pretence. He finally becomes head of the hospital, but does not take any measure to change the dire situation of it (cf. 214). Eloff states that "I am content [...] and] that I have come into my own" (215), but only regarding his job. He says that "[his father died] thinking that I have arrived somewhere. And on paper I suppose I have" (214), which proves that his personality still remains unresolved.

This interpretation contradicts Titlestad's conclusion that "the vector of whiteness is generally progressive: most white South Africans are being remade, existentially and politically, in the light of the nation's transformation" (119). Galgut presents apartheid ideology as still being under the surface, continually influencing the ones who experienced this time of South Africa's history. Although politics have a more inclusive character by now, illustrated by the multicultural staff of the hospital, old habits remain unchanged. Ending here, Barris' following critique appears justifiable. There are, however, issues in Frank's, and more importantly, Laurence's, character, which contradict his conclusion.

5.3 Reminders of the Past

Barris (2011) critiques the presence of apartheid figures, stating that they are anachronisms which "[stretch] it [South Africa's literary canon] curiously out of shape" (39). In his opinion, Galgut forecloses the ending rather than opening it up to make room for a diversified view on the nation's future (cf. Barris, 39). Here it is argued, that the critic's argument that "[Eloff] simply will not let go of the past" (28), is only partly true. Although he adheres to the formerly established markers of masculinity, he is definitively not in favour of the old system. Furthermore, Barris says that "[t]he premise appears to be that while the illness of apartheid has been overcome, the societal patient (to borrow Graham Greene's term) is a burnt-out case, permanently stripped of vitality and function. If this hospital is a picture of a society, it is a society condemned to mediocrity, a society with no future" (25f.). Still, this also not fully valid. Laurence Waters, despite his dishonesty, is able to make a change. This is due to the fact that the young doctor belongs to the next generation, who has not experienced apartheid as Eloff has. Thus, when focusing on him instead of Frank, the novel fits into the new South African literary canon.

As established before, Eloff originates from a family keeping up the old values. Thus, the political past is part of his personality, even more so because he adheres to its rules by suppressing his homosexuality. Due to this and his -so far - unchanged position in the hospital, he is what Barris terms "a spokesperson of pessimism, of downright cynicism" (26). However, that does not imply that the doctor feels bitter because of apartheid's end. Rather, his emotions originate from the fact that a full transition has been prevented and that, as a result, he still has to fear uncovering his homosexuality. The main character positions himself outside the bygone history, as he says that "[t]he past and the future are dangerous countries; I have been living in no man's land, between their borders, for the last seven years" (117). These lines indicate that he is used to adhere to the given ideology. Simultaneously he detaches himself from the old values; otherwise he would not perceive deviation as perilous. And because the past is not yet resolved, he cannot become an active part of the future. He still fears negative consequences arising from homosexuality. This notion is supported by Frank's discomfort when driving to Pretoria to see his father and to finally sign the divorce papers. The city is "a foreign world, [... all elements] assembling to make a picture of the past" (132). He is not part of the stereotypical, old white society. Thus, Eloff deems it safe to behave inconspicuously as not to draw any attention to his person. His insecure future derives from the unmediated

personal past: Frank never detaches himself openly from apartheid ideology, unlike Patrick.

Moreover, Frank's anxiety is fuelled by Moller and the Brigadier. The protagonist remembers his time in the army after Laurence expresses that military service would have been a "formative experience" (61). The commandant calls Frank to make a medical assessment of a captured and tortured SWAPO soldier, asking if "[he can] take more questioning" (66). The doctor's first impulse is to help the badly wounded man, but then

I remember who I am, where I am, what is required of me. The man on the floor is an enemy, who will in any case not last the night. It is myself I must look after, so that I don't find myself in his [the prisoner's] place, naked on my back in a cell, not a doctor any more, a patient from whom there will never be a cure. (66)

As this incident takes place in the past, it does not represent an anachronism. It is an integral part of Eloff, because he states that "I have found my grand defining moment, but what it revealed I didn't want to know" (67). At this moment, Frank decides whose side he is on. Again there is a parallel to *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. The military camp is an intensifier of the rules of masculinity, and the doctor chooses to be part of it, and stick with it. His decision is based on fear, making this situation one of the most memorable ones in his life. He meets Moller again when taking Zanele to the only restaurant near the hospital, "Mama Mthembu's place" (39). Frank refers to his time in the army, which results in an outrage on the girl's account. After hearing that "she is having dinner with an enemy" (100), Frank's cynicism surfaces. He tells her that Laurence's "[...] year of community service up here isn't going to teach him much. [...] Let him kill people, let people try to kill him. [...] He wouldn't talk about country clinics and helping the human race any more" (100). Eloff is justifying his passivity and conformity to the past system by indicating that he does not have any other chance. His choice to remain inconspicuous in order to avoid problems brings other difficulties with it. Zanele is exemplary for people of the next generation, who view military as "the bad old days" (100). She consequently assumes that Frank defends the old ideology. This is also a reason for Frank's embitterment. He cannot tell her that he is forced in this role, because it would mean to reveal his true identity. Moller's reappearance reinforces this need, bringing the memory of the SWAPO soldier back to life (cf. 99). His anxiety is based on Moller's unchanged personality. Barris critiques his character as a "stock villain" (32), which is open to discussion when viewing it in the context of literature's task to move beyond apartheid after transition. There is no indication whether the commandant has changed his personality, or not. Regardless of this, Frank fears him, because he knows what his superior used to be capable of during the time

of military service. Here, Galgut deploys criticism directed at the TRC. As mentioned before, Mamdani states that for any perpetrator not identified as such, there is one enjoying impunity (cf. 34). Moller is clearly in the group of the unidentified ones. Moreover, he even moved up in the ranks of the army, being a "colonel" (184). As the shortcomings of the TRC are fact, not fiction, the colonel's character does not represent an anachronism. The Brigadier is a different case. Eloff takes Zanele up to the former seat of the dictator after having sorted out their differences arising from Frank's status as enemy. There they meet the other man, and Zanele is instantly drawn to him, as if he is a "celebrity" (109). Her reaction causes Eloff to rethink his assumption that "power had been taken from him [Brigadier]" (110). Due to that, the doctor feels uncomfortable in his presence, especially after the former dictator announces that "[his] time is coming still" (112). Hence, aside from the doctor's father, Moller and the Brigadier are two further figures in the novel who cling to past ideologies. In contrast to the protagonist, these men do value apartheid and its advantages for them. Therefore, Frank's need to cover up his true identity is also reinforced, amplifying his pessimism. Thus, precisely because he is a cynic, the phrase "[k]eeping the old symbols shining" (104) is not, as pointed out by Barris, to mourn the past, but to refer to people who do so, like the three men, in an ironic way.

5.3.1 Changing the Past

Although politics make all people equal in theory, the division between black and white, rich and poor is very much in evidence throughout the narration. Laurence, who conforms to South Africa's meta - narrative of all people being equal, completely sets politics aside, saying, "[t]hat's all past now. It doesn't matter anymore" (6). He refers to the obvious differences arising from apartheid's legacy. The former homeland used to be divided from white land by a line on a map (cf. 17f.), and it still is this way. The inhabitants of the area, in which the hospital is, are poor (cf. 19), while the city of Pretoria, only a few hours away, is a stronghold for rich, white people (cf. 132, 145). Thus, money, opportunity for work (cf. 4) and education (cf. Maria's quality of speaking and writing in English, 19) are lacking in the former homeland, which is much to Waters' "bewilderment" (5). As Frank points out, "[t]he past has only just happened. It's not past yet" (6). As a result, the demanded equality is far from being within reach, and none of the characters in the novel, except Laurence, trusts peace. All keep to themselves, not wanting anybody to know their secrets. Rather, they try to preserve *peace* (my emphasis) by refraining to make drastic movements. Frank's description of their medical emergencies mirrors their attitude:

"Appendicitis was the sort of emergency we liked: recognizable and treatable, within the scope of [their] resources" (12). Even Dr. Ngema, a black woman, does not trust the gained freedom of democracy. She opposes change and progress, although repeating mantra-like the opposite (cf. 33). Additionally, she reinforces the old hierarchy. Dr. Ngema positions Laurence in Frank's and not Tehogo's room, "[b]ecause... Tehogo isn't a doctor [...]. It makes sense for two doctors to share." (8). Frank reads between the lines and comes to the conclusion that "[b]ehind the words were other words, not spoken. [...] it was that we were two white men, and we belonged in a room together" (8). Hence, Galgut demonstrates that, although there is no obvious racism involved anymore, people still categorize others based on skin colour, hiding it behind other forms of hierarchy.

Laurence Waters' appearance forces the staff of the hospital to rethink their established way of living and judging other people. He is, despite his truly blind idealism, a positive force. The young man's personality is constructed consciously by himself. He denies his origins by saying that his parents are dead (cf. 44), indicating that he rejects their beliefs. Moreover, he wants to "be different" (40), and "do work that means something" (40). His whole identity is build upon assigning a meaningful purpose to his life. The clinic provides fertile ground for his self-assigned task, as neglect is visible in each corner. Frank takes him around in the hospital, which already affects the older man: "But now all came into focus, as if it was my first day. I walked him through the hospital. The life and activity of the place was all at one end of the main building; [...] Doors led into deserted wards, rows of beds standing spectral and naked between green curtains hanging on rails" (33). Thus, Frank sees what Laurence sees: the need to do something to improve the situation. However, Frank's character prevents that Laurence's enthusiasm wins him over completely. Still, he begins to perceive everything with "[his] new eyes" (35). Although Eloff does not conform to Laurence's urgency and blind idealism, he at least acknowledges the need for change. The young man starts to improve the hospital's outer appearance (cf. 56f.), which also has an effect on the staff. Although "the weeds and the grass grew back" (58), indicating that his efforts have no consequences, the young man goes on in his cause. Laurence develops the idea of running a field clinic, as "people won't come to the hospital, then let the hospital go to them" (77). Frank is still of the opinion that "nothing changed. That was the way of things up here" (80). Still, his roommate's doings make an impression on him: "My life looked as it normally did. But somewhere deep down, underneath, it wasn't the same" (80). Hence, gradually Laurence alters the people with his optimism, paving the way for a change. Slowly, by degrees, he also converts the hospital's identity.

Before, people live next to each other without getting involved, like a "little jumble of disconnected buildings" (34). The young man's party, given in honour of Zanele who visits him for a few days, tears down some of the reservation:

Something had happened to us that night; it was as if we'd fallen through a wall that normally bricked us in too tightly to move. The room opened and closed like a lurid flower around me. I wasn't myself. The loose abandon that had come over me was something foreign and lush. I felt as if I was up on a height, from which I could look down on the usual contours of my life and see how narrow and constricted they were. But I would never go back. I knew that all of us would stay where we were, in this high place, in this benevolent state of friendship that had fallen like grace upon us. (90f.)

Although Frank's elevation only lasts to the next morning (cf. 93), the party's atmosphere and Laurence's infecting idealism results in a general improvement of the hospital's aura (cf. 154). Resulting from the relaxed atmosphere, the staff agrees in helping Laurence to set up a field clinic. Even Dr. Ngema is convinced of its advantages (cf. 155), despite her aversion against change and disrupting events. Only Frank excludes himself from the prevailing happiness. This is due to his personality and the recent encounter with Moller. His old fears are re-established, thus he is not likely to believe in Laurence's success. The young man disappears or dies in the end trying to defend a patient. His death is the final cause for Frank's belief in a positive future, strange as it may seem. Laurence's commitment transforms his decease, rendering it almost as the one of a martyr. Thus, Eloff's final statement that "other places, other people, will follow on" (215), is directed to idealists like Laurence. They have the power to improve things, because they are not hindered by past politics. Consequently, the doctors saying that "[he] won't be stuck here for ever" (215), represents a positive outlook also regarding his personality. There might be a time in which he can openly admit his homosexuality without having to fear consequences.

Laurence Water is, therefore, the nation's future. Galgut is positive that change will happen, although only slowly. Reading *The Good Doctor* this way, there are no anachronisms which put the novel outside South Africa's new literary canon. Moreover, the two presented interpretations of the narration's ending contradict Barris' opinion that it is foreclosed and society is doomed to go on without a future. (25f.).

5.4 Summary

Once more Galgut demonstrates that he is highly aware of the political situation in South Africa. Again, he combines a personal story to the larger context. Aside from the structural weaknesses of the plot, as pointed out by Barris (2011), *The Good Doctor* does not provide much ground for criticism on the author's behalf. It illustrates the present "dire" (214) situation and, at the same time, a positive outlook for the nation's future. The only critical remark offered here is the moral of the story. Galgut seems to pass on responsibility to the generation of transition and democracy.

6. *The Impostor*

Adam loses his work and home, which forces him to take up residence in a rundown, remote place owned by his brother Gavin. At the edge of poverty, Adam decides that it is time to change his life. Thus, he returns to his almost forgotten identity of a poet. A chance meeting with Kenneth Canning, a friend from school days, so it seems, draws Adam into the shadowy depths of South African business deals. Lies are at the base of each action undertaken by him and his new associates, resulting in various conflicts and complications. Canning's game park is in the centre of attention, representing a link to Adam's past.

6.1 Issues in the Novel

South Africa repositions itself in global politics. It "avoids blaming particular policies or global trade structures for Africa's marginalisation" (Taylor and Nel, 164), and "passes the blame on to the mystical notion that is known as 'globalisation'" (Taylor and Nel, 164). Fittingly, this era is known as "African Renaissance" (Taylor and Nel, 165). However, there is one often repeated point of criticism: Africa orientates itself too much on the line of "Northern-dominated hegemonic order" (Taylor and Nel, 165). In general, the two critics fear that

[...] this very acceptability and 'fit' [...] carries within it the danger that the message of this group will serve to legitimise (perhaps unwittingly) existing global power relations rather than restructure them. Asserting that Africa must 'gel' with the world, as one report put it, without interrogating the structural situation within which the continent (and the South in general) finds itself, is highly problematic. Furthermore, the agenda that they [South African political elite] seek to push holds within it seeds for a further marginalisation of the majority of Africa's peoples

while granting a highly privileged stratum of African elites the potential to benefit from the ongoing globalisation process. Indeed, a main criticism of the initiatives being advanced is that they serve the interests of externally oriented fractions within key (comparatively developed) African states while leaving the rest of the continent to sink or swim, as it were, with the globalisation current. (166; cf. Tikly, 2004)

This process is described as "New Imperialism" (Tikly, 175). Tikly states that "[it] emerged within the broader context of contemporary globalization" (175), which is the reason for the widening gap between rich and poor nations as well as inhabitants of a country (cf. Tikly, 2004). He identifies Western the "development" (177) programme as one of the key conveyors for "re-inscribing the old north-south relationship which had until then been largely formed in relation to the colonizer/ colonized opposition" (181). He continues in the following way:

Further, whereas colonizers and colonized had previously belonged to two different universes, separated by a gulf of biological and cultural difference, the new binary represented a step in the reinvention of the 'Third World' as part of a continuity with the West (Escobar, 1995). Furthermore, whereas classical colonialism was premised on the view that although the 'natives' could be 'civilized' to some degree, they could never achieve equality with the West, in 'development' discourse, it became possible for underdeveloped regions and populations to evolve into developed ones. This did not mean, however, that the previously colonized were now seen as cultural 'equals' with the West, at least until they had become more 'westernized'. (Tikly, 181)

The process of westernisation is carried out by education, which is part of the development programmes. Western assumptions, beliefs and practices are put in the "colonised minds" (Tikly, 187f.) to reinforce Western or Eurocentric thinking (cf. Kwaku Larbi Korang, 2004). Galgut's *The Impostor* demonstrates these effects of globalisation by illustrating the companies' and politicians' strategies to enrich themselves. The divide between rich and poor is plainly visible. Galgut puts strong emphasis on corruption, by which he criticises South Africa's as well as Europe's political elite.

A further issue is the importance of land, more specifically game reserves. In general, these are used to conserve nature and wildlife, and they are part of the tourism industry as locations for photo safaris. Such parks are erected under the motto of preserving the environment (cf. L. Green, 2010), but "such a claim masks [...] the particularly controversial nature of conservation" (L. Green, 291). She refers especially to "a poor rural population, [for whom] the deliberate setting aside of land, which could otherwise be used for hunting or grazing" (L. Green, 291) has more negative than positive effects. Moreover, today's game reserves have to reshape their image. Louise Green states

that the new type of safari "reclaim[s] the notion of 'safari' from its past association with European imperial travel and colonialism and [reinserts] it in a new rhetorical structure linked with the 'moral value' of environmentalism" (294). She explains the difficulties of the modern version of safari in the following way:

It is the ambiguity of the colonial that the endless definitions and redefinitions of the New Safari have to negotiate. Because if as style it can be regarded as simply one aesthetic among others, as a set of practices it includes, like the old safari, institutionalised forms of racial discrimination. To be 'overly-colonial' might be to evoke too clearly the disturbing practices of colonialism, which the New Safari wishes to supersede. (L. Green, 295)

The storyline of *The Impostor* is centred on an old game park. It is the stage for a shady business deal involving Adam's friend, local politicians and celebrities, and a shadowy, criminal character known as Mr. Genov. The employees of this place would own it by law, but Canning's knowledge of business strategies allows him to exploit them while pretending to help these people. Hence, old race divisions are still in place and new imperialism is at full play in the novel.

6.2 Win - Win Strategies

The narration depicts the divide between rich and poor in South Africa. Those who have the education, knowledge and money, prosper in business at the expense of the others. As a result, the gap widens. In *The Impostor*, Galgut delineates several groups of people demonstrating the effects of these business strategies. Kenneth Canning, Sipho Moloi and Mr. Nicolai Genov are the corrupt centre of the storyline. The people of the settlement Nuwe Hoop are exploited by those men: they are cheap work force and do not benefit from the changes in the country. Canning's servants, Grace and Ezekiel, are representative of the apartheid system. They have no place to go and do not know any other life than serving their master. Galgut does not make much a difference between black and white persons, but rather between educated and uneducated ones.

Corruption and exploitation of others are the main issues in the novel. Adam's brother Gavin, a property developer, does not object to "unscrupulous" (*The Impostor*, 19⁵) deals. He pays a black man to lend his name as company director because "his name on the letterhead brought in legitimacy and investment" (19). Gavin's personality is constituted by the need to be successful and rich (cf. 22). Hence he proposes to Adam to take up residence in a little house in the Karoo. Gavin buys it because it is considered as "trendy"

⁵ All page numbers in parenthesis in the following refer to this edition

(8) to own such a place, but he uses it only few times. Until Adam moves in, the house is empty for some years and, as a result, in a bad state (cf. 23). Gavin argues that it will be "the perfect spot" (23) for Adam to restart his career as a poet, implying that his only motivation is to help. Considering Gavin's character, it is more likely that he uses Adam's desperate state of living conditions to restore the place. Adam agrees, but without knowing his brother's true intentions. Resulting from that, the protagonist is also a victim of corruption. The scheme of exploiting people while pointing out the benefits for those is the central theme throughout the novel. Canning, Adam's supposed friend from school days, enriches himself by following this pattern.

The land on which Kenneth's game park is build belongs rightfully to the people of Nuwe Hoop. Canning explains that these people "were chased off one of my father's farms" (60) and reclaim the area. However, Canning "donated the land" (60) to build the settlement in order to "head off a land claim" (60). He argues that they are "[c]heap labour on tap to build the pass. And I'll be using them in my future plans too" (60). Kenneth points out that a "[p]artnership between big business and the previously disadvantaged -it's a new South African solution" (60). Still, the inhabitants of the settlement do not gain anything. Adam describes Nuwe Hoop in the following terms:

[There] was an odd collection of buildings. It was like a tiny township, with rows of replicated houses, except that care had been taken over appearances: there were tarred roads and rudimentary gardens. The houses themselves were built in imitation Cape Dutch style, which couldn't disguise the fact that they were small and basic. It wasn't quite poverty, but something close to it, dressed up as gentility and correctness. [...] And in a certain way, the place did seem new and hopeful. But the human figures moving between the buildings looked leaden and aimless. (35)

Thus, Canning offers those people roofs over their heads, but no future. Rather, he incorporates them into his own progressing. Moreover, he gets "the better deal" (60). The game park is set in fertile land and covers a tremendous area: "The vegetation is vivid and dense, rising in vertical waves. It is shocking, all this verdant through. It's like a tropical island that has been towed in from somewhere else and moored incongruously here" (62). Ironically, the reservation is styled in a "*faux*-African style" (62), carrying the name "Gondwana" (62). The "rondawels" (74), the apartments, are

with the same design as the lodge, the same pretence at ethnic simplicity: smooth mud floors, and the thatch showing between the wooden struts of the roof. But a mosquito net is draped over the bed, and there is a television discreetly hidden in a cabinet; through the open door of the bathroom he can see the gleam of Italian tiles. This is five-star luxury, with an artful veneer of modesty on top. (74)

The difference between these two kinds of housing is telling of the divide in the nation. There is not so much a difference between black and white anymore, but between rich, or at least middle class, and poor, between those who can afford leisure and those who cannot. The toll station at the new road connecting the game park, Nuwe Hoop and the further country signifies this new restriction. Adam, in order to occupy himself, goes for a ride when coming to the station. However "he was too poor right now to pay fifteen rand in both directions just to while away a few hours in contemplation" (35). As a result, wealth is the new measure to categorise people. Kenneth plans to use and employ the people of Nuwe Hoop to replace the game park with a golf course (cf. 137, 192). There is much irony in it: the people, who by right own this land, are dependent on Canning for work and money. He gains their land by fraud, and employs the inhabitants to destroy their property. Canning describes the luxury and exclusivity of his project (cf. 136) and how he wants to "exploit the interest in fossils by building a dinosaur theme park" (137). Gondwana is a rich place for finding prehistoric fossils (cf. 115) and bushman art (cf. 98), representing a link to the past for the indigenous population. Apartheid cut them off from their own traditions, and the game park would be a good opportunity to learn about it. Still, Canning only sees the possibility to make money. Similar to Gavin, his only ambition is wealth, not the need to help people. Moreover, Mr. Genov "wants to *lose* money with this scheme. [...] For tax reasons, or maybe he just needs to move money around" (138). Hence, Kenneth's statement that "[i]t's a win-win situation for everybody" (137), excludes the people of Nuwe Hoop. As a result, the golf course is simply another form of modernity and apartheid: "Black people are living inside and outside of modernity as they were the backbone of modernity because their involuntary work on plantation as slaves brought forth modernity. Those slaves the status of citizens was denied, thus, they were outside of modernity" (Featherstone, 11). This concept is easily applicable to Canning's plan. The inhabitants of the "satellite village" (137) are denied the status as equals, working in the club to ensure that the members enjoy every possible comfort. However, they themselves still live in a poor area. Nuwe Hoop is in no means different to what the townships used to be: a place for the nearby workforce, but remote enough as not to disturb the exclusive image of the golf club. Adam perceives these people as "a chorus without voice" (113) reflects the one-sidedness of the win-win strategy. Quite aptly, the protagonist sums up these thoughts in the following way: "The travesty that Canning is cooking up is made of greed and absurdity, with a big moral hollowness at the core" (138).

6.2.1 Apartheid's Legacy and New Imperialism

Although apartheid is officially denounced, its remnants are still present in the novel. Ezekiel and Grace, the old black servant couple, do not have a future apart from doing what they know - serving a master. New Imperialism ensures that money is brought into the country, but only to the already wealthy. There is no help for those who cannot afford education in any way. Thus, inequality endures and the past is not yet fully resolved.

Baby, Kenneth's black wife, and Sipho Moloi, Canning's business partner, are in stark contrast to Grace and Ezekiel. Baby is rich due to her marriage with Canning. She watches all her steps and conversations in order to conceal her originally low status (cf. 126). She does not feel any sympathy toward Grace, rather, she treats her as a servant: "[...] no glance, no acknowledgement, passes between the two women, except in the form of command" (92). Moloi has a similar attitude regarding Ezekiel. Canning asks the old servant about his life with his former master, Kenneth's father. Adam seems to be the only one aware of the strange situation: "[He] wonders at what wordless perceptions might be passing between this young, well-heeled black yuppie, and the poor old family retainer. But perhaps he is the only one who notices: the two of them are so far from one another, sitting at such divergent points of history, that they might be in different worlds" (95). In fact, South Africa is split in two worlds. On the one side are the new South Africans heading into a promising future, while the needs of others are neglected. Development programmes are aimed at the new generation (cf. 15), but there is no aid for those who grew up under apartheid. The old servant couple is in the situation of "blind economic dependence" (95), because there is no possibility to learn any other way of living. Still, Adam's insight into their situation remains without consequence. He falls back into the habit of viewing them as background characters without lasting impression (cf. 113). Their forgotten and neglected status is evident after they are dismissed by Baby. Grace discovers her having an affair with Adam, and fearing that the old woman might endanger Baby's comfortable life, the young woman fabricates a reason for having them dismissed. The old couple turns to Adam for help (cf. 207), and he does not know any other solution than bringing them back to Gondwana. There, however, they are not welcome anymore. Canning believes that they steal from the kitchen, although Grace and Ezekiel are "most devoted servants" (94). He is quite happy that he does not have to take care of the two anymore, because "[t]hey are pretty useless these days. Not much future there" (96). Being confronted with them again, he tells Adam that "they're not [his] problem" (209). The

question of whose problem remnants of apartheid are arises. New South Africa demands to forget the past, thus there is no one who supports people like Grace and Ezekiel. Also Adam is at loss. In the end, he shifts his responsibility to Lindile, Grace's and Ezekiel's son. Until the son arrives, Adam gives the old couple shelter. Reflecting on the situation the two are in, money seems to be the only way of *helping* (my emphasis):

He wishes he had money. With money, a great deal would be possible. He could pay for them to sleep at the hotel; he could give them a proper meal at a restaurant. Better yet, he could give them a big cash donation and send them on their way, his conscience eased. With money, he could put a gap between him and them; he could wash his hands of them completely. (214)

Also in his view, financial support is a very convenient resolution for not having to take responsibility for his doings. Grace and Ezekiel would not be in such a situation if it wasn't for him and Baby. Galgut displays not only the problems people originating from apartheid times have, but also the ones of the new generation. The needs of such people like Grace and Ezekiel are unknown to him. Thus, capital serves to soothe guilty consciences and to forget the past. Also Lindile foregrounds finances, demanding support from Adam: "If you want to help, [...] if you really want to help, then give us some money. That will make a difference" (221). It is not known in which way money would make a difference for Lindile. His following statement, "[n]o money, no power" (221), may refer to education, as schooling helps to improve living conditions in terms of well-paid labour. Moreover, it may improve the knowledge of how Western business strategies work. Also the protagonist is no exception. He is not familiar with business, and, more importantly, he does not *want* (my emphasis) to know, or to learn, how it functions. Adam, for whom "[t]he world of business, of money and power [...] has always been a mystery" (102), is drawn into Canning's illegal deals. He is in the role of an unseeing - and unhearing - "witness" (140) of these processes. There are numerous hints at the illegal activities of Canning, Genov and Moloi. For example, the protagonist listens to parts of a conversation between Canning and Moloi in which they talk about a "donation" (89) to pass the "EIA" (89), the Environmental Impact Assessment (cf. 216). Adam learns that Sipho is part of the government (97), thus it is obvious that both men are involved in corruption. The protagonist trusts Canning, so he does not become suspicious. In addition, his indifference toward business prevents him from asking Kenneth what he plans to do. Canning in turn, consciously upholds this blindness, or rather inexperience. He does so for two reasons: a) it is illegal and the fewer people know, the better, and b) because it ensures cheap, dependent workforce. The people of Nuwe Hoop are victims of economy, being pushed into

dependence. First, they may not know that they are being betrayed and second, they cannot afford to fight Canning, because they have no money to do so. Resulting from that, money does mean power in terms of economic well-being as well as in terms of knowledge. As long as improvement is denied to all inhabitants of South Africa, the division into two worlds will remain in existence.

6.3 The Fallen Poet

Adam focuses on his personal concept of beauty in order to compose poems. He perceives nature as harmless surroundings, void of any political or social implications. This view is taken from his past, from his youth in which he writes his first volume of poetry. At this time, his works gain success, because they derive from Adam's true feelings. His latest works lack this ingenuity and originality, because they rely on the images of the past, and do not incorporate the protagonist's present view of the world. Nevertheless, Adam realises this only after Canning announces his future plans regarding the golf course. So far, Gondwana is his source of inspiration, because it represents a link to his past. After its destruction, Adam starts to perceive nature and his ability as a poet differently. Moreover, his neighbour, Mr. Blom, confirms the protagonist's apprehension that he is not a poet. Mr. Blom crafts sculptures which are inspired by this man's personal history. These are ugly, but the protagonist has to acknowledge their meaningfulness. In the end, Adam gives up poetry, because his concept of beauty has lost its appeal and meaning to him.

The protagonist's decision to write poetry again derives from his need "to make a contribution" (20). However, there is no indication in which ways he wants to achieve that. This is due to the reason that his identity as a poet is a fabricated one. He relies on the past, in which his poems "had attracted some attention, mostly because of his age" (21). Adam is in a desperate situation, but "the poet in him felt renewed" (21). Having no definite future, the protagonist starts to rework the recent misfortunes as "something he'd willed upon himself. He hadn't lost his job; he had given it up. He hadn't lost his house; he was shedding possessions" (21). Resulting from that, Adam's "moment of truth" (21), his certainty to be a writer, is a lie. Hence, Adam builds the image of a "penniless poet" (22), being "the real soul of the country" (22). He agrees to Gavin's proposal to take up residence in the small house in the Karoo, because Adam already sees "himself sitting at a window, a vista of rolling hills and fields outside, words proceeding from his pen in a long, unbroken flow, and it was exactly where he wanted to be" (24). In the protagonist's mind, the Karoo and his future proceedings as poet form a romantic picture, similar to his first

poems (cf. 21). Nevertheless, the landscape of the area is in stark contrast to the lush surroundings in which he writes his first volume. The Karoo is described in the following way:

There were sun-blasted stretches of plain, then sudden eruptions of oddly-shaped hills. The emptiness was powerful and strange. It had the feel mostly of desert, but it was springtime and in certain fertile valleys, where there was water, the green was vivid and intense. Sometimes there would be a farm-house, with a scattering of buildings, a few stick-like human figures. And sometimes there was a tiny dwelling, no bigger than a room or two, in the middle of a huge desolation. It didn't seem possible that anybody could live there. (25)

Similar to an idea developed in "The Clay Ox", the vastness of the desert resembles emptiness in Adam himself. However, this novel's protagonist does not want to acknowledge his creative bareness. Rather, he tries to focus on the surrounding nature, saying that the beauty of the deserted landscape "would be more valuable for having to be learned" (25). Adam cannot draw any inspiration from his surroundings: "He could see, in theory, how beautiful this landscape was, but it remained outside him, resistant to poetry" (40). The true problem of Adam's writer's block is not the "wrong landscape" (40), but his inability to connect to it. He perceives his environment as a "stark, stripped-down countryside" (25), as "not African" (25) in contrast to the one of his youth, which is "African" (25). His poems of this time are "hymns to the bushveld" (25). Reflecting on his inability to compose lines centring on nature, he discovers that "[p]oetry was beyond him" (41). The protagonist cannot build a meaningful connection to his environment, because his whole identity is constituted by images of his past. He tries to continue where he left off in his youth without considering the present. As a result, the natural surroundings are apprehended as "hostile" (40) by Adam, because he cannot see himself having a definite future in new South Africa. Nevertheless, this notion is quickly cast aside, because it disturbs the protagonist's self-perception.

The chance meeting with Canning reassures the protagonist of his cause to take up poetry again. Kenneth obviously admires Adam's first volume of poetry (cf. 54), which quiets the protagonist's self-doubts. His friend's game park is another connection to Adam's past. The landscape there is very much alike to the one of his youth (cf. 70, 114). Adam seeks a nature void of political and social implications, a harmless landscape. He wants beauty for beauty's sake. Therefore, he turns a blind eye on the evident poverty (cf. 25, citation above) and inequalities. The people of Nuwe Hoop, Grace and Ezekiel, are made to fit in his picture of Gondwana (cf. 113). Also in his past he seeks "no ideological project [...] with his pursuit of Beauty" (39), which earned him the accusation that he avoids "the

moral crisis at the heart of South Africa" (39). He feels the duty "to replace politics with aesthetics" (39), because "his life was empty of protest" (39). Adam is aware of history (cf. 72), but he detaches himself absolutely from politics. The need for aesthetics as the sole driving force is evident in his present life. Thus, the protagonist reshapes the world according to his limited perception of beauty. In Gondwana he can freely engage in his pursuit, so his writer's block diminishes: "[...] after he's visited Gondwana, he sits down at his desk with that familiar inward glow, which outlasts the act of writing: even in his idle times, he feels fired now with conviction and certainty, a sense of powerful purpose. *This* is what he came up here for; *this* is the self he wanted to discover" (109). Hence, Adam ignores consciously the before-mentioned allusions to Canning's illegal deal, because he simply does not want to know about it. Aesthetics matter more than politics in the protagonist's world view. When Canning announces that the game reserve will become a golf course in the near future, Adam is angry. His source of inspiration, his link to the past, is taken from him and he begins to perceive his surroundings differently. "[...] he has moved here, to the countryside, because he wanted to speak with childlike simplicity about nature, but he finally understands he's been deserted by that voice. A great complexity has sprung up between him and the world. [...] He has lost his innocence [...]" (143). Hence, the protagonist apprehends that poems can only derive from true emotions, not from his revived past. He has moved on, thus the poems do not reflect his present world view. Mr. Blom's sculpture confirms Adam's initial fear that he is not able to compose anymore. The sculpture the man gives to the protagonist "is indisputable *real*. Not pretty at all - full of spikes and power, there's something unwholesome about it" (147f.). Adam senses that true emotions are responsible for the distinct figure, and he also understands that these are not positive ones, as "it disturbs him in a deep, wordless way" (148). Blom voices his feelings with this sculpture, which becomes evident when he confesses his past crimes to Adam. He walks over to the protagonist to ease his mind and sees the sculpture on a shelf. Adam is forced to acknowledge that he "doesn't like it [and] finds it quite ugly" (167). Blom's reply that "[s]ometimes the truth is ugly" (167), initiates the confession (cf. 169) and reveals the figure's deeper meaning. Galgut does not include which crime in particular inspired the shape of the statuette, but its meaning is clear to Adam. It is the embodiment of Blom's violent past, in itself a form of confession. The protagonist's first impression of the realness and disturbing character of the figurine show that the quality of a work, be it a poem or a sculpture, depend on originality. The neighbour's visit and the destruction of Gondwana (cf. 192f.) destroy Adam's perception of his surroundings. Now, he is fully aware of its

destructive, ugly and violent side, which cannot be ignored. Reviewing his latest poems, the protagonist apprehends that "he has been a fool, coming to live out here, chasing after the past. He isn't - he never was - a poet. [...] The whole saga has been a case of mistaken identity" (199). Hence, the main character gives up poetry because his aesthetics, his concept of beauty for beauty's sake, does not work. There is still the demand that poetry, and writing in general, must have a connection to present issues. Observing the peacocks in Gondwana, he sees "the brutal appetite" (211), which mirrors the greed of the people surrounding the protagonist. His question of "[w]ho could write a poem about a peacock" (211), demonstrates that he is not willing to reflect on reality in his works. Thus, he gives up living in the countryside and settles in the city again. There he meets Canning for the last time. When they part, the protagonist feels "as if he'd left something behind, something vitally important that he would need in just a moment" (249). With Kenneth, the last symbol of Adam's past disappears. It signifies that the main character detaches himself from his personal history, which is resembled by the statue of a "forgotten hero" (249). Hence, he is one of the new South Africans who do not assign importance to the past. There is nothing left from Adam's initial wish to make "a contribution" (20), because it would involve coping with present issues such as corruption and the still existing problems caused by apartheid.

The ending allows two interpretations regarding Galgut's opinion on aesthetics unconnected to politics. First, because all his works so far combine nature and politics, he deems it impossible to separate the two in order to create meaningful writing. Place identity shapes the nation as well as inhabitants. As writers are part of a country, they cannot distinguish themselves from the influence of politics and social issues. Second, Galgut criticises the demand to consider history at all times in literature. Elleke Boehmer formulates the dilemma of post-apartheid writers in the following way: "The writers appear wary or uncertain about addressing themselves to genuine experiment, to the craft of writing as a movement beyond formula und blueprint, as worth doing it for itself" (47). Hence, writers are hindered in their attempt to focus on aesthetics without implications such as history and politics. Adam's choice to give up poetry reflects both views: a) his poetry is "*bad*" (199), because it does not reflect on reality, and b) he does not want to incorporate it.

6.4 Summary

The Impostor is the most negative novel so far. Galgut does not offer any characters that are void of corruption. All people in the narration strive after money and success, mostly at the expense of others. One gets the impression that the whole of the novel's South Africa is undermined with it, preventing any positive outcome. Moreover, Adam's wish to contribute something is undefined. As a result, his decision to give up poetry is meaningless, no matter which of the two interpretations offered above apply. Moreover, the storyline involving the game park loses importance with the novel's progression. The implications of it are connected to Adam too weakly. First, Gondwana seems of great significance for the protagonist, but there is too little information on his personal past to establish a meaningful link for the reader. Second, the main character's focus on beauty could have been fully deployed there, but Galgut's descriptions of the given landscape are simply observations of the surroundings. Adam merely states repeatedly how beautiful the wilderness is, but he does not refer to specific items which inspire him to write his poems. Nevertheless, Galgut depicts the conflicting identities of Adam's past and new South Africa. The protagonist cannot connect to his surroundings, because he still lives in the time of his youth. The strive for money, signified by the golf course, is in contrast with his attempt to write poetry.

7. *In a Strange Room*

The narration consists of three stories, united by the subtitle "Three Journeys". In each of them, the protagonist Damon travels through Africa, Europe, and India encountering people who shape his life. He is driven by restlessness, deriving from his need to run away from himself. Damon is not able to connect to the world and its inhabitants, thus he cannot bear to remain still in one place for a longer period of time. In the first narration, "The Follower", he meets a German named Reiner. Their chance encounter on a lonely road leads up to a mutual journey to Lesotho. While travelling, their similarities and disparities become obvious, resulting in a tension mirrored by a storm. Their relationship ends in silence. The second journey, called "The Lover", features Damon and his encounter with three travellers. He becomes especially attached to Jerome, but neither of them is brave enough to voice their love for each other. Jerome's death causes the protagonist to reflect on his failure to be able to love someone. The last story, "The Guardian", is about a female

friend of his who attempts suicide while they are together on a journey through India. Her death provides the insight that each encounter, each journey, affects Damon's self.

7.1 Issues in the Stories

Politics as well as the single focus on South Africa are lacking almost completely in Galgut's latest work. Sofia Kostelac describes the trilogy in the following way: "Galgut's South African context is de-prioritized and features as only one of many aspects of his identity. Moreover, as his journey unfolds, the singularity of the South African context is diminished and, as he travels through Zanzibar, Tanzania and Malawi, South Africa appears as only one of many locales in transition" (Kostelac, 58f.). However, the transition is more prominent regarding the protagonist's identity than the nation's development. Although Damon is the main character throughout the three narrations, there is another self of him present. This integrity is an older version of the protagonist, reflecting upon his past. Moreover, because he is "self-consciously named" (Kostelac, 58) Damon, the omniscient narrator could be the author himself. Thus, the reassessment of the personal history is a journey into the identity of the narrator, and probably, of Galgut. Elleke Boehmer elaborates on the difficulties authors have after the end of apartheid, and one way of coping with the loss of literature's main theme is "recuperative autobiography as a way of narrating a self into being" (46f.). Resulting from that, *In a Strange Room* is a very personal piece of writing, allowing insight into the issues of negotiating one's identity in the post-apartheid era while still being under the influence of bygone times. The protagonist is obviously interested in Reiner and Jerome, but he refrains from loving them openly. Thus, both encounters tell of the still present restraint on open homosexuality. This idea only works under the following premise: the omniscient narrator is, in fact, Damon Galgut, the author. He has experienced apartheid and its confinements. Therefore, the author represents the link from the past to the present situation of his protagonist. Damon has never experienced apartheid, thus the reluctance to engage in deeper relationships with the other men derives from Galgut's own experiences. Similar to Frank Eloff, the main character in *The Good Doctor*, the author cannot rid himself of history completely. Hence, the collection of these three stories are journeys regarding the literal meaning of the term as well as the figurative one, referring to the explorations of identity by means of re-visiting the personal past.

Galgut's writing style reinforces the notion that Damon's omniscient self undertakes a journey into the personal history in order to arrive at a conclusion regarding identity.

Galgut uses what Stephen Clingman terms "transitive syntax" (Clingman, qtd. in Jacobs, 91). Clingman's theory of the "syntax of the self" (Jacobs, 91) signifies the following:

We can see this, for instance, in questions of syntax, which not only has to *confront* division but *requires* division – in the elements of language and meaning, in morphologies, in sequencing. There is no meaning without *space*, or the gap between meanings, or the elements involving difference in the sentence. But out of these gaps and differences, according to the generative capacities of syntax, a form of navigation takes place, allowing the miracle of utterance and expression. It is the transition across these boundaries that produces meaning, and where meaning is not complete, or is deferred, then further navigations are both invited and required. It is when we fall into singularity – assuming the 'substitutions' of complete and whole meanings – that both our navigations and utterances fall into negation. And so the boundary is also a horizon, a destination never quite reached, like the boundary of the world. The boundary of meaning, then, is a transitive boundary; the transitive is intrinsically connected with meaning; navigation depends on, and creates, the transitive boundary which itself may undergo change. In all these ways the boundary is not a limit but the space of transition. This is true for grammars of identity as well. As we have seen, the self can be a combinatory reality both in space and time, and what provides its transitive form is the capacity for navigation. Differences within the self or between the self and other selves are not overridden or transcended in such a formulation. Rather, they become the foundation of *identity as a kind of meaning* – but meaning considered always as navigation, exploration, transition. (Clingman, qtd. in Jacobs, 100)

Jacobs confirms the above mentioned theory that the omniscient self of Damon is actually Galgut himself:

By naming his protagonist Damon in this novel, which Galgut has admitted is a combination of memoir and fiction, he transitively locates the entire narrative in the space of crossing between actual author, implied author, narrator and subject/protagonist, thereby inviting a reading of the events in terms of both autobiography and fiction. (103)

Clingman states that the transitive syntax "is a function of, and permits, *navigation*" (qtd. in Jacobs, 99). Hence, the writing style itself is a representation of the two kinds of journeys undertaken in the narrations. The actual travels of Damon shape his personality, but only the omniscient self is aware of the effects and reflects upon those in retrospect. While the protagonist's disposition manifests itself in perceptions of nature, his other self comments on and unravels these observations.

7.2 Identity and Politics

Politics do not have the same importance as before. Still, there are incidents, which refer to the past as well as present situation of the nations Damon travels through. South Africa's past shapes Damon's perception of his fellow travellers and his surroundings. These

passages expose Damon's awareness of history, and that it is part of his identity as South African. The present situation, which is one of corruption and illegal circumventions of official procedures, influences his identity while journeying. Hence, history and present time affect him, although he puts himself outside of historical discourses.

In the first narration Damon is in Pylos, Greece, when news of the Golf War are displayed on television. He states that "what he sees isn't real to him. Too much travelling and placelessness have put him outside everything, so that history happens elsewhere, it has nothing to do with him" (*In a Strange Room*, 15⁶). This assertion is made by Damon's other self, indicated by the use of "he" instead of "I" (cf. Jacobs, 103f.). Hence, the omniscient narrator interprets Damon's feelings when this one sees the "images of bombs and burning" (15). As a result, Galgut, through the voice of Damon's older self, claims that "he doesn't carry any abstract moral burdens" (15). Still, history is important for Damon as well as his older self, which shows in travel preparations. Reiner and the protagonist decide to journey to Lesotho. The first "takes himself off to the local library to read up on Lesotho" (22). Damon is relieved, because "at least we will know something about where we're going, but when he gets back it turns out he hasn't found out about the history of the country at all" (22). Thus, the protagonist's first impulse is to inform himself about a country's history before going there, indicating that he is aware of its possible implications on their journey. He knows that the political situation of their destination might be unstable; therefore, he expresses his concern as follows: "[w]hat about the politics, I say, we haven't looked at the human situation, we don't know what we're getting into" (25). Resulting from that is the fact that Damon is not outside history, otherwise he would not insist on informing themselves about it. Moreover, he is not void of moral afflictions as demonstrated by the subsequent conversation between him and Reiner: "Reiner doesn't want to ask permission to camp. Why should we. It's the custom. Their custom, not mine. This is their country we're in. Their country, I don't believe in countries, that's just lines on a map" (39). Consequently, Damon has a different understanding of a country, its past and possible inferences of that than Reiner. The protagonist acknowledges that they are visitors who must follow certain rules in order to pass through without problems. Damon's and his other self's apprehension of history and its moral implications are clearer in the second narration, in "The Lover". Damon teams up with a group of young people, who are on their way to Malawi. At the border post, his national identity becomes important for the first time, because "South African's don't need visas" (72) to get into Malawi. Simultaneously,

⁶ All page numbers in parenthesis in the following refer to this edition

he observes three travellers who cannot pass through. These three are important later, as Damon joins their group on the way to Tanzania. Some persons of his present travel association also need visas, others not (cf. 73). Hence, there seems to be a great amount of confusion who is allowed in which nation on which accords. This issue is "the product of a paradox" (Comaroff, Comaroff, 636). These authors elaborate on the building of a homogenous national identity of post-colonial states and explain that "homogeneity as a 'national fantasy' is giving way to a recognition of the irreducibility of difference" (634). As a result, at each border crossing, Damon is aware of his nationality, identity and his difference in comparison to others. His distinguished status is most prominent in such situations, because they refer to the physical exercise of crossing a line as well as to the mental task of it: "[...] everything turns into metaphor. The border is a line on a map, but also drawn inside himself somewhere" (86). Here it is argued, that there is not only one line, but many of them constituting the limits of personal identity. Each journey defines these lines anew due to fresh experiences and encounters, which form and reshape integrity. One of these restrictions is moral. In Damon's case, his moral integrity is defined by his nationality as South African. There are two passages in "The Lover" revealing the connection between personal and national integrity. He and his companions - not the three travellers - go to Cape Maclear to spend a few days at the lake there. The place used to be restricted to white people only during apartheid (cf. 78). Damon experiences the still existent racial division, which is described in detail by Glen Thompson (2011) in his article "Reimagining Surf City: surfing and the making of the post-apartheid beach in South Africa". One instance of this divide is described in "The Lover" in the following way:

Even the locals take up their appointed place in this version of paradise, they are happy to drop everything when called and go out fishing for these foreign visitors, or prepare a meal on the beach for them in the evening and clean up when they are gone. [...] When they're not needed they simply fade into the background, going back to their natural tasks, [...] (74)

Damon is aware of the economic differences between him and the locals, because, as a South African, he knows perfectly well what causes the inequality. An incident involving a lost flipper demonstrates that his moral derives from his acknowledgement of apartheid and its implications. A man brings the group of young people on a small island by boat, and one of them loses the flipper. Damon realizes that "[t]he price of the flipper is worth maybe a week or two of fishing to this man" (77), thus the protagonist insists on retrieving it. The other members of the group are oblivious to the man's poor economic situation, as they show resentment at Damon's call for help in the search. They simply demand the

fisherman to "buy a new one" (77). Resulting from this episode is the main character's reputation as "fucked-up South African" (77). This interlude is told by his other self, demonstrating that neither of the two is able to leave history behind and behave like an ordinary tourist. It is part of their identity. After this, things change for Damon, and "he finds it difficult to make innocent conversation with these people" (77). The second occurrence takes place shortly after the flipper-scene. Damon listens to an Irish girl who tells him that

she lost her temper with [...] an old man who works at the guest-house, she paid him, she says, to do her washing for her, but when he'd finished he hung it up on a line and neglected to take it down and fold it. Is it too much to expect, she wonders aloud, when you pay somebody to do your washing that they should fold it when it's dry. She smiles and asks, did I go too far. (78)

His outburst and self-evaluation affirm that Damon's personality as South African derives from the nation's history influencing his perception of the surroundings:

He can't contain it any more, the anger that fuelled his little outburst yesterday is now a rage. Yes, he tells her, you went too far. She looks startled and confused. But why. Because he's an old man maybe three times your age. Because he lives here, this is his home, and you're a visitor. Because you're lucky enough to have the money to pay this old man to wash your clothes, your dirty underwear, while you lie around on the beach, you ought to feel ashamed of yourself instead of being so certain that you're right. [...] but his anger is not just at her or even at the others in their party, the hottest part of it is for himself. He is as guilty as any of them, he too is passing through, he too has luck and money, and all his self-righteousness will not absolve him. (78f.)

The protagonist cannot bear to stay in this place any longer. Damon's identity separates him from the others, because it is shaped by being South African. Damon decides to take a ferry and leave Cape Maclear. On the boat, the protagonist meets the three travellers from the border post again. All of them decide to go to Tanzania (cf. 83). There, at the border, the others cross without difficulty, while suddenly Damon needs a visa. Now the present situation of the country becomes important to the main character. He learns that he has to pay for a stamp, the allowance to continue his journey into the country (cf. 87). At first, the protagonist does not understand that the border official is corrupt until another man suggests that he should "[o]ffer him money" (89). He runs back, and the boss of the first official "wants to explain the ethics of this transaction to him, if you want a man to break the law, he says, if you want him to risk his job, then you must make it worthwhile for this man" (92). Damon does not feel outrage at the man's bribability; he is just asking himself "how [he could] not have seen" (90). Hence, corruption is completely accepted. Damon learns that there is always a way around official procedures (cf. 107). The moral line

within Damon shifts. He has not known - or used - corruption to his advantage before the incident at the border post. Now, however, he is not reluctant to exploit it to his advantage. This lesson is important in the last narration, "The Guardian". His friend Anna is in hospital due to an unsuccessful attempt of suicide. This is a crime in India; therefore it must be reported to the police - which Damon does not do (cf. 159). A doctor approaches Sjef, one of Damon's friends in India, and explains that "if there is any hassle from the authorities, to give him a call" (159). With this in mind, the protagonist does not hesitate to call this one when a man from the casualty police arrives at the hospital. The doctor describes Damon what there is to do:

The police must have been tracking her through the hospital, they know she's going to be discharged soon. That's when they'll grab you, so you must get her out before then. Do it now. Go to the doctor in charge of the ward and tell him you want a DAMA. That stands for discharge against medical advice. He'll argue and tell you it's impossible, but you must insist. Then take her out before the doctor can call the police and let them know. The doctor will also be getting a cut, so you must be fast. (168)

Knowing that he must play his part, Damon "want[s] a DAMA, [he] say[s] with false confidence" (169). In this case, it is not important that Damon is South African. What matter is, that he applies the knowledge gained in the second narration. Hence, Damon's morals are defined by the past regarding the perception of the social surroundings, and by the present concerning his moral stance on handling situations to his advantage.

Kostelac states that "Galgut's South African context is de-prioritized" (58f.), but Damon's national identity is important in Malawi and Tanzania. Although the focus is not on South Africa, its history influences the protagonist, and he cannot deny it in other parts of Africa. It is, as Kostelac says, "only one of many aspects of his identity" (58f.). Still, it is a significant one, regardless of his strive to be outside history. The nation's past is the reason for Damon's restlessness and his reluctance to get involved closer with Reiner and Jerome, as demonstrated in the following chapter.

7.3 Inner Conflicts

Damon is travelling constantly, so that he doesn't have to cope with his true identity. He does not feel comfortable in Cape Town, because its place identity is in discord with the protagonist's personality. The city hinders him to unfold his true personality, which is only present when he is alone in nature. Moreover, his "placelessness" (15) is an indicator for his fear of connecting himself too closely to others. As Jacobs says, "travel is an attempt at distracting himself" (103), to stop thinking about himself. Damon states that "travelling is

like free-fall" (26), his second definition, it is like "flight" (26), is more apt. The other, older self, reflects on Damon's restlessness in the following way: "[...] something in him is already moving forward to the next place, and yet he is also never going towards something, but always away, away" (25). In the first two narrations, Damon departs from people as soon as he gets too closely involved with them, such as Reiner and Jerome. In "The Lover", Damon realizes that the lack of love causes his restlessness. There are three key sentences in the texts which help to trace Damon's development: "The world you're moving through flows into another one inside, nothing stays divided anymore, this stands for that, weather for mood, landscape for feeling, for every object there is a corresponding inner gesture [...]" (85). Hence, the key to Damon's personality is his perception of his surroundings. This is especially true in the first narration. The motif of the storm, which initiates his and Reiner's departure from each other, is taken up again in "The Lover", indicating Damon's alienation from Jerome. At the end of this text, the following sentence is important: "A journey is a gesture inscribed in space, it vanishes even as it's made. You go from one place to another place, and on to somewhere else again, and already behind you there is no trace that you were ever there. [...] Things happen once only and are never repeated, never return. Except in memory" (123). Damon begins to realize that not travelling by means of the physical activity helps him to develop his identity, but the mental journey. The ending of "The Guardian" provides the following final insight: "Lives leak into each other, the past lays claim to the present" (180). Hence, Damon resolves the question of who he is. All his past experiences and encounters shape his present identity. Each new journey will define the lines which are "drawn inside himself" (86) anew.

Damon and Reiner have a mutual understanding of each other from beginning on. This, it is argued here, because both have similar identities, and that, in fact, Reiner is pushing Damon towards his true nature. This shows itself in their walking routines. The German chooses the harder paths, over mountains and other obstacles. Hence, the young man constantly works on his own identity by expanding his physical limits. On the other hand, the South African does not show an interest in exploring his integrity. He would rather walk on roads, shorter and easier routes. Reiner forces Damon to follow his directions. Therefore, the protagonist must cope with obstructions and his true self alike. In this respect, the landscape resembles his feelings. The storms, especially the final one, symbolise their moods toward each other.

The protagonist states that "[h]e is intensely happy, which is possible for him when he is walking and alone" (3). Following Galgut's use of nature's solitude in the previous

works, it is obvious from beginning on that Damon is homosexual. His true personality unfolds only in nature. He travels through Greece when he encounters Reiner and the unfolding conversation is "not quite intimate, but familiar. As if they have met somewhere before, long ago" (5). Hence, they perceive each other as "the same" (41). Both are drawn to each other, but "one is too scared and the other too proud, then the apple is finished, the moment past" (13f.). Thus, at this moment both are their true selves, but cannot get past personal restrictions. Next morning, they exchange addresses before departing. Galgut indicates that the two young men will see each other again, as they share a mutual understanding of one another. After one and a half years, Damon returns to South Africa. What follows from the argument that Damon's original identity is displayed only in nature, is that in town and among people, Damon is not his true self, hence somebody else. As a result, he "feels that he is only passing through" (16f.) when returning to "the city he's come back to live in" (16). Soon after Damon's return, Reiner and he make contact and decide to undertake a journey to Lesotho. There are tensions between the young men (cf. 22, 25), but Damon "is sure, when they are out of the city and alone together on the road [the frictions will pass]" (25f.). Thus, when both are their original selves, they will come closer to each other. On the first day of travel, Reiner and Damon make a camp for the night in a cave, and "Reiner comes over and crouches down behind him. They say nothing, the silence thickens into tension" (32). Again, Galgut uses the solitude of nature and the cover of the night to portray homosexuality. As apartheid is over, the darkness would not be necessary anymore. Still, as it is there, one can conclude that Damon and Reiner do not want to show openly their sexual preference. Damon refuses to give in into the tension, because "[w]hat Reiner wants now would be no different than with the woman, a ritual performed without tenderness or warmth or sensual pleasure. But the truth is also that there is an answering impulse of subservience in him, part of him wants to give in, I see shadows thrown up in grappling contortions on the roof of the cave" (33). The subjection is not directed toward Damon being serviceable to Reiner, but to give in to his true identity. Damon wants to be loved without having to hide his homosexuality. From now on, it appears that Reiner is a part of Damon himself, a dark stranger who challenges the protagonist constantly. This notion is enhanced by them being the only human people in a vast landscape for a long time. The German directs where they go, what they buy, and he always chooses the harder, more difficult walking route (cf. 33ff.). They rest after one of the long walks and Damon falls asleep.

[W]hen he wakes hours have gone by and it is starting to storm. The sky is black and blue with cloud, ladders of lightning drop down, thunder shakes the stone. When the rain comes it is almost solid, a door closing off the world. [...] It is like last night, now that he is rested and refreshed, now that the heat has gone, the rawness of his extreme emotions is also soothed, he can almost love this strange place he finds himself in, and his strange companion too. (36)

The storm symbolises the unresolved conflict between the young men. Like the heat, the rising tensions cause emotions, which express themselves in a storm, a fight. However, Damon does not argue with Reiner. Hence, "[t]hese afternoon storms happen almost every day, the heat will build in intensity till it finally breaks, afterwards there is always this feeling of regeneration, in the landscape but also between themselves" (36). Resulting from that, both "avoid personal topics" (37), and the frictions are always under the surface of their journey (cf. 41). Reiner pushes Damon to his physical limits by insisting on a sixty kilometre hike. The German "seems rejuvenated, the point for him was to overcome weakness and the point has been achieved" (46). For Damon however, "something inside him is finished" (46). His "urge to push" (47) Reiner off a cliff expresses his wish to forget about his true identity. He does not want to cope with it; he is tired of Reiner, ergo his original personality, forcing him to overcome his personal weakness. An especially powerful storm initiates the break between the men:

The dark is coming down unnaturally fast and when they look out ahead of them they see why. Rolling in from separate points on the horizon are two massive storms, their paths set to collide roughly where they are standing. The black fronts of cloud are impenetrable, already the sun is obscured. [...] No human force has prepared him for a violence so impersonal or strong. Wind and rain and noise. The ground shakes. Between lightning and the thunder the interval is tiny and getting smaller. Then there is no interval and the centre of power is above them. (48f.)

Damon's and Reiner's, hence Damon's true identity, collide. Now they arrive at a point where Damon has to make a decision. The refreshing effect of the previous storms does not arrive after this particular one. They have a major argument, in which the South African voices his resentments: "Words are coming out from my mouth too, plucked out and thrown, incoherent and mismatched, their trajectories colliding" (54f.). The German and Damon depart in different directions. Consequently, the protagonist decides to go on by himself, and selects the easy way instead of the hard one which entails coping with his identity. Damon sees Reiner two more times in Cape Town. The German takes up residence at the place of Damon's friend, "so as to occupy a corner of his life, forever" (62). Reiner eventually leaves, but the protagonist's self "would not be surprised to see a dark figure in the distance, coming towards him" (64).

Jacobs describes their relation in the following way: "[...] they might be mirror images of each other, but like original and reflection, their images are also opposed" (105). I want to continue this thought with respect to identity: although original and mirror image are opposed, they are one, meaning that without an original; there can never be a reflection. Reiner mirrors, in this respect, Damon's identity: "An image in a mirror is a reversal, the reflection and the original are joined but might cancel each other out" (41). The ending of "The Follower" suggests that neither is erased. Damon's older self "will hardly think of Reiner again, and when he does it is without regret" (64). Hence, he acknowledges that there is a positive influence deriving from Reiner and their fights. Their encounter points out that the protagonist is in need of love. Damon grows by this experience, as observed in "The Lover".

Jerome, one of the three travellers, is at the centre of Damon's interest. The love the young Swiss man offers is not of the pushing and selfish kind of Reiner. Damon is aware that the lack of love causes personal problems:

A few years later he is wandering in Zimbabwe. No particular reason or intention has brought him here. He decides on impulse one morning to leave, [...]. What he is looking for, he himself doesn't know. [...] He still has not made a home for himself. [...] It has begun to feel as if he's never lived in any other way, nor will he ever settle down. [...] In his clearest moments he thinks that he has lost the ability to love, people or places or things, most of all the person and place and thing that he is. Without love nothing has value, nothing can be made to matter very much. (67)

As a result, he "can't seem to connect properly with the world. He feels that this is not a failure of the world but a massive failing in himself, he would like to change it but doesn't know how" (67). Hence, Galgut does not blame post-apartheid South Africa for not being able to acknowledge homosexuality openly, but himself. Consequently, Damon begins to question his present identity and seeks resolution in journeying. Jerome is his chance to find love again.

The other man is equally interested in the protagonist, because "for a long arrested moment they hold each other's gaze before they both look away and try to sleep" (81), when the four of them spend the night at the ferry. Throughout their mutual travel, the main character realizes that "he is outside the group, looking in. In the way the three of them talk and joke and gesture there is also the weight of a private history that will always be impervious to him. [...] This sets him apart, making his loneliness resound in him with a high thin note, like the lingering sound of a bell" (84). Driven by his interest in Jerome and the need to belong to other people, he accompanies them on their way to Tanzania. There the incident at the border hinders him to continue his journey with Jerome and his

companions. He loses precious time and tries to catch up with his new friends. In Mbeya he searches for the train station, as he knows that it is his friends' plan to take a train there. He perceives his surroundings differently when he is alone in search of his friends and after finding them: "In space of five minutes the whole world has changed shape, this town that looked mean and threatening to him is suddenly full of vibrancy and life. They go by taxi to the station. This building too is no longer the empty darkened mausoleum of last night, it's been transformed into a crowded public space filled with noise and commotion" (95). Ergo, Damon's emotions are responsible for his perception of his surroundings, and his positive evaluation depends on the presence of Jerome. In this observation is the solution to Damon's problem. If he attaches himself to someone he loves, he is able to connect to the world. He is, however, still afraid of tying himself to Jerome. They have never had the chance to be alone so far, but when the other travellers go into a bank to get money, "the moment is upon him so unexpectedly" (98). Jerome gets hold of Damon's arm and asks if he would like to live with him in Switzerland (cf. 99). Damon describes his feelings in the following way: "It's like being struck by lightning. Or like being pushed over an edge, on which, he realizes, he's been balanced for days" (99). The protagonist experiences a similar challenge to his identity as when being with Reiner. Nevertheless, where Reiner has been a destructive force, Jerome is a positive one. Again, the main character's life "has narrowed to a fork, at which he dithers in an indecisive rapture" (100). The image of lightning reminds one of the storm he and Reiner are caught in. There, Damon admits that he is afraid of lightning (cf. 50). Therefore, storms and bolts are charged with the meaning of departure and Damon's inability to engage in a deeper friendship. His identity still hinders him in this attempt. Unsurprisingly, the protagonist refuses to accept the invitation. The following reflection of Damon's other self demonstrates the regret he feels afterwards:

Jerome, if I can't make you live in words, if you are only the dim evocation of a face under a fringe of hair, and the others too, Alice and Christian and Roderigo, if you are names without a nature, it's not because I don't remember, no, the opposite is true, you are remembered in me as an endless stirring and turning. [...] I am writing about myself alone, it's all I know, and for this reason I have always failed in every love, which is to say at the very heart of my life. (106)

Damon travels on alone, but cuts the journey short, because of a sudden urge to go to Switzerland and Jerome. In South Africa he is not so sure anymore, and thinks that "the journey is over, and that he's back where he started. The story of Jerome is one he's lived through before, it is the story of what never happened, the story of travelling a long way while standing still" (111). Hence, Damon realizes that his travels only served the purpose

to find himself, but he is never brave enough to take a risk and truly explore his identity. Months later he decides to visit Jerome, but the two are not able to connect the way they have in the bank (cf. 117). Jerome's family welcomes Damon in a friendly way, and he feels comfortable in their middle (cf. 115). Their sense of "completion and unity" (114), a piece of art with the name, "He Has No House" (115), and "the lights of a ferris wheel go round and round and round" (118) pave the way for a temporary stillness of Damon: "He doesn't know why, but this scene [the ferris wheel] is like a mirror in which he sees himself. [...] for the first time since he started travelling he thinks that he would like to stop" (118). The protagonist accepts the fact that the physical exercise of travelling does not resolve his problems. Back in South Africa, the protagonist takes up residence in a friend's place to keep an eye on it. He connects to the landscape around him, "there is no interruption between him and the world, he isn't separate any more from what he sees" (122). He even writes to Jerome and asks for a visit. However, Damon learns that Jerome is dead, and being lonely again he loses the connection to his surroundings: "[h]is body feels old and through the dark lens on his eyes everything he knows looks strange and unfamiliar" (123). His connection to the world around himself is due to his bond with Jerome. He loves him, or at least the one Jerome he meets in Tanzania. Damon's regained ability to do so helps him to bond with his surroundings.

His saying that travels leave no presence and his grief are in contrast. Although journeying might not leave physical traces, the people encountered while travelling are influencing Damon. Reiner brings him a bit closer to his original identity, because he is forced to face up to it. While being with the German, Damon learns that he wants love. Jerome is the embodiment of his wish, but the protagonist is not yet ready to engage that closely with another person. The notion that only memory allows to relive past events confirms the idea that the older self of Damon is working on his identity by means of evaluating his experiences with his fellow travellers. Nevertheless, it is not until he focuses on another person except him that he acknowledges that he already admitted people into his life on a very personal level.

Damon takes a friend, Anna, on a journey to India as a means of recovery for her (cf. 129). Their relationship is under constant strain, as she breaks all her promises given before the departure and puts herself in danger at every possible moment. In the hotel, she attempts suicide by taking all her pills. His call for help signals his need for a person to support him in saving Anna, as well as in rescuing him. Caroline, an English nurse, heeds both requirements. She and Damon are joined through the drama evolving around Anna,

which results in their friendship. Due to this, Caroline tells Damon her personal history, which gives rise to the protagonist's insight.

Damon is "middle-aged now and his travelling habits have changed" (130). He still undertakes various journeys, but he remains "in one place for longer periods of time" (130). He even starts to bond to places and people. The hotel is full of "familiar faces" from the seasons before. Hence, due to age and past experiences, Damon is able to form friendships, although they might only be superficial. Still, it shows that he is comfortable in his surroundings, unlike in his home town. When he discovers Anna's almost lifeless body, Damon "[shouts] with all his force, signalling his distress in rings of sound that move outwards from the room" (148). Galgut inserts consciously a double meaning here. In "The Follower", he includes a passage from William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*: "In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were" (46). These words come to Damon when he "thinks about everything and resolves nothing" (46), hence when thinking about who he is. Consequently, the "distress [moving] outwards from the room" (148) is directed at his inner conflicts. At this moment, Caroline enters the room, and his life alike. Their care for Damon's friend causes them to spend a lot of time together, and the protagonist feels that "something else is afoot, something connected to Caroline" (160). She is the one who rides in the ambulance with Anna, a journey which reminds her of her dead husband (cf. 160). As soon as Anna is stable enough, she is transferred back to South Africa. Damon remains in India, and still spends his time with Caroline: "they cling to each other for consolation [and] keep each other company [...]. She has now become his friend, though he didn't seek her out by choice" (173f.). Due to their close contact, the woman wants to tell her sad tale to Damon, just once "then [she] might be able to leave it and walk away" (175). Her story is "joined somehow to Anna" (175), which is the reason for Damon seeking the grave of the husband years after Anna's death.

He is weeping at his grave, "but it takes a while to realize who he is really weeping for" (180). Damon, Galgut, and the other self are indistinguishable at this moment, also indicated by the sentence that "[l]ives leak into each other" (180). The protagonist refers to Anna, Caroline and her husband, which are tied to his story now. His older self refers to himself and all the past fellow travellers like Reiner and Jerome, by saying that "he feels it now, maybe for the first time, everything that went wrong, all the mess and anguish and disaster" (180). As Galgut names his protagonist Damon, he invites "reading of the events

in terms of both autobiography and fiction" (Jacobs, 103), thus making himself inseparable from Damon's older self.

7.4 Summary

There is a circular notion to the narrations: Galgut's own experiences shape Damon. The protagonist is evaluated by his elevated self, serving as omniscient narrator. This self is representative of the journey Galgut makes: he is reworking the past in order to trace the personal history which leads up to the present identity of Damon's other self, hence of the author. However, one should not forget to "[register] how Galgut has connected and transformed them [the memory]" (Jacobs, 104). Still, there is the notion that Galgut seeks to make peace with his personal past, similar to Caroline, by telling his story.

8. Conclusion

Damon Galgut is a bold and fresh writer to repeat the Observer's reviewing remark. During apartheid, he dares to write about white, male homosexuality, love, friendship and ordinary family matters. Moreover, he is an invigorating author, because he contributes to South Africa's literary body in a very personal way. Criticism of the nation's history and politics is often found in the protagonists' conflicts with their surroundings. Additionally, intertextuality reveals a further, more subtle layer of critique, indicating that Galgut is aware of and comments on pressing issues the time. One might accuse him of reusing and recycling his protagonists and their identity struggles, but it is argued here that, when viewed as a whole, these six works reveal the development of characters, and Galgut himself, over a period of time spanning three or four decades.

8.1 Homosexuality

In this respect, the issue of homosexuality has its beginning in *Small Circle of Beings*. The protagonists of "Shadows" and "Rick" discover their sexuality in the solitude of nature. Their stories depict the difficulties of accepting this part of their integrity on a very personal, still apolitical level. Patrick, the main character of *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, negotiates homosexuality within the restrictive time of apartheid. Politics plays a significant role, as the story is centred around 1994. On the one hand, Patrick experiences political as well as personal confinement, and on the other hand, individual and national

transition. Regarding this issue, the novel contains a hopeful outlook for the future, in which homosexuality is no longer subject to discrimination. *The Good Doctor*, published twelve years after *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, illustrates that it still proves to be a difficult subject. Frank Eloff engages in various affairs with women to conceal his true sexuality. He is influenced by his father, who clings to old Afrikaner ideologies. Hence, the nation's past is alive under the surface while politics and literature are engaged in rebuilding the nation to become the new South Africa. *In a Strange Room* offers a solution to the conflicts the previous protagonists have. Damon undertakes a journey to the depths of his own identity, discovering that accepting all parts of one's personality is the only resolution for a life void of constraints. Galgut inscribes many of his own experiences into the last novel, indicating that he makes peace with his personal as well as the nation's political past. Consequently, there is a complete line of development throughout these writings.

8.2 Travels

Journeying is a further issue, which connects the books. The short stories and novels are united by three kinds of travel: a) they are surveys of history; b) the protagonists undertake physical and c) mental tours through the country and their minds alike. The boy in "Small Circle of Beings" develops his identity by contrasting his mother's values and his own. The focus is mostly on his mother and her creation of a restrictive environment which hems her son's advancement. His desire to live on his own indicates that the mental process of cutting the cord is complete. Also "Lovers" focuses on the immaterial journey. James sets out to meet his father's secret love. At the end of this encounter, his personality is changed because he feels closer to his father. "The Clay Ox" features a young man walking seemingly aimless through the country. He is in search of his integrity and place in the world. Hence, he is on a physical as well as spiritual journey. *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* combines all three notions of progress. Patrick relives his past while going to Namibia. During the process of reviewing, he gives an account of the nation's history. At the end, his final insight is due to Namibia's transformation, and the protagonist is able to complete his inner exploration. *The Quarry* has a similar beginning to "The Clay Ox", as both protagonists enter the narration while walking alone on a road. However, there are crucial differences. The nameless man, who becomes the quarry, is representative of a whole period, because he symbolises the ambiguity of that time. Both focus on the search for identity, but where Guy succeeds, the stranger fails. The main character of *In a Strange*

Room, Damon, combines both aspects. He travels through three continents without arriving at a conclusion regarding his identity. Only years later he is able to accomplish insight. Resulting from the autobiographical notion of *In a Strange Room*, it is also a journey for the reader into Galgut's own personality.

8.3 Intertextuality

Galgut deploys intertextuality frequently and as early as *Small Circle of Beings*. A description of landscape in this novel shows striking similarities to a passage in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Galgut's incorporation of this text is a comment on the divergence between colonisers and colonised. The intertextual reference in *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* is not a literary text, but a comment by "President Mugabe of Zimbabwe has compared homosexuals to dogs and pigs, and argued that they should 'not have any rights at all'" (Croucher, 216). Although this statement is effected in 1995 and Galgut's novel is published in 1991, it is striking that these two animals named by Mugabe appear in connection with the novel's protagonist. Moreover Galgut puts emphasis on the killing of animals by the characters in favour of apartheid and clearly distinguishes his protagonist from this practice. It can be concluded that this kind of reference to homosexuals is an established practise. Furthermore, the author implies criticism concerning the still existent divide between black and white. This particular point of critique is not necessarily found in the story of *The Quarry*, but in the title itself. It is a reference to *The Quarry* written by Charles Waddell Chesnutt. Dean McWilliams writes in his introduction to this novel that "it is very much the product of a Negro writer and activist looking back over the past, surveying the present, and trying to help plan the future" (xi). He interprets Chesnutt's writing in the following way: "Chesnutt argued that racism would not disappear until the distinctions between the races were blurred by increased marriage across the lines" (xi). Hence, Galgut's title illustrates that racism is still a major issue in South Africa. His narration does not propose marriage as a solution, but clearly refers to the need to erase categorisation of people based on skin colour. This notion is evident when looking at the blurred distinction of the township and the adjacent settlement. Further intertextuality is found in *The Good Doctor*. As Barris points out, there are "startlingly detailed correspondences" (24) to Peter Wilhelm's *The Healing Process*. The critic explains the differences of the two in the following way:

Wilhelm projects his hospital as a metaphor for a sick, tormented society, one that needs healing. The metaphor looks forward to the possibility of healing in national

and therefore historic terms. [...]The premise [in Galgut's novel] appears to be that while the illness of apartheid has been overcome, the societal patient (to borrow Graham Greene's term) is a burnt-out case, permanently stripped of vitality and function. If this hospital is a picture of a society, it is a society condemned to mediocrity, a society with no future. (Barris, 25f.)

Hence, Barris interprets *The Good Doctor* as a failure "in its attempt to position itself as a post-apartheid text" (24). María Jesús Cabarcos-Traseira opposes this view by stating that it "refuses to give anything but a staunchly realistic image of contemporary South Africa in which the past is more than a lingering influence" (46). Regarding *The Impostor*, Sofia Kostelac, whose review focuses on authorship in the novel, identifies the concurrence of Galgut's text with "Pierre Bourdieu's now famous critique of the 'charismatic' ideology of romantic authorship outlined in *The Field of Cultural Production*. Here Bourdieu explores the emergence of the 'independent intellectual', who 'does not recognise nor wish to recognise any obligations other than the intrinsic demands of his creative project'" (Bourdieu, ctd in Jenkins 135, qtd. in Kostelac, 56). Galgut's protagonist demonstrates similar aspirations, but fails in his attempt. The reason is to be found in his past, which is situated in apartheid times. The main character's poems receive ungracious reviews, because are consciously void of politics. Also his recent poems do not refer to the contemporary situation. Therefore, they are, even in the protagonist's view, of poor quality. Kostelac gives a very appropriate conclusion: "*The Imposter* could thus be said to caution us against any exaggerated claims to intellectual and artistic autonomy in this contemporary 'post-transitional' moment of South African writing. Although the writer may no longer be subject to the polemics [...], the novel shows us that considerable socio-economic and political pressures continue to inform and delimit authorship in this context" (57). So far, intertextuality is always used to deploy criticism. The ones in his latest novel are of a different nature. *In a Strange Room* includes one piece of writing, William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and one sample of art, namely *He Has No House* by Vojislav Jakić (cf. Jacobs, 2011). In contrast to the works before, these two references do not serve as social or political critique, but as support for the protagonist's identity development. Thus, intertextuality, place identity, journeying and identity development form a coherent picture of South Africa from Galgut's personal perspective.

8.4 Galgut's Progress

Similar to his protagonists, Galgut evolved over time. *Small Circle of Beings* is a key text inasmuch as it introduces the above discussed aspects. The five short stories are united via

the theme of identity development, but they are not connected regarding content. The result of having five protagonists within the according number of narrations is that their advance is not depicted as detailed as one might wish for. Galgut's use of place identity is not very helpful here, because there is too little information on the characters' and country's past. Still, within this collection, Galgut establishes the motif of solitude to indicate homosexuality. Moreover, "The Clay Ox" is the first story to incorporate two story lines, one following Guy's past, the other one his present. However, the plot depicting his childhood is incoherent and does not contribute to the narration regarding Guy's present situation. In this respect, *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* is an immense leap forward. Galgut achieves to inscribe South Africa's history in Patrick's perception of landscape to depict his inner conflicts. The journey into his personal history is interwoven with the nation's past, forming a coherent picture which ultimately leads to Patrick's advance. *The Quarry* signifies a break in Galgut's manner of including landscape. The observations of the natural surroundings do no longer serve the purpose to connect the protagonist with his environment, but to point out the ambiguity of the time to the reader. Thus, Galgut passes on the responsibility of unravelling the significance of places and their implications for the characters to the reader. Consequently, the audience too has to evolve in order to read Galgut's subsequent writing. Therefore, in *The Good Doctor*, Eloff's homosexuality is not as obviously shown as in the preceding works. Also concerning *The Impostor*, the reader has to follow closely Adam's perception of his surroundings in comparison to his picture of the past to discover the reason for his inner conflicts. *In a Strange Room* completes, in some respects, a circle. It is a collection of short stories, but feature only one protagonist. Due to this circumstance, Galgut is able to depict Damon's development in great detail. It encompasses his advance of personality not only regarding homosexuality, but also concerning friendship. Although the focus is not on South Africa, its influence cannot be denied. In this respect, Damon's protagonist is as transnational and even international as South Africa itself.

Conclusive, the protagonists' development mirrors the nation's progress, which is, in itself, a statement on how closely people are tied to their country. As Galgut demonstrates, they are connected in far more ways than simple national identity. Consequently, the novels are as much a product of South Africa's history as Galgut is a compound of the country's place identity.

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Abstract

Damon Galgut is a South African writer who is overshadowed by Coetzee and Gordimer. Galgut receives national as well as international recognition after publishing his fourth novel, *The Good Doctor*. The Observer's commentary regarding his latest novel, *In a Strange Room*, motivates this thesis. It is said that the author is the "fresh and bold voice of South Africa". The analysis of Galgut is based on six novels. These are the following: *Small Circle of Beings* (1988), *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* (1991), *The Quarry* (1995), *The Good Doctor* (2003), *The Impostor* (2008) and *In a Strange Room* (2010).

The focus is on identity development in the context of South Africa's politics. Background for analysing the novels is the concept of place identity. This approach helps to identify the main characters and their progress in the given historical context. Consequently, the political development of South Africa has a significant role in all novels. Therefore, each chapter features a small introduction regarding the contemporary situation of the country. Galgut's literary production is placed in four rough categories which resemble political eras. Apartheid focuses on the erection of the dominant white discourse and the breakdown of this establishment. Literature of this time reports on the struggle between black and white people. The transitional period depicts South Africa's transformation into a democracy. It is subdivided in two categories: the euphoric and the pessimistic transitional period. Writers of these two eras elaborate on positive outlooks as well as ambiguity, violence and the country's past. During the transnational, or post-transitional, period South Africa defines itself anew regarding economy. Also the writers' perspectives shift. Politics is no longer the centre of attention. However, this is only true regarding young authors. Galgut, who grew up under apartheid, still tries to come to terms with this period. He always refers to the nation's history in his novels, and almost always it is in form of critique. His works include the problematic issue of homosexuality before and after apartheid, racial segregation and the difficulties arising after democratization. His goal is to portray the implications and effects of politics on individuals. Resulting from that is the close relation of identity development and the nation's progress. Place identity helps to identify social norms and values, which are in conflict with the ones of the protagonists. Thus, South Africa's identity is important for the characters as well as Galgut himself.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Damon Galgut ist ein südafrikanischer Autor, der weitgehend im Schatten von Coetzee und Gordimer steht. Erst seit seinem vierten Roman, *Der Gute Doktor*, erhält er nationale wie internationale Anerkennung. Ein Kommentar vom Observer betreffend den letzten Roman, *In Fremden Räumen*, ist der Ausgangspunkt dieser Arbeit. Es wurde behauptet, dass der Autor die "frische und kühne Stimme Südafrikas" ist. Grundlage der Analyse sind sechs Romane Galguts: *Small Circle of Beings* (1988), *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* (1991), *The Quarry* (1995), *The Good Doctor* (2003), *The Impostor* (2008) und *In a Strange Room* (2010). Das Hauptaugenmerk der Analyse liegt auf Identitätsentwicklung mit Bezug auf die politischen Umstände Südafrikas. Das theoretische Modell der "place identity", also die ortsbezogene Identität, ist die allumfassende Grundlage. Anhand dieser Theorie lassen sich die Probleme der Hauptcharaktere und ihrer Entwicklung im jeweiligen geschichtlichen Zusammenhang nachverfolgen. Daraus folgt, dass die politische Entwicklung der Nation in allen Romanen eine große Rolle spielt. Aus diesem Grund bietet jedes Kapitel einen kurzen Einblick in die (für den Roman) gegenwärtige Politik des Landes. Eingegangen wird auf Apartheid und die Zeit danach, die sich in folgende Epochen unterteilt: die Übergangsphase zur Demokratie, die von Enthusiasmus geprägt ist, die zweite Übergangsphase, welche sich durch Pessimismus auszeichnet. Die transnationale Phase, in der sich Südafrika (wirtschaftlich) neu orientiert, geht über in die gegenwärtige Entwicklung Südafrikas. Diese politischen Entwicklungen entsprechen den literarischen Epochen. Apartheid - Literatur zeichnet sich durch die Festigung der Afrikaner Ideologie aus, welche Homosexualität und die schwarze Bevölkerung unterdrückt. In den beiden Übergangsphasen wird Literatur dazu benutzt, das "neue" Südafrika aufzubauen. Positive Ausblicke, aber auch Ambivalenz, Gewalt und der Blick in die Vergangenheit beeinflussen die Werke dieser Zeit. Die letztgenannte Phase zeichnen sich durch die Loslösung von Politik aus, allerdings nur bei jungen Autoren. Galgut, der während der Apartheid aufgewachsen ist, verarbeitet immer noch diese Zeit. Es zeigt sich deutlich, dass Galgut immer Bezug auf Geschichte nimmt, meist in Form von Kritik. Homosexualität, Kritik an der Rassentrennung und Probleme der Zeit nach der Apartheid sind Themen, die sich in allen Büchern Galguts wiederfinden. Sein Ziel ist es, die Auswirkungen der Politik auf einzelne Personen darzustellen. Aus diesem Grund sind Identitätsentwicklung und die (politische) Geschichte Südafrikas eng miteinander verknüpft. Die ortsbezogene Identität enthüllt gesellschaftliche Werte und Normen, die

meist im Konflikt mit denen des Hauptcharakters stehen. Da es in Zeiten der Rassentrennung kaum möglich war über Homosexualität und die "normalen" Dinge des Lebens zu schreiben, entwickelt Galgut seinen eigenen Stil: die Wahrnehmung der Natur und der Landschaften in denen sich die Hauptfiguren bewegen lassen darauf zurückschließen, dass Homosexualität ein Tabu-Thema ist. Die Einsamkeit der Natur und vor allem der Dunkelheit dienen dazu, dass den "wahren" Identitäten der Personen Ausdruck verliehen wird. Diese Form der Darstellung der Sexualität findet sich in fast allen Romanen wieder. Galgut zeigt dadurch auf, wie problematisch dieses Thema in Südafrika war, und immer noch ist. Obwohl der Autor sich hauptsächlich auf die Probleme junger, weißer Männer konzentriert, findet sich immer wieder Kritik an der (immer noch) vorhandenen Rassentrennung. Meist nutzt Galgut Intertextualität um auf diesen Punkt hinzuweisen. Die meisten Romane mit persönlichen Erfahrungen des Autors durchsetzt, was vor allem bei *In Fremden Räumen* zum Tragen kommt. Südafrikas ortsbezogene Identität beschäftigt daher nicht nur die Romanfiguren, sondern auch Galgut selbst.

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