

**SOUTH AFRICAN WRITERS IN EXILE: A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY
AND COMMON THREADS IN THEIR WRITING**

BY

NONCEBA LEVIN

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ABSTRACT

When South African writers held a conference at Wits University in November 1991, it was an occasion that ended thirty years of injustices and hardship that writers had experienced under apartheid laws. These included incarceration, detention without trial and censorship. South African writers have also been witness to many other gruesome atrocities done to their fellow South Africans.

South African writers, mainly blacks, suffered a combination of these injustices, thus forcing them to leave home in order to actively engage in political activities as well as writing. A primary aim of this study is to look at the shifts that time and distance can cause in a writer's perception of home.

Three of the writers examined in this study - Alex La Guma, Christopher Hope and Mandla Langa - were in exile for at least eight years. The fourth writer, Rian Malan, was also in exile for a short period, during which his book was written and published, before returning to South Africa. Each one of these writers has injected in their writing a way of dealing with their memory about the 'home' left behind. The study considers how each of these writers deals with and compensates for this.

The study also looks at the how these writers were affected by the racial categories of black and white in terms of their which was produced within the intense apartheid era between the Sharpeville massacre in 1961 and the Soweto riots in 1976. The study examines how Alex La Guma and Mandla Langa (black writers) and Christopher Hope and Rian (white writers) produced their works under apartheid laws, then exile.

The study suggests that some of the writing produced by these authors in exile, does reflect a loss of a lively sense of what was really happening 'at home'. It also suggests that exile as a state of existence is a very complex and challenging thing in a writer's life, that often puts demands on the creative imagination to adapt to situations.

Dedicated to three people who taught me

to strive forth: my late grandmother, Zibalile Elizabeth Gumede; my late father,

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INTRODUCTION

Literature in the South African context has for a long period been presented with the problem of a choice between aesthetics and commitment to 'struggle'. The problem arises out of the socio-political conditions which tended to divide writers and artists alike along the lines of having to decide whether to remain neutral towards matters of the oppressed majority and follow their artistic talents in concentrating on perfecting their art. Perfecting the art, in this case, posed a further problem of whether an artist uses the forms of artistic craft which in themselves adhere to and are informed by the dominant ideology of nationalist rule or not. The other alternative of literature of struggle meant using artistic talent to carve out works that further the intentions and ideas of struggle in order to undermine the dominant ideology as well as awaken the masses to overthrow the white minority government.

In view of this dilemma, there are two areas of concern that will be examined in this study. The two areas are: considering the chosen writers' attempts to maintain a living contact with home and looking at the kind of choices made by individual writers when dealing with the debates and ideas of the struggle for liberation.

Under pressure from repressive laws, especially those affecting the freedom of expression, many South African writers went into exile. For many artists exile meant one of two things: either the individual artist's choice of subject-matter, which was limited at home, could be extended, or the artist could choose to perfect the art and remain committed to the struggle. Many South African writers who went into exile continued to write about issues of oppression at home. Some remained completely committed to the struggle actively as well as through their art. Others, though not actively engaged in the struggle (i.e. actively supporting any particular organisation), however continued to engage in resistance literature. This kind of literature takes many forms in terms of how it contextualizes or analyses the political situation in South Africa from the 1950s to the 1980s.

This study will examine the contribution of this kind of South African literature by looking

at selected artists and their works. The examination will consider how the writers go through the individual processes which led some of them to actively engage in political struggle.

The literature that will be examined in this study is within a varying period of development of South African literature[s]. In order to make a clearer picture of where the literature of struggle lies within the South African context, one needs to chart its structure and development over the past decades. This is not an attempt at a thorough historical account of a literature of struggle in the context of a struggle against the dominant English and Afrikaans literatures, but just a periodizing sketch to see where it came from.

Part of the period briefly charted here deals with literature of the 1950s and early 60s by mainly blacks which Lewis Nkosi (1983 : 3 - 24) has endearingly termed the "Fabulous 50s". This brief history will pay particular attention to the views, fears, anger and criticism voiced in the literature of the time, especially in connection with the question of identity and commitment by writers like Alex La Guma and his Drum School contemporaries.

Of equal importance in this introduction to the study will be charting the political environment that most South African writers (especially blacks) faced at the time. A brief look at political history centring on the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) ideology and its impact on South African literature both at home and in exile from 1978 into the 1980s will also be given. The political influence of the BCM at the time is important as it sheds light on the shifts in writing styles among young black South African writers, especially those who remained inside the country.

Identity and Exile as Cultural Phenomena

Writers or indeed artists in general are cultural products of their own society and in turn are engaged in the everyday development of that culture through their works of art. As products and producers of a particular culture, writers are influenced by the level of their socio-political commitment. How a particular writer helps portray that society is a measure of commitment not only of the conscious self but also of the hopes and aspirations of that society.

Speaking on the demands for cultural articulation by the intellectual within society, Frantz Fanon says:

to fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation, that material keystone which makes the building of a culture possible. There is no other fight for culture which can develop apart from the popular struggle ... (1963 : 233)

Fanon sets out the importance of commitment for a writer whose society is still engaged in a struggle for liberation. Fanon's statement crystallizes the need for a writer under such conditions to set out the criteria for his or her art in terms of the self entering or staying out of historical processes of society.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o clarifies Fanon's point :

The way political power in society is organised can affect writers and their writing in three ways: The writer as a human being is a product of history, of time and place. As a member of society, he belongs to a certain class and he is inevitably a participant in the class struggle of his times. As a writer in a given society, it does make a difference whether the writer is allowed free artistic expression or not; whether he is allowed to write or not; whether what he writes is controlled or not; and whether he is espousing this or that class outlook. (1981 : 72)

Ngugi, as Fanon has earlier, clearly sees social changes as working through a historical process and the writer as a catalyst for such changes. In the South African context, a writer has a problem when he tries to identify with some of Ngugi's sentiments.

The way political power has been organised in South Africa, until very recently, it was difficult for the writer, particularly the black writer, to make any of these choices. Political oppression (beginning with the colonial legacy) has for many years created divisions between black and white writers. On the one hand, the black intellectual has, for a long time, been racially

divided from other intellectuals in the white, and indeed the Indian and Coloured camps.

On the other hand, black intellectuals have been forced to reside together and among 'their race' which consists of both the urban worker and the rural population. The industrialised sprawls of township dwellings have provided for the South African writer an immediate lived and shared experience unequalled by that of any white contemporary who wishes to express commitment to the struggle of the majority. Even with the removal of racist statutory laws including the Group Areas Act, (Schrire 1991 : 232) which separated residential communities according to racial groups regardless of class, most black South African artists still reside in the squalid townships.

The predicament faced by South African black writers can be expressed as follows: how can the writer identify intellectually with other writers from the other racial groups and still maintain the socio-political commitment of articulating the aspirations of the suffering masses?

Es'kia Mphahlele echoes the Fanonian and Ngugi arguments in articulating the ambivalent position of an exiled black South African writer. Mphahlele acknowledges that, in the apartheid situation, black writers lived with the people and thus their writing was nourished by the culture of survival that surrounded them. Once the writer moved out of the apartheid situation into exile, these feelings were replaced by intense hatred. Mphahlele records this shift in these words:

There is something about the act and fact of communal survival inside a situation of racism that either tones down, or lends another complexion to, the hate that is mixed with anger. Outside the situation, you are on your own, you have little communal support: at best, it is intellectual. So you hate the whites you left behind with a scalding intensity. (1974 : 42)

What we learn from Mphahlele's statement is that in the South African context, the writer is kept close to the drama of living under apartheid. Mphahlele sees this closeness not as an impingement upon individual life as Lewis Nkosi (1983 : 4) says but as a cushioning effect as well as a support enabling the writer to control emotions of anger and hatred. Exile for Mphahlele gives the black South African writer the space to coldly rethink the horror allowing anger and

hatred to fester and burst. The struggle to survive becomes a struggle for individual :

In this thesis "identity" will refer to the extent to which the chosen writers create South African literary culture and thus a common South African identity, as opposed to separate identities for separate race groups formed by apartheid. (This issue of identity in the South African context has been examined by political scientists as "the national question.")

South African Writers at the advent of Nationalist Party Rule

In order to have a clear perspective on South African writing in the 1950s, it is necessary to look at how writers reacted to Nationalist Party elections propaganda and the subsequent rigidity of enforced Apartheid.

Historically, criticism of South African literature has on the whole dwelt on the broader spectrum of society which is divided along racial lines. This critical approach has led to South African literature being looked at in terms of the black and white racial divide, and thus has marginalised a large proportion of the voices of writers within the fragmented canvas of white, Indian, African and Coloured groups. In some quarters, the tendency has been to look at South African literature within the framework of the traditional African or post-colonial novel. This is short sighted.

Firstly, although South African writing can be seen as part of the broad post-colonial tradition of writing in English, the political situation in South Africa has in some respects been unique, hence the background and developments of South African writing are sharply different from those of the rest of Africa. Stephen Clingman (1986 : 3) points out that South African development into an industrial giant in Africa with the use of black labour had a pace and a magnitude quite unparalleled in other colonial areas.

Secondly, the fact is that in South Africa the colonial experience and subsequent struggles against it did not follow those of other African struggles very closely. The point to consider here is that the colonial master was not one single entity but overlapping layers of foreign

encroachment on the local and indigenous cultures resulting in a complex microcosm of cultures, counter-cultures and sub-cultures.

Whilst most African countries won their independence on the political platform by evoking a counter-culture of nationalism against the imperial power, in South Africa this has been seen as a danger to a cohesive future national culture. In view of these complex conditions, it is not surprising that most early South African literature was not concerned with expressing a commitment to national goals. Clingman in his introduction singles out as an exception to this the literature by some white writers which supported some government acts such as the 1924 Labour Consolidation Acts, which were aimed at advancing white interests. Perhaps the most significant writing during this period is Sarah Getrude Millin's God's Step-Children and William Plomer's Turbott Wolfe. Whilst Millin's story was seen as extremely racist and embarrassing by those politically aware, Plomer's book also shocked the general reading public. Plomer's portrayal of the possibilities of a love affair across the colour-bar in the South Africa of the time was seen as touching on another sensitive issue, that of the 'native question'. The 'native question' then was the debate on the position of 'non-whites' within the Union of South Africa in terms of full inter-racial integration.

With these insights into the history of South African literature, we can see how white writers tended to view the historical process. On the one hand, there were those who did not see anything wrong with the moves being made by the Nationalist Party towards consolidating labour in terms of the colour-bar. On the other hand, there were those white writers, like Nadine Gordimer who saw the pitfalls of a racially divided nation and reacted against it in the best way they could. The most direct impact of the second kind of South African literature was not fully realised until the novels of Nadine Gordimer started to be published.

During the pre-Nationalist Party government era, the political activities of cultural groups other than the Afrikaners were marked by attitudes of christianity and liberal humanism. (Shava, 1989 : 5 - 14) It seems that at the time South Africans, both black and white, thought that individual goodness, christian goodwill and good sense would solve South Africa's problems. This trust in human nature is easily discerned in some of the literatures in African languages¹ and in

Mhudi by Sol Plaatje (the first African novel in English) and, as has already been pointed out, in the work of some whites.

Peter Abrahams's Tell Freedom (1954) was the first 'Coloured' autobiographical novel to be written in South Africa. Abrahams' novel, therefore, stands separate but not different from the earlier christian-based writing which propagated the 'good versus evil' doctrine. Other writers with this mode of thinking include, of course, Alan Paton. Paton's famous novel Cry the Beloved Country (1948) has been criticised for its liberal inclinations. While writers like Plaatje, Abrahams, Paton and others used liberal humanism as the means of questioning South Africa's social ills, later novelists like Nadine Gordimer saw the task as that of exposing the dangers of that path. Gordimer's acute analysis of the socio-political conditions in South Africa is in a sense prophetic of the events to come in the following years.

The younger generations of black and white writers were to experience a new kind of turmoil in trying to produce literature that expressed these experiences in varying forms and degrees.

By the mid-1950s it was also clear that South African literature was never going to content itself with work which steered clear of any political commitment or pin its hopes on liberal humanism alone. When the Nationalist government came to power in 1948 it enacted laws that were to further oppress and alienate blacks as well as many whites who did not agree with the policies based on racial segregation. This aspect of South African life ushers us into another era of literary endeavour in South Africa.

Black Writing in the 1950s and 1960s: The Drum School

Apartheid laws were designed to segregate the South African people along racial lines not only politically but residentially, educationally and economically. The fragmentary status of South African people meant a fragmentation of their individual, cultural and national lives.

As the apartheid system began to bite, an intensified kind of historical experience was

knocking on every South African writer's mind, at least on the black side of the racial divide. The urgency of this need is felt most keenly in the writing by journalists in Drum Magazine and Cape Town's New Age newspaper. These journalists told their stories in the journalistic art that they practised thus creating a new genre in South African literature.

The Drum writers include Es'kia Mphahlele, Can Themba, Todd Matshikiza, Bloke Modisane, Casey Motsisi, Arthur Maimane, Lewis Nkosi and Nathaniel Nakasa.² Literary works by these writers have come to mark two movements within South African literature in English.

Firstly, they mark a break-away from the liberal humanist approach of the pre-1950s era. The Drum School literature also firmly points towards a new way in which South African writers were to squarely face the problems of choice between literature of struggle and aesthetics. This decision by many of the writers to expose the evils of apartheid created a gap between the cosmopolitan literature they were producing and that produced by writers in African languages.³ Politically, the African language writers felt the hammer of apartheid laws more as religious press houses all over South Africa began to publish works in African languages for schools only.⁴ This was mainly to harness markets and profit by providing school books for the recently segregated school system. Repercussions of this era are still felt today as the separation of the two literatures remains largely intact. (Van Schalkwyk, 1982 : 58)

Secondly, the Drum writers felt the need to express anger, oppose apartheid, and portray fears of the majority in the most effective way possible under the circumstances. These writers devised an autobiographical genre which they felt could deal with the pressure of apartheid. The genre also enabled the Drum writers not only to utilize their journalistic talents but to use the newspaper stories to expose South Africa's oppressive system beyond its borders.

Among those writers who had the same aims in their work were Coloured writers from Cape Town, some of them from the Communist inclined New Age newspaper. (Abrahams 1991 : 19) Whilst the Drum writers were exposing apartheid ills in Johannesburg, writers like Alex La Guma, Dennis Brutus, Arthur Nortje, James Matthews and for a time Bessie Head (Vigne 1991

: 1) were also doing the same for Cape Town and other areas. Alex La Guma is one of the writers from this era that this study will focus on.

Let us then examine the Drum School of writing a bit more closely. The Drum writers had grown up reading the 'Jim comes to the city' novels of the pre-1948 era such as Laurens Van der Post's In a Province, Grenfell Williams' I am Black and Plomer's Ula Masondo. Works in this genre were later added to by Alan Paton's novel Cry the Beloved Country (1948) whose theme, plot and characterisation followed the liberal humanist mode based on the politics of the day. The 1950s' generation of writers, coming face to face with the harsh apartheid laws, found this type of literature unable to contextualise the agony and humiliation of the uprooted black intellectual, the working class parent, worker, mother, lover and growing child in the urban shanties.

The Drum writers also found that the characterization in the available literature exercised a certain control of the African character. Lewis Nkosi says the genre seemed to plead "for a return to the Christian values of love for neighbour as well as for enemy".

Further, Nkosi points out that, in a way

... writing was a war between two generations of South African writers ... the older generation which looked forward to fruitful changes under the Smuts government and the young who saw themselves beginning their adult life under a more brutal apartheid regime. (1965 : 6)

The above testimony by Nkosi points out a dilemma that writers from generation to generation face in their society. This is the dilemma that writers are cultural products of an ever changing environment and thus may help to reinforce that particular culture in their works of art within that given time frame.

The point here is that a literary culture was thriving in South Africa at this time but as a measure of cultural development in the country, the liberal humanist novel had been overtaken by political events. The younger generation, therefore, felt the need for change and for South

African literature to reflect this need through fictional characters, plots or themes.

Most of all, some felt the portrayal of the South African struggle for liberation against oppression both at the individual and national level was a contested area. For example, in an unpublished M.A. thesis, Abubakar Solomons (1987) has produced an account of Arthur Nortje's personal dilemma. According to Solomons, Nortje felt that South African writing should not be based on the struggle for political rights.

There has been a lot of criticism on the works of the 1950s and 1960s writers. The emphasis I would like to take up in this study is that a critical look at the Fifties and Sixties literary era reveals two things.

First, the younger generation of writers at the time were able to shift the role of literature from that of cosy traditionalism and christian moralising to a more vibrant interpretation of the decline of African cultural values. (Shava 1989 : 29 - 37) The literature articulates, (though not in an overtly political way) the schism caused by the imbalances of an economic leap that was based on a process of excluding large sections of the population from enjoying the profits and benefits that were generated. The literature also shows a desire for a kind of cosmopolitan South African identity.

Another point to make here is that after having initiated the shift in perspective, inside South Africa, the 1950s and 1960s literary genre of black South African writing did not manage to develop into the novel form. As Nkosi points out (1983 : 6) the 1950s generation of writers did not identify with Alan Paton's hero, Stephen Kumalo, in Cry The Beloved Country because he did not represent who they were or their past or possible future. Though the writer was able to identify with the suffering majority, that identification meant a certain kind of dislocation with the past and an intellectual entrapment. This created a need to voice South Africa's problems outside of its borders in order to expose as well as register a historical process. Nkosi articulates the problem this way : "... how does one begin to write about apartheid in a way that would be meaningful to people who have not experienced it? I don't know". (Ibid : 25)

For the black writer during the apartheid years, the South African situation was tragic. The writer could not produce literature for the people that it was intended for. At the same time South African literature and culture did not fall neatly into western traditional forms of literary writing and need to educate by exposing was much greater than perfecting aesthetic forms. This, however, does not mean that striving for artistic achievement and excellence was totally abandoned. Exile was to provide the right kind of distance and relief from the closeness of lived experience.

In another volume on the 1950s and 1960s literary period, Nkosi points out the shortfall of this literary period:

... until a solution is found to the political problem, we are not really entitled to speak of a South African 'culture' just as we may, but are not entitled to speak of a South African 'nation'. On the contrary, what we find in South Africa is a group of contending nationalities but no proper 'nation' able to confer authority to its artists. (1981 : 80)

Nkosi is pointing out in retrospect the limitations of the Fifties and Sixties literature. While the Drum writers fulfilled some of Ngugi's criteria for a writer of literature of struggle, most of them could not cross the line to political commitment. Most of these writers did not [yet] see South African literature using its voice as the voice of struggle.

Writing After Sharpeville

After the Sharpeville massacre of March 21, 1960 South African literature suffered a heavy blow. Banning orders on writers and their work, censorship laws, and at times arrests and detentions forced many writers to flee or go into exile. Those who remained inside were forced to find new ways of expressing themselves.

Though some critics, for example Mbulelo Mzamane, have disagreed with some parts of Piniel Shava's (1989 : 51 - 56) writing, I think the analysis he gives of the way in which South

African writing adjusted its focus and style during the 1960s and 1970s is useful. Shava points out that the clamping down on literary activities by the state created a new challenge for the South African writer.

South African writers, whether inside South Africa or in exile, had to find a way of expressing their anger at being silenced by the Nationalist government. For those writers inside South Africa, a way of expressing anger directly at the government whilst telling the world about the atrocities taking place in the country became necessary to amass support for change. Poetry became the most viable genre for writers inside because it enabled them to carry out their task of awakening the consciousness of the masses while avoiding quick and immediate detection by government censors. (Gordimer, 1973 : 52)

During this era, it had become very difficult for writers to use fiction and the autobiography as genres for fear of censure and imprisonment . These writers then took up poetry as a short and direct form of writing that could be used for this purpose effectively. It can be said that poetry, therefore, presented itself as a more direct way of challenging the state because its language could be veiled and made implicit. Of Oswald Mtshali, one of the first poets to use this technique in Sounds of a Cowhide Drum (1971), Shava says:

Mtshali's cynical and sarcastic attitude, his oblique and ironic use of vivid, suggestive similes and images, and the profound meaning that lies beneath the apparent simplicity of his poetry all contribute towards their total effect. (Shava, 1989 : 72)

Mtshali's title poem "Sounds of a Cowhide Drum" echoes the simple "Boom, Boom" rhythm of the African drum that symbolizes centuries of African rites heralding happy and important events. Hence, it doubles as an image of the coming of age of the African states at independence. It is an awakening of history and heritage which oppressed South African blacks only echo through a Zulu dance or a Zionist vigil.

South African writers of this era included James Mathews, Don Mattera, Casey Motsisi,

Arthur Nortje, Mafika Gwala, Mongane Serote, Sipho Sepamla, Wopko Jensma, Peter Horn, Christopher Hope, Njabulo Ndebele and Mandlenkosi Langa, to name but a few.

Black poets saw poetry as a new weapon of protest, a genre that could use associations and examples of oppression that were familiar to the oppressed as well as the oppressor. The use of indigenous idioms, however, made it difficult for the oppressor to easily see some of this poetry as directed at the state. Some of the white South African writers, though, continued to write novels.

Another challenge to the South African writer was that of firm commitment to the literature of struggle. South African writers in exile soon realised that the events 'at home' needed to be firmly exposed to the outside world. This realisation called for a firmer commitment to the struggle; hence writers like Alex La Guma, Mandla Langa and others wrote works that advocated a revolutionary solution to South African problems.

Meanwhile, within South Africa itself the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) with its hard-nosed political ideas of mobilising the black population against white supremacy, made a considerable impact on South African literature. The aftermath of the 1976 Soweto riots meant a further shift into revolutionary attitudes both in the poetry and in a few prose works that were produced at about this time.

With the African National Congress having been forced to go underground, with its leaders either in jail or in exile, the rise of the BCM influenced quite a lot of writers into militant writing. So, the shift in political thinking also affected the kind of poetry that thrived well into the 1980s. The poetry was punchy and more direct than that initiated by Msthalu and Matthews (although these two poets also went on to produce poetry using the new techniques).

Another point Shava raises is that some of this poetry is clearly influenced by Black American writing of the Black Power and the 'Black is Beautiful' theme current at the time.

My interest in this era is in the effect caused by the Black Consciousness political ideology

on South African literature and in particular the black and white divide within it.

Jabulani Justice Mkhize , in his unpublished M.A. thesis, examines the impact of BCM ideology on South African black poetry in the period after 1976, saying:

All these poems are written for a black audience and are addressing social issues in as far as they affect blacks - they are redefining the black person's experience on his/her own terms. This tallies with Black Consciousness's concern about the instilling of black awareness and pride, an immediate need for introspection and the conscientization of the masses. Reference to whites and their role is notably absent; where it is discernible at all, it is peripheral ... Whites are referred to only in so far as they are seen as part of the problem, an obstacle to the black man's quest for freedom. (1991 : 45)

I have quoted at length Mkhize's conclusion on this arena of South African poetry because it puts into perspective the background and time frame in which Christopher Hope wrote his first collection of poems. The examination of this era will also give some of the reasons why writing of this time evoked further cultural fragmentation along racial lines, though in actual fact more poetry was produced from most racial groups.

Exile : Deracination or Freedom to Create?

I have given this sketch of the South African literature of this period in order to offer a basis on which this study can examine literature from South African writers living abroad. The study will focus on some of those writers who have not only continued to be prolific in terms of fiction about South Africa, but were able to really examine the issues pertaining to oppression and to cultural and political dynamics.

The study will also look into the position of exile in terms of the way writers seem to be affected or galvanized in their efforts to represent images of home and themselves. The need for exiled writers, especially South Africans, to find their identity from the idea of home rather than

the psychological definition of self is a fascinating one. The fact is that even those South African writers who are not politically committed in trying to redefine the self and home(lessness) tend to use the idea of 'home' as where they have been in the search of where they are or would like to be.

The question is then, where does artistic freedom to create lie? Does cutting the link between the artist and 'home' give the needed freedom to create within the South African experience? In Race and Class Mphahlele points out that exile puts the writer

in the bigger world of ideas and situations that demand a larger variety of emotional responses, one's reflexes take on a different quality, a greater complexity. (1982 : 187)

It is of interest here to try and elucidate what Mphahlele alludes to when talking in terms of the "bigger world of ideas and situations" and "ones reflexes take on a different quality ...". This will be done with reference to some of the chosen South African writers.

For the writer, culture or background forms a cushion from which art can be carved out. This effect provides the exiled writer with something to feed on whilst the space provided by exile, as pointed out earlier, gives enough time for reflection on life and events which may take different forms. (Manganyi 1983 : 178 - 17) Hope, however, stipulates that for the first ten years, the exiled writer is able to feed on memory which later fades as the immediate environment of the host country tends to fill-in the 'home space'.

Finally what links can be found within this body of South African works? On the one hand lies a body of work from exiled writers that is clearly based on the political ideas of the ANC. The works of Alex La Guma and Mandla Langa are examined for this influence. For Mandla Langa's works the already available M.A. study by J.T. Mkhize (1991) has also been very useful.

Other interests in this era of South African writing are to find out what other determining factors seem to impel these writers to write about conditions at 'home'.

There are four South African writers who have been chosen for this study: Alex La Guma, Christopher Hope, Mandla Langa and Rian Malan.

Chapter 1 examines the early works of Alex La Guma: A Walk In The Night (1962), And A Threefold Cord (1964) and The Stone Country (1967). Chapter 2 looks at Christopher Hope's work before going to exile in 1975: Cape Drives (1974) and A Separate Development (1980). I would like to point out why I have included A Separate Development in this pre-exile stage: it is because the novel although only published later had been researched and written while the artist was still living in South Africa.

Chapter 3 examines the literature written in exile by these four artists by looking at selected works: La Guma's In The Fog Of The Season's End (1974) and Time Of The Butcherbird (1979); Christopher Hope's The Hottentot Room (1986), Black Swan (1987) and White Boy Running (1988); Mandla Langa's Rainbow On The Paper Sky (1989) and Rian Malan's My Traitor's Heart (1990).

Finally, Chapter 4 concludes the discussion and links up any common threads or indeed uncommon characteristics that had been established in this body of literature on South Africa written by the chosen writers in exile.

Notes for Introduction

1. Shava (1989 : 5 - 14).
See also Ntuli "The Review of the Present State of Literature in the African Languages" in Van Schalkwyk (ed) (1982 : 19 - 20).
2. See Eilersen (1995 : 3 - 50; 175 - 193) who clarifies Head's earlier background e.g. her having worked on Drum together with the other black Drum writers.
Huma (1988 : 126 - 195).
3. Alvarez-Pereyre (1984 : 9; 116 - 128).
See also Gordimer (1973 : 33).
4. See the following essays in Van Schalkwyk (ed.) (1982)

P. C. Mokgokong, "The Publication and use of Literature in the African Languages" pp 2-4.

D.B. Ntuli, "Review of the Present State of Literature in the African Languages" pp 18-24.

S. P. Phalatse, "The Role of the School in Promoting Literature in the African Languages" pp 39-43.

E. Mphahlele, "Promoting Literature in the African Languages: The Role of the Author" pp 54-58.

CHAPTER 1

ALEX LA GUMA

In a valuable attempt at highlighting the dilemma facing the critic of South African black writing in the 1970s and 1980s, Jane Watts says black writers seem to agree with the Marxist view that their literature is the kind of art that

emerges from the community, to be consumed as a product by that community; but they ensure that consumption does not become the vapid end in itself typical of other forms of superfluous consumption within capitalist society. It has to activate something within the readers; it must set in train a social transformation that will lead, eventually, to social revolution. (1989 : 54)

Watts stipulates that this view of the role of literature in South Africa is based on an extension of the Brechtian thought which demands that a work of art should not just

change the reader, but that it should dismantle his given identity and produce a new kind of human subject. And the fundamental reason for such is the replacement of bourgeois individualism with human solidarity (Ibid)

Watts's view of South African literature and the subsequent emergence of its new brand of literary criticism gives a precise premise for arguments to be examined in this thesis. It is the window through which those selected writers such as La Guma will be examined in order to see why their fictional characters are rendered the way they are and whether they are peculiar to South African writing.

Alex La Guma's earlier fiction, mostly written or researched whilst he was still in South

Africa, has been well documented as the fiction of a committed political consciousness. No doubt the novels do fit in with the commitment of an artist looking at his society from within, which leads to the characters being rendered with total sympathy and understanding. It is through La Guma's art that we begin to look at, grope towards, feel and try to find out what it is like to be a Coloured in the South African situation.

La Guma's collection of short stories and two novels, as has been argued by other scholars, can be said to realistically show the frustrations of the Coloured people under the socio-political laws of apartheid. In A Walk in the Night (1962), And A Threefold Cord (1964) and The Stone Country (1967) the social lives of the District Six Coloureds, which La Guma knew so well, are shown as caught up in a perpetual circle without a way out. Their community is portrayed as fragmented social groups without a single voice. Their lives are occupied by petty personal frustrations and differences, and they are unable to stand together as a collective force to counter the advance of apartheid laws that are bound to further crush their hopes and dreams.

The argument that I wish to advance is that La Guma did not see the Western Cape Coloureds, especially those in District Six, as a single group of people with a single social or political identity as most criticism has led us to believe. Earlier critical work on La Guma's first novels was directed at how the artist himself committed his art to a political consciousness of struggle through the depiction of his characters and at times convincing realistic narratives.¹ Recent criticism on La Guma's earlier work is directed at examining how the artist tried to view his material, the Coloured people, in terms of group consciousness.² I will argue that La Guma found the Coloured people frustrating and lacking in organised political consciousness and his literature lays bare some of the strains that lie behind this fragmentation. A thorough examination of the first three books will show just how deeply La Guma saw into the soul of the Cape Coloured population.

The Coloured community in the Western Cape (popularly known as Cape Coloureds) is usually identified as a single group of people with one ethnic origin and unified political aspirations and destiny. Historically, the Cape Coloured people are a collection of about 17 different groups with different and complicated combinations of ethnic and geographic distribution

along the Cape Peninsula and Namaqualand. In his well researched race-relations study of Cape Coloureds, R.E. Van der Ross tries to illustrate the inter-mixing and combinations saying that the situation was far more complicated. (1979 : 41)

Further complications came when the Nationalist government tried to bring about a political solution to unify Cape Coloureds by introducing the Population Registration Act (Act No.30 of 1950). This meant that the Coloured people had to be classified and reclassified according to government political needs.

Prior to the 1950 Act, western Cape Coloureds had been governed under Ordinance 50 of 1828. Van der Ross says, Coloured people believed that "their political destiny lay along with that of all other Cape people, but particularly along with that of the rulers i.e. whites". (Ibid : 68) But when preparing for the 1948 elections for whites, the Nationalist party propaganda started speaking in terms of a separate identity for Coloureds. The Nationalist party went on to introduce a separate voters' roll for Coloureds which left many of them despondent and feeling betrayed by the white electorate at the time. The privilege offered by Ordinance 50 had been regarded as belittling due to the very fact that the Coloured people, then, regarded themselves as part of the white group, and therefore, involved in white power.

However, it should be pointed out that this "shared similarity and power" (Ibid p 68) only went as far as language use, lifestyle (with the exception of the Malays) and political aspirations were concerned and mainly applied to the English - speaking groups. When the Afrikaner Nationalists came to power, Coloured people faced a reversal of the many things that they were used to. For the first time the Coloured people were to experience social, political and educational segregation and were thus made into a distinct racial grouping like the Indians and Africans.

Gavin Lewis's historical record of Coloured politics at the time says:

The Nationalists, Die Burger explained, would replace the shadow of theoretical political equality for Coloureds with whites with the substance of increased economic opportunities within the framework of separate development. (1987 : 246)

How then did the existing Coloured political organisations fare in trying to stop their political power from slipping away? By the time Coloured organisations grouped together in a stand against the pro-segregationist elections, it was too late. There were disputes about whether to participate in the elections or not. Some Coloured organisations clearly believed that the Coloured future still lay in accepting the Nationalists' decree that the Coloured parliamentary and city council representations should be made through three white persons elected by the Coloureds. Some of the political groups within the Coloured community felt that they were losing the power of direct representation by the Coloureds themselves while others felt there had never been any realistic political power within the old representative framework. The Coloured community became deeply divided on this issue. (Ibid : 246 - 270)

Feelings of fear for the future came from concerns that the existing liberalism which traditionally linked political rights to property ownership would be eroded especially for those Coloureds with economic means and educational status who embraced 'western civilized standards.' To a greater majority of poor Coloureds who remained as a labour reservoir in the Cape farms, it really did not mean anything except further oppression.

The other point to recognise is that whilst the nationalists were clipping away Coloured freedoms, they were also strengthening white rights by writing carefully worded exclusion clauses into the existing white workers' unions such as the Stone Masons' Union, the Plasterers' Union and the Bricklayers' Union. Before, Coloured employees had automatic membership of these unions; now they had to apply for acceptance.

With this background of confusion, La Guma, armed with a Communist Party upbringing, must have found this period of Coloured history disturbing. Later, as an executive member of the Coloured People's Congress, he was to find his political aspirations more in line with those of a broad-based mass movement such as that offered by the African National Congress. The need to belong to and identify with an unfolding political consciousness, which his Coloured community could not give him, seems to have become greater with time.³

This need manifested itself when the Coloured People's Congress took part in the ANC's

1952 mass defiance campaign launched on June 26 of that year. This also marked the future solidarity between the ANC and the Coloured Congress (and other organisations) which blossomed with the drafting of the Freedom Charter at the Kliptown meeting three years later, despite arrests and harassments by government. When Nelson Mandela's strike call⁴ came in May 1961, the Coloured Congress supported it fully.

Now politically aware Coloureds had taken their support away from whites to the African side, which was not surprising under the circumstances. I have already suggested that the swing in white politics had ousted Coloured participation and as the English-speaking whites quietly accepted this, the Coloured community had to look for other affiliations. The Africans had, meanwhile, been outside the battle of wills between Coloureds, English-speaking whites and the Afrikaners and had been slowly building up an alternative political forum. After the Nationalists came to power, Africans abandoned the gentlemanly approach in their politics. Realisation had dawned that political rights and power would never be gained through sympathetic christian morality from the whites, but had to be fought for. By the mid-1950s, the ANC was clearly making overtures to other interested parties to join hands and fight for general rights and freedoms.

This historical sketch has been presented in order to see where La Guma's art aligns itself with his political commitment. La Guma's art, therefore, does reflect this background in the search for identity, the main theme of this study, and this continues into his exile writing. La Guma's writing was also greatly influenced by the literary ideas that were prevalent at the time as seen in the works of his contemporaries, the Drum writers. Lewis Nkosi says that in Johannesburg, the artists were enjoying a grand hands-on cooperation between white and black members of the Union of South African Artists. The end-result of this was the success of Todd Matshikiza's "King Kong" jazz opera. Nkosi suggests that local acclaim for the opera was also for "an Idea which had been achieved by pooling together resources from both black and white artists in the face of impossible odds". (1983 : 16)

In an analysis of the fairly easy mixing between black and white artists in Johannesburg,

Nkosi says that in time this physical exposure of both groups to each other dismantled the apartheid-created myth of white life as guided by christian values and intellectual discipline. Nkosi says the stories written about everyday white life in daily newspapers began to enable educated Blacks to see differently how South African whites really lived:

I think we began about this time subtly to despise white South Africans. Whereas we had feared, envied or in some cases had even hoped to achieve the same standards by which we imagined the white community to live, we now began to adopt a patronising attitude toward the white suburb ... They could have taught us restraint where we burned ourselves too fast .. but I doubt if white South Africans were the right people to teach us discipline; for if the South African middle class were capable of discipline; the content of the lives they led was not worthy of of any discipline ... (1983 : 23)

La Guma, as a journalist in Cape Town, although coming from a background that had already lived and tested these experiences as espoused by Nkosi, shows his characters as having been left out of the Nationalist Party promise of economic stability. The "Fabulous 50s" was then a period of discovery for many educated city-based black South Africans and some of those white South Africans who were politically or socially aware of the repression of blacks. Although a lot of mixing did take place between races, it was either in a christian context or based on master-servant relations; it was not ordinary socialising of like minds.

Nkosi also points out that the new generation of educated and urbanised Africans survived the "Fabulous decade" era because of the Jewish influence which served as a catalyst between the traditionally opposing views of the Calvinists on one side and the other traditional christian churches on the other. Because the new urban African was no more the mildly mannered 'mission-boy' of earlier times, Jews provided a good alliance without any commitment to religion. (1983 : 13) (The religious question does not really come into La Guma's fiction, and it will be dealt with in Christoper Hope's work which centres around this issue.)

Further, Nkosi succinctly points out other influences like the exile writings of the

Francophone writers whose concept of 'Negritude' made Africans, or those who had become known as 'non-whites', look back in search of their past values. During this process of self-discovery, it was hoped that the 'non-whites' would discover who they were and that their future lay in Africa and not in Europe. In the South African case in searching for past values writers also hoped to find a solution for a 'colour caste system' whose

middle group has continued to offer the piteous spectacle of a people who seek to identify with the ruling class of whites while feeling the uncertain pull of an identity with the majority of the black oppressed. (1965 : 32)

To my mind, there is no best way of putting together the emotions, thoughts and fears that must have pressed upon each black artistic mind in South Africa at the time. Nkosi's well thought-out essays seem to unwittingly reveal what La Guma's early works are about. La Guma's fiction deals with this inner search for identity by a people that the government had humiliatingly divided from other groups according to colour, pigmentation, eyes, hair and features.

In A Walk in the Night, Michael Adonis's short walk through one night's hours is a symbolic journey of the whole Coloured people. We meet him seething with anger after he has been sacked from the only job he has ever had at a sheet metal factory for answering back to a white foreman. Michael gets off a train as if rushing somewhere only to stop a few paces ahead and look at the rush-hour crowds coming from work, looking "right through them, refusing to see them". (p 1) Michael's alienation begins with these words. From here what he thinks and how he acts is a consequence of this alienation - the "not seeing". As we follow Michael's journey through the night we are able to realise that all the decisions that Michael takes are not choices but forced actions of a trapped individual like those of a caged animal.

Let us now consider Michael's immediate actions. First La Guma tells us what Michael was wearing. His clothes were 'stained'... 'rubbed and scuffed'... 'worn'... 'beginning to crack' and 'broken'. (1974 : 2) This is a record of someone whose prospects have never been bright and never will be. Things have not been rosy for Michael and now with the job gone, the future looks

even bleaker. Michael is shown to us through his outward appearance. The clothes represent experiences of misuse and hardship coupled with resilience that was beginning to wane.

In an interview with Robert Serumaga, La Guma said:

With Michael Adonis I've tried to make a typical Coloured person. During the years I lived in District Six I played with and met characters like him - young men who, because of their situation in life and because of the lack of opportunity and their colour, have been prevented from achieving any ambitions - have been forced into this situation ... (1966 : i & ii)

Hence, instead of meeting a character we meet a type of South African whose experiences are being presented to us. Michael contains his anger and humiliation in a way that is familiar to him and probably to those who share the same experiences. The hardness and well-worn look of Michael's clothes correspond to the way he lets his anger wear off. Michael's ability to secretly fume and appease himself is both a mark of the extent of his alienation and of his lack of choice of any alternative action. It is the kind of alienation typical of someone who lives and dreams, like living inside one's shell. Clearly there is no workers' group to report to; instead he blindly goes to the only place where he is likely to be able to air his grievances, the Portuguese cafe. What he finds is only Willieboy's advice that opting out of the larger society seems the only way to survive:

No, man, me I don't work. Never worked a bogger yet. Whether you work or don't, you live anyway, somehow. I haven't starved to death, have I? (p 4)

Indeed, Willieboy does not die of starvation, but is killed by Raalt on the basis of mistaken identity, while trying to survive the way that he knows best. Even as Michael tries to work out his anger and make promises, Willieboy has long stopped worrying about work issues and instead listens to a juke-box. La Guma's description of Michael Adonis is such that there is nothing that sets him apart from anybody, indeed even from the ordinary coloured 'john' around town. Willieboy on the other hand is darker with kinky hair where Michael's hair is not quite kinky. Willieboy wears garish clothes which set him apart and has a nonchalant air about him. (p 2 - 3)

It is important to look at these two characters very closely in order to see why they later trade roles.

Within hours of losing his job, Michael begins to be adrift as he is shown watching his former group, the workers, stream from the trains into Hanover Street. Suddenly the world of the working man, of trains, bright lights, goods advertised, music and films and the promises of the good life seem to move away from him as he "watched the crowds streaming by ... the chatter and hum of traffic brushing casually across his hearing". (p 8)

La Guma describes the "drifters' world" peopled by young men like Willieboy, Foxy and Joe. These are people that probably Michael only knows by acquaintance and not association. The loss of his job means Michael has time to walk the streets and be part of this out-of-work group which is likely to meet up with the police. Michael's reaction when he meets the police is aptly put by the narrator's voice which tells us:

You learned from experience to gaze at some spot on their uniforms, the button of a pocket, or the bright smoothness of their Sam Browne belts, but never into their eyes, for that would be taken as an affront by them. It was only the very brave or very stupid who dared look straight into the law's eyes, to challenge them or to question their authority. (p 11)

In a discussion of this point in the story, Abdul JanMohamed suggests that La Guma's narrative style controls and checks "the anger and rage" felt by Michael in order to "avoid elaboration of Michael's emotions" (1983 : 229) and further says:

... the concrete and detailed surface of the novel is a deliberate mode of controlling the feelings of the characters and the narrator's rage and violence are violently suppressed by the calm, naturalistic objectivity of the prose. (Ibid : 230)

While I agree with JanMahomed's observation, it is made from the view of western thought processes and critical norms. The observation seems to come from the assumption that

Michael is an individual character whose encounter is an individual experience and he should therefore show anguish or a semblance of human dignity to rise above his humiliation. But, by controlling these emotions, La Guma has made them common, therefore, common to all who experience them. Michael is no hero, only an example of many people, so his reaction to the law is as automatic as anybody's that lives in fear of the law. Willieboy has already pointed this out when he says: "Ja, ... Working for whites. Happens all the time, man". (p 4) It is as if he is telling Michael to become aware to the reality of their situation. Being unfairly dismissed is a common occurrence among those who work for whites. ✓

On this point Watts says South African literature has to express the victimisation of an entire community, to speak for its humiliation and shame, to bring home to the readers a consciousness of the state of being of the community, and to help them come to terms with the violence evoked by the situation in which they find themselves. (1989 : 4 7)

As already argued, because of the failure of the Coloured people to develop a group political consciousness, La Guma's control of the narrative serves to reveal the very need for such a group voice.

At the bar we meet Michael who has drunk a glass of sweet wine that has helped soothe his ego about the day's events. After self examination in the bar mirror, he pretends to be a gangster-like character from a film, saying "Okay, troubleshooter. You're a tough hombre. Fastest man in Tuscon". (p 14) Michael finds his identity with underworld film characters at the very instant Foxy walks in through the swing doors looking for Sockies, a character whom Michael will replace in the group's night event.

The bar incident serves to show that Michael does not rise above being an individual representing many Coloured youths of his time. We have seen how La Guma's narrative breaks any attempts by Michael to truly search for his soul and find out what he wants and how he can get it. The coming into the bar by Foxy takes away any chance for Michael to make a decision on his own.

Earlier, La Guma had presented the bar as the place where different interests and choices take place, a melting pot of ideas, schemes and current news. Just after Michael has dreamt of himself as a gangster and of going abroad, that dream is shattered by Greene's story that whites are the same everywhere, because the American whites had just hanged a negro in the streets. Then Michael gets subjected to some information about other choices such as the taxi-driver's talk about the 'Parade' where he learns that the colour-bar was caused by the 'capitalis' system' (pp 17 - 19). What comes out of these stories is that none of the people there are familiar with political issues, which shows a lack of political consciousness. Asked about the 'capitalis' system' the taxi-driver says, "I can't explain it right, you know, hey," but goes on to give a detailed account of the killing of Flippy by Cully Richards. With this scene La Guma completes his revelations of what we might perhaps call false consciousness operating individually and collectively among the Coloured community - an inability to understand or analyse the real dynamics of the socio-political situation in which they are caught-up.

Talking about Mongane Serote's use of the depraved township environment, Watts, in an essay titled "Poetry of Mongane Serote," distinguishes between an environment and what she calls 'a mere setting':

The African township is very much a human circumstance rather than mere scenery: the inhabitants wear their hovels and backyards like old clothes that are almost self-identical with the wearer. The physical geography of the place has no existence apart from the people who live in it. (1983 : 158)

This can also be said of La Guma's realism in the middle of Michael's symbolic journey into the underworld. The walk he takes from the pub to his tenement where he meets and kills the old Irish actor, Uncle Doughty, is the symbolic journey through an identity crisis which is both his own and that of his own community. The narrator says of Doughty:

Now he was a deserted, abandoned ruin, destroyed by alcohol and something neither he nor Michael Adonis understood, waiting for death, trapped at the top of an old tenement, after the sweep of human affairs had passed over him and left him broken and helpless. (p 25)

Doughty is also waiting for his passage through life and Michael's search for identity unwittingly provides the old man's escape to death. Ironically Michael's killing of Doughty is so accidental that it does not even come close to making him a hero or a gangster.

La Guma is saying that with or without Michael, old Doughty was going to die anyway, but this way Michael was also going to realise his claim to 'bravado.' The characters seem to grow in stature and sense their predicament through their own illusions. The actions these characters take are not the results of resolutions reached through anguish and self examination, but are more like the instincts of an animal that knows its survival depends on its devising something. These actions also reflect the way the characters hide behind the masks of anonymity which the law has inflicted on them.

After the killing of Doughty, Michael slinks off instead of waiting for the law to find him, and does not even look on it as a murder, "Well, I did not mos mean to finish him". (p 44) Here is the crux of the matter. Michael does not feel he should be punished for an accidental mistake. He takes the law into his own hands, absolves himself of guilt and frees himself from possible reprisal by the law.

Michael runs from the scene of the murder to crouch at the back of the tenement. Willieboy comes looking for him only to find Doughty lying dead in his room and runs away in fright. Willieboy's reaction at the murder scene arouses suspicion from a woman-neighbour who discovers the dead body and screams, alerting the other tenants to Doughty's 'murder'. Willieboy becomes a suspect for the killing, "the boy in a yellow shirt" as John Abrahams describes him to Raalt. The law acts in complicity with Michael as Raalt looks for anybody who may have committed a crime. So the law's punishment is meted out on any 'Coloured' person fitting the vague description of the suspect, "the boy in a yellow shirt".

Old man Doughty we are told "made a small, honking, animal noise and dropped back on the bed". There was no struggle. Like the taxi driver's story of Flippy just sitting down and holding-in his guts while Cully tried to push them back in until the law came and handcuffed him, Doughty just collapsed in an almost comical death. Michael was not destined for jail but for the

underground, so he was not going to sit and wait for the law to take him. Michael Adonis goes into a reverie searching for an alternative lifestyle.

In his reverie Michael equates his life with that of old Doughty. He says: "... he's dead and you're alive. Stay alive ... and get kicked under the arse until you're finished too. Like they did with your job ...". (p 44) Michael sees old Doughty as someone who has also been kicked around. (p 25) After choosing to stay alive and flirting with the possibility of anchoring his life with family ties, he is brought to the present by the woman's scream.

In this part of the story, the narrator's voice tells us that: "... and the thought that jumped into his mind was, Oh, God, they found that old bastard". It is interesting that this same voice is heard again saying:

Voices interjected, the man spoke again, his voice bearing a note of pride in his knowledge of the workings of the judiciary. Experience gave authority to his opinions. Conversation recommenced and the blur of voices rose, but without coherence in the room where Michael Adonis crouched. (p 45)

The narrator's voice seems to come through as showing the reader Michael's annoyance which propels him to escape the tenement rather than face the law. Michael's escape does not grow from an articulated consciousness but is merely a tactic to "stay alive".

Michael views the group discussing the murder as meddling with things that do not directly involve them. He sees it as back stabbing and trying to be white by "doing the right thing" in the eyes of the law despite the fact that the law is always "smacking them around". (p 46) This is what finally confirms Michael Adonis as an alienated figure in his community. Seeing the Coloured community from within and presenting them as he sees them, through Michael, La Guma shows that to be on the right side of the law is just "trying to be laan" in a society where the law punishes both innocents and law-breakers alike.

In another essay, JanMahomed says that in A Walk in the Night "The individual is forever

caught between his own sense of unique individuality and his feeling ... that he is merely a functional, generic being". (1983 : 235) Although JanMahomed's essay is very illuminating on La Guma's narrative techniques, I would reiterate my earlier argument that individuality does not seem to be the main crux of La Guma's argument in this story.

I think the narrative makes it clear that the characters here are not questioning the fact that they are mere functionaries. What is at stake here is one's functionary role which then gives rise to a question of identity with or alienation from a group. What the narrative shows is how the individual disintegrates into the various functional levels and identities found within groups in the Coloured community. This process mediates itself through alienation which the individual must experience first before joining the group. This alienation is further emphasized by the leitmotif of searches in the story. Michael Adonis is searching for alternatives to his shattered life. Willieboy is searching for someone who can lend him money to buy his enjoyment. Raalt is searching for crime (any crime, which Doughty's killing provides) and Foxy is searching for Sockies or a replacement 'lookout' (which Michael eventually provides).

Further JanMahomed points out that in the story "... [the] generic nature of race relations allows one individual to be substituted for another without any significant alteration in the original intention or function of an act or event". (1983 : 238) I would agree entirely with this observation for this way there is no particular individuality among the characters presented before us. JanMahomed sees this as a feature of the workings of the inhumanity of the apartheid system. Michael's worn out clothes give him an ordinary look whilst Willieboy's garish clothes land him in trouble. In the eyes of the law these characters are interchangeable. Though La Guma does not see Coloured people that way, in this story he demonstrates how the apartheid system views them collectively as a group and how each individual struggles against these odds to survive as an entity. For example, when we next meet Willieboy walking in the night shadows he is unknowingly carrying Michael's guilt. Willieboy's anger and frustration are seen in his social relationship with the American sailors and his attempts to absolve himself from Doughty's killing.

We are told:

But years of treacherous experience and victimisation through suspicion had rusted the armour of confidence, reduced him to the nondescript entity which made him easy prey to a life which specialized in finding scapegoats for anything that steered it from its dreary course. So that now he longed for the stimulants which would weld the seams of the broken armour and bring about the bravado that seemed necessary in the struggle to get back into the battle that was for hardened warriors only. (p 48)

La Guma's irony cuts deep in this passage. The none descript Willieboy goes to Gipsy's shebeen and after a few glasses of cheap red wine feels he can defend the Coloured girls from being abused by American sailors. Instead 'the bravado' brought about by the liquor is too little for the task at hand and the opposition too strong. The 'bravado' is also not enough to persuade Willieboy to stand up in his defence against accusations about Doughty's killing. The ineffectuality of Willieboy's heroic attempts ends up with him retching over the steps just as Michael did after his accidental murder of Doughty. As La Guma says in his narrative voice, "[that] battle ... was for hardened warriors only". Until the Coloured community comes up with a warrior or community leader(ship), there is no hope for a concrete realisation of their dreams individually or as a group since the present characters are dismal failures (that is in the context of La Guma's fiction. In reality, things have somewhat changed in the new South Africa).

Constable Raalt's view of his work revolves around escaping the paranoia about his marriage, being a corrupt policeman, collecting money for favours from people like Chips of the Jolly Boys Social Club and looking for crime in 'non-white' areas. The killing of Doughty presents Raalt with the main aspect of his view of crime (the search for someone to catch) as he says, "Nobody kills anybody on my beat and gets away with it. No bloody bastards". (p 60) Raalt's failed social life manifests itself in anger and guilt. The fear of committing a sin in the christian sense is what irks Raalt as articulated by "it's a sin to kill your wife. It's a sin the way she carries on too". (p 38) Raalt then transfers this anger and guilt to any scapegoat found at the scene of a crime. This worries the young driver, who thinks that Raalt's misbehaviour is a social hazard,

bound to disgrace the white race by some rash act. Raalt is also an alienated and marginal figure whose actions do not reflect the rationality of white society's christian teachings and beliefs.

If we adopt JanMahomed's argument, Raalt is another 'mere functionary' of his own society. Raalt is there to prop up the barbaric laws of white South Africa. The driver's sobering observations about Raalt show that South African laws not only affect the 'non-whites,' but whites also have their casualties. Like Michael's and Willieboy's, Raalt's thoughts enact the dislocated actions of an alienated person whose personal fears reflect the often blurred lines between good and evil in the white South African way of life. Clearly, Raalt's actions also raise questions about his group identity, not in terms of skin colour but moral behaviour. If apartheid is to be held as a doctrine intent on the application of perfect discipline and moral behaviour on South African subjects, Raalt's social and moral behaviour falls too short of this intention. La Guma, through the young police driver, shows us that Raalt is representative of the ills of such anguished morality.

Alienated groups are another aspect presented in this fiction. Foxy and his gang represent the underworld, a marginalized world of crime. This group does not adhere to any laws except those of 'staying alive'. Raalt's actions are representative of a group of white South Africans that find the apartheid system useful for their own ends. The Coloureds gathered at Michael's tenement witnessing their own incoherence as a community, as shown by the way they treat John Abrahams and react to Raalt's provoking questioning, represent another alienated group:

The people gathered in the corridor, near the upper landing, gazed back at the constable, some of them nervously, some with surreptitious boldness, all with the worn brutalized, wasted, slum-scratched faces of the poor. They saw the flat grey eyes under the gingerish eyebrows, hard and expresionless as the end of pieces of lead pipe, pointed at them. (p 61)

As a group or community the tenement occupants are overwhelmed by fear of Raalt's eyes. Instead of seeing eyes they see something resembling the barrel of a gun. That silences them. When John Abrahams tries to be heroic again, his bravado gets shattered as with all the characters who try to take individual action. In trying to stand up in the community, Abrahams implicates

an innocent victim (Willieboy) who happens to have on "... a yellow shirt and a sports coat and had kinky hair". (p 63)

Lewis Nkosi, critically points out the problem of characterisation in fiction coming from this period. On Richard Rive's novel Emergency (1964) Nkosi says:

In most of the stories recently published in Quartet by four Cape Coloured writers, there are no real full-blooded characters with real blood to spill; no characters whose fighting, or love-making has the stench of living people: they are cardboardpieces (and ardboardpieces don't spill blood) Embarrassingly, what comes out of the apartheid machine when it has ground to a standstill is not human flesh but cardboard pulp. (1983 : 137)

Nkosi goes on to distinguish La Guma's writing for what he calls "his enthusiasm for life as it is lived". (Ibid)

All the individual characters who have taken the decision to fight their own battles outside of any group are very marginal people with no power. Willieboy fails as a character of the underworld; even though he fashions his life from films, he still feels and remains "part of the blurred face of the crowd, inconspicuous as a smudge on a grimy wall". (p 72) His subsequent death, therefore, does not affect the events of the novel except to demonstrate the ineffectuality of individuality and larger than life dreams. Raalt, whose actions are sanctioned by the law he is supposed to uphold, fails by becoming a hunter instead of a policeman. La Guma's discursive terms reduce Raalt, the agent of white man's law, to an alienated, marginalised brute. This way La Guma questions and challenges the power of South African whites as a group. The representation of Raalt's character in this story neatly subverts the ideological base of white man's power in South Africa. It displays a group of people that do not speak with one voice as seen through the disagreements between Raalt and his driver and Raalt's refusal to call and wait for the detectives. Raalt is a law unto himself; he has a personal identity problem. Raalt acts out his own personal frustrations showing an alienated and lonesome figure that in a way undermines the power stipulated in the statutes by his racial group.

When Willieboy dies in the back of Raalt's police van he finds solace in the memory of his mother's scoldings which form part of his identity. In death, Willieboy remembers his mother saying he will have a no-good end to his life. Joe on the other hand has a problem trying to convince Michael not to join Foxy's gang. In Michael, Joe has found someone he can identify with. When Michael leaves, Joe heads back to the beach front where he spends most of his time collecting fish left-overs from the trawlers, in isolation.

Attention will now be given to La Guma's other short stories in the A Walk In The Night collection. There seems to be an inter-relationship between the themes of these stories and those of later works. It is this kind of inter-connectedness of La Guma's work that seems to point towards a self-defining narrative strategy.

In Tattoo Marks and Nails (pp 97-107) the theme is the lack of heroes among the Coloured community. In this short story we come across the ex-army character 'Ahmed The Turk' who went into the World War Two alongside the Commonwealth contingents. Ahmed represents those Coloureds or indeed Africans who never came back as heroes for their people nor to the whites whose life and values they went to defend. In the story, Ahmed is scared of being identified by "The Creature" during one of the prison mock-courts. Ahmed lives in fear of recognition to the point that he never takes off his under-shirt and always knows how to defend his position by saying that the prison is not as hot as Wadi Hussein camp in the Lybian desert. However, Ahmed gradually reveals his true identity to the narrator. We learn that instead of a medal for bravery, Ahmed escaped from the camp with the words "Private So-and-So, A Cheat And A Coward" (p 104) tattooed on his chest. Through the prison bully's antics of searching for his brother's killer, we learn about the Coloured ex-serviceman's hurt and how most of his compatriots had been forgotten by the Nationalist Party government.

The one point to underscore is Ahmed's fear of removing his own mask among his people so that they can see his past shame. The other is that Ahmed is forced to face his own personhood, unmask himself from the Wadi Hussein empty hero-worship tactic that he tries to sell to cover his nakedness. La Guma sets the story in a prison cell where almost all the prisoner are naked except Ahmed. The unmasking of Ahmed on both levels happens when he suddenly

cries out, "Creature, you pig! Why don't you leave the poor basket alone? Can't you see he's ... scared?" (p 105)

This theme of an ex-serviceman within the community is carried over and developed in And A Threefold Cord with Charlie Pauls as a young and conscientious protagonist within his community. Charlie Pauls is also an ex-serviceman who is unemployed but very supportive to his family and girlfriend. Charlie defends all those he loves like his useless uncle Ben, brother Ronny and girlfriend Freda. Charlie also believes in the universal and somewhat utopian ideal that people or things are not as bad as they seem to be, to which his mother retorts:

Goddamit, Ma Pauls said. Everybody's awright by you. Isn't so bad. Is awright.
Everything is going to be okay. You not bringing up no children yet. (pp 35-36)

Ma Pauls's indictment exposes Charlie's weaknesses and warns us against taking Charlie's good nature and positive determinism too far. When we meet Charlie, we see a nice young man whose ideas and thoughtfulness make us believe he might develop into the hero, until we realise that he is limited. It is as if La Guma is also warning the reader that this is the direction for which he as a writer is searching, but for which he has not really found the right character. The outburst also serves to warn us that Charlie's enthusiasm may not be totally correct as later illustrated by Ronny's killing of his girl-friend Stella and subsequent capture.

The tone and mood of the Pauls family story is different from that found in A Walk in the Night. The Pauls family story is connected and held together by family love, poverty, friendship and sharing of life's perils. Through these social strands we see La Guma's first family grow to withstand life in the Coloured shanty-town. Charlie is the voice of reason, a growing consciousness. Also he preaches togetherness and politics; although his formulations are second hand, they are better articulated than those of the characters already examined in A Walk in the Night.

In And A Threefold Cord, La Guma sets the District Six community at the time when the South African Nationalist government had succeeded in removing Coloureds from their original

area and rezoning the tract of land for white occupancy. Similar moves had been made in Johannesburg where Africans were successfully removed from Sophiatown to the present South Western Township, Soweto. The book marks the effects of the Verwoerd government era of the early 1960s.

The Pauls family, like many families elsewhere in the non-white sections of South African society at the time, lived in fear of removals, and the repressive laws. Some of these families, like the Pauls family, constantly live in fear of nature which in many instances seems to conspire against their livelihood. Charlie Pauls is apolitical but does not suffer from false consciousness.

Again, in And A Threefold Cord, La Guma has a de-centred white character in George Mostert. Mostert, like old Doughty in A Walk In The Night, has been cast aside by the crunch of the capitalist machine for having taken a wrong choice by not listening to his wife's advice to move to another town where business could have been better. Capitalist South Africa had marched on leaving Mostert clinging to the past: the shred of dignity provided by his race and colour is hardly a comfort for his future.

Anthony Appiah puts forward the reliance on race as a determining factor for a specific identity as very problematic when rallying groups for a particular purpose. Though I do not necessarily share his enthusiasm for the Pan-Africanist project he espouses, he says one of the lessons to be learnt is

... that identities are complex and multiple and grow out of a history of changing responses to economic, political and cultural forces, almost always in opposition to other identities. (1991 : 289)

This complexity of identities in modern society is very apparent in La Guma's novels when one examines the way the author portrays his characters.

Firstly, we see Mostert clinging to his dead business and on the verge of being overwhelmed by the only neighbourhood he has around him. He is a victim of a social group

whose identity is defined by an economic boom under the veil of racial identity. When the upwardly mobile couple drives up to his garage the narrative clearly shows the different choices taken in response to the South African economic boom. Mostert, La Guma tells us, chose to stay behind while his wife moved on. The couple at the garage provide a testimony that group identity does not necessarily rest on race or colour alone but is subject to constant shifts in response to historical, political and cultural processes, as Appiah notes.

Uncle Doughty on the other hand represents an old identity that was once defined through the imperial majesty of a past era - the British empire. Doughty's lament for a grandiose past life as a soldier and an actor straddling two continents (pp 24 - 25) does epitomise the colonial ideal and group identity that is fast losing its grip as new realities take shape.

In The Stone Country La Guma's concern with group identity picks up the thread developed in A Walk In the Night when we last saw Michael Adonis with Foxy's gang. It is clear to us that Michael has rejected Joe's "blerry godfather" like warnings against crime, choosing to join the gang. In Tattoo Marks and Nails the gang is larger and clearly defined as "petty-thieves, ~~gangsters~~, murderers, rapists, burglars, thugs, drunks, brawlers, dope-peddlers: most of them by no means strangers to the cells, many of them still young, others already depraved ...". (p 98)

La Guma's portrayal of the coloured community inside jail in The Stone Country is very astute. The depravity of the jail atmosphere renders the coloured community as a defeated community within the realm of South Africa's brutal legal system which allows no escape from humiliation for those who cross its boundaries.

The Stone Country was researched during and after the most repressive years of apartheid rule following the Treason Trial of 1956, in which La Guma was a trialist, and the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. While the book marks the author's vivid memory of his own incarceration, it also laments the introduction of the Publications Act of 1963 which silenced many South African writers, causing many to flee into exile.

In this book, La Guma identifies South Africa as the jail saying it is "a small something of

what they want to make the country. Everbody separate, boy: White, African, Coloured. Regulations for Everybody, and a white boss with a gun and a stick ...". (p 20) The human deprivation inside the jail is not different from that epitomised by the tenement of District Six in A Walk in the Night which is also developed further in And A Threefold Cord. When George Adams "feels like an immigrant entering a new and strange country, wondering what was going to happen to him" we understand and feel compassionate to his estrangement. Here the author's identity merges with that of Adams the 'Communist' (p 24) activist in repressed South Africa.

Whilst the government separates South Africans according to racial groups, La Guma's aim in this book is to re-create political relations between African and Coloured peoples through the identification of common problems - racial discrimination, poverty, unemployment and crime. As it has already been shown that race is not La Guma's basis for identity, it becomes important that politics plays the unifying factor for a new kind of identity that is to lead an oppositional strategy against the apartheid ideology in order to free South Africans from discrimination based upon racial differences.

Jefferson Mpolo is a seasoned comrade from earlier campaigns as he tells us "... I was through all this before. During the "Emergency". He also advises Adams not to lose the ID card. The new political alliance between Coloured and African is being affirmed as the only course open to obtain freedom. Later La Guma uses these glimpses of alliance in developing the themes of In The Fog of the Seasons'End, his first book purely researched whilst in exile. George Adams's prison term at the remand section is spent quietly studying the situation around him and firmly stating his political position to both warder and fellow prisoner.

In The Stone Country La Guma also threads together and develops the identity of the criminal element within the coloured community, exposing it as bad and something that should not be emulated.

Coloured people seem to have resorted to crime to hide their shame and defeat, as La Guma's narrative demonstrates through Michael Adonis's short night of misfortune, mistake and poor judgement. La Guma finds this unacceptable, hence, in The Stone Country he sets his

narrative to engage with this impractical way of dealing with the South African situation. The narrative proposes a methodical way of dealing with a state [the prison symbolizes the country] that is similar to a decaying and suffocating prison. He sets out to carve new heroes, new hopes and new identities for people to look up to.

The image of the coloured bully is taken from the short story Tattoo Marks and Nails with its protagonist, The Creature, who is looking for his brother's killer. In The Stone Country La Guma presents us with Butcherboy Williams, the prison bully, and the Casbah Kid whose youth and violent blunder earns him the gallows. The Roeland Street prison, itself a relic of imperial times, is described as follows :

... over the years bits and pieces had been added ... and because it could not expand outwards, it had closed in upon itself in a warren of cells, cages, corridors and yards. Outside, the facade had been brightened with lawns and flower-beds: the grim face of an executioner hidden behind a holiday mask. (p 17)

The prison's community is divided into two camps: the brutes of the underworld and those who are aiming to change the South African status quo - George Adams and Jefferson Mpolo. The territory of the underworld bully, which had earlier successfully lured the likes of Michael Adonis and the Casbah Kid as the only alternative for coloured youth, is now being challenged by political alignments. George Adams is saved by Yusef Ebrahim (Yusef the Turk) from a dangerous confrontation with Butcherboy. Yusef the Turk saves Adams because he believes that the baddies have a duty to look after those who are working for the revolution. He says: "People like you, we got to look after, mos;" (p 70) this is also reiterated on the day of the fight. (p 80)

The triumph of this new friendship is realised when Ebrahim fights for Adams's honour against Butcherboy and his cronies. Even though we are not clearly told who actually killed Butcherboy, what is clear is that Butcherboy's influence and tactics have lost their firm base. As soon as his position weakens, the Casbah Kid whose "... right hand jerked in a swift movement ..." (p 88) takes a chance to revenge himself.

Yusef the Turk defends Adams because from the time Adams came into the jail he challenges every established code, in that way earning everyone's respect. By the time the fight takes place Adams has established his identity and its principles of fighting for one's right even if it meant fighting the feared guard, Old Fatso, over the mug issue. "He sensed the defiance, and turned angrily on the waiting column of prisoners". (p 76) Fatso is angry but smart enough to realise something is at stake.

La Guma's narrative presents the fierce tension before the fight between Yusef the Turk and Butcherboy as a sheer power struggle rather than a battle of wills. The insolence and demonstration of strength and public support shown earlier by George Adams to the guard, Fatso, is now displayed by Yusef the Turk to Butcherboy. " 'Fair fight' ... The basket wants a fair fight. Man to man ... And to his surprise there came a mutter from most voices, 'Fair fight, fair fight'. A murmur echoed even by his immediate henchmen. He peered about again ..." (p 82) Even before the fight Butcherboy has clearly lost control of his prison turf. The fight is a fight for life and all that he believes in. Before the skirmish, La Guma describes Yusef the Turk as: "... sharp and tough and dangerous as a polished spear". (p 81) and his body "tubercular in comparison with the uncouth hulk of Butcherboy, but ... the long body is really as tough and as flexible as a sjambok". (p 83)

In this little scene, Yusef the Turk becomes a symbol of the black South African's resistance to foreign domination over centuries of colonisation. The symbol of a spear was used by the ANC to name its guerrilla army Umkhonto WeSizwe. The sjambok is a symbol of South African police brutality. So, poised before the fight, Yusef the Turk is a combination of a spear and a sjambok ready to overpower the depraved symbol of brutality - the eagle. For centuries, the eagle has been used by European nations to symbolise their colonial conquests. Most European army squadrons and currencies are emblazoned with the eagle.

Butcherboy is described through his tattoos "the skull-and-cross-bones, the flags and crossed daggers, the nude women who wiggled as his muscles writhed and ... an eagle in full flight, its beak agape and wings spread, eyes glaring and talons hooked and poised for the kill". (p 83) The eagle symbolises Butcherboy's brutal power which is similar to that of the South

African state. The rest of the tattoos represent all the underworld characters that La Guma had sketched in his short stories.

Butcherboy is the culmination of all that is bad in the Coloured community and indeed in the country, hence, "... the tiny fountain of blood ..." that killed him was a "... trickle out of the eye of the tattooed eagle". (p 88) Yusef the Turk killed the eagle, the symbol of destructive power.

With Butcherboy gone, George Adams continues to spread his influence in the prison. He chides the Casbah Kid for selfishness when refusing to help Gus, Morgan and Koppe with a few sticks of cigarettes. It is as if La Guma is re-affirming the belief in working together expressed by Charlie Pauls in And A Threefold Cord.

The detailed description of how he, the Casbah Kid and the other three prisoners engineer the whisking of the few cigarettes, is a demonstration of what can be achieved by working together sharing certain skills in order to overthrow white power. For George Adams, working together is very important especially as he and Mpolo had been arrested because somebody must have warned the police about their distribution of pamphlets. The wish is expressed by the Casbah Kid's outburst: "All this stuff about our people getting into the government ... You reckon it will help people like us? People in prison like?" (p 118) Even the hardened young Albert March dreams of the day he can have a chance to change his lot if only a little bit.

In this book, La Guma finally gives us the cat and mouse scene which prefigures the attempted escape by Gus, Morgan and Koppe. Like the mouse which braces itself and makes a dash for life, Koppe had spent sleepless nights afraid of escaping jail, being on the wrong side of the law. When the escape finally happens, the hardened plotters, Gus and Morgan, both fall into the hands of the police but Koppe survives. Faced with fear and the determination to survive, even the weak can amass enough power to move on and overcome any obstacle.

The Stone Country has been criticised as a story that emphasises the cruelty of the South African state. I think there is hope expressed in this book. La Guma's project of looking at problems faced by the Coloured community and black South Africans at large (either individually

or collectively) begins to be expressed in this story as possibilities of attaining freedom take shape.

La Guma's three books constitute the first phase of his writing career based on research and immediate experiences gained at home before going to exile. The second part of this study will look at the latter phase of La Guma's writing especially at what influences exile and distance had on the writer's ability to represent his 'home'. Before looking at La Guma's exile phase, Chapter 2 will look at Christopher Hope's collection of poems Cape Drives (1974) and his novel A Separate Development (1980) published in exile but researched and written at home.

Notes for Chapter 1

1. Gordimer (1973 : 29).
February (1981 : Chapter 7; Chapter 9).
Nkosi (1981 : 31 - 35 ; 107 - 115).
Nkosi (1983 : 137 - 138).
Abdul JanMohamed (1983).
2. Abrahams (1985).
Shava (1989 : 58 - 68).
Maughan-Brown (1991 : 19 - 37).
Carpenter (1991 : 1 - 18).
3. Abrahams (ed.) (1991 : 8; 24; 33 - 36).
4. Abrahams (1991 : 11) Showing Alex La Guma's and other fellow Coloured people's involvement in the May, 1961 strike called by Nelson Mandela.
See also Lewis (1987 : 262 - 271).

CHAPTER 2

CHRISTOPHER HOPE

The history of South African political life has changed with the elections in April 1994. This political change ushered all South African subjects into a constitutional democracy and it is difficult now to define some of those people who still remain outside as exiles. For the purposes of this study, exile will mean all South African writers whose livelihood inside the country was disrupted in various forms, forcing them to choose living in another country. The different stages and degrees of disruptions in the writers' lives are expressed in their works as well as captured by the reader in the varied ways some of them dedicated their lives in exile.

Christopher Hope is a novelist living in England whose roots are based in South Africa, having grown up in Johannesburg and Pretoria. He studied in the universities of Witwatersrand and Natal (Durban). Hope now permanently lives in London with his family having left South Africa in 1975. Hope has often distinguished between forced and voluntary exile and regards himself as experiencing the latter because he chose to leave South Africa. In an interview with Phil Joffe Hope says:

... I have often thought about this and I know that 'expatriate' would be the more general, and perhaps in a sense more accurate way of describing what I am, because I am somebody who voluntarily lives away from the country for most of the time. There is no obligation on me to stay away - no legal obligation on me to stay away, yet it was a kind of enormous anger, mixed with anxiety, that drove me away in the first place. It is that, to a very large degree, which still fuels my writing, and it is that, also to a degree, that keeps me away from the place. (1989 : 93)

Christopher Hope describes who he is and the circumstances that made him decide to leave 'home'. There is another very important point in this passage that Hope touches on - "the enormous anger,

mixed with anxiety" that not only decided his leaving 'home' but fuels his writing. This is the nub of this study - to find how much of Hope's writing in exile is actually fuelled by experiences of 'home' - South Africa.

First, I will look at Hope's earlier works Cape Drives and A Separate Development which were written or researched in South Africa before the author decided to live in England in 1975.

Hope's writing background is that of the White English-Speaking South Africans (the writing of WESSAs). I think that Michael Wade comes close to articulating precisely what the position of white South African writers in English has been; Wade uses the term 'eschatological' for both Afrikaans and English - speaking white South Africans, which immediately has the connotation of a separate socio-cultural existence, which the Afrikaans speaking whites wanted to preserve, while the "... English-speaking whites, lacked ...an eschatological framework to accommodate the image of the black ...". (1993 : 2) This suggests that English speakers did not have a coherent identity of themselves through which they could collectively view the native blacks.

The whole debate of why the English-speaking whites lacked a coherent approach towards Africans is outside the scope of this study. However, Andrew Foley (1991) does provide some interesting information on some of the problems faced by WESSAs. But for now, I will link what Wade and Foley imply in their debate with what Christopher Hope articulates in his work.

Hope's writing comes within a period of heavy debate on the probable complicity in attitude between the white English-speaking South Africans and their Afrikaner counterparts. Jacques Alvarez-Pereyre also says there were feelings that the English-speaking white South Africans, although not aggressive, were generally regarded as 'conservative' and their 'liberal tradition ... greatly exaggerated'. He is here agreeing with Colin Gardner, that often they were hiding behind the Nationalists' doctrine of apartheid "... either from opportunism or fear". (1979 : 24-25)

Hope's writing falls under the umbrella of mainstream English literature. South African literature in English had been carrying on the eurocentric themes of colonial encounters and racial difference which were firmly rooted in the liberal theory. The writings of Thomas Pringle, Olive

Schreiner, William Plomer, Sara Gertrude Millin and others (referred to earlier) had been firmly rooted in the English tradition which looked at the South African way of life from a colonial perspective. Even later writers like Alan Paton, Nadine Gordimer, Jack Cope, Dan Jacobson and others had to make a conscious effort to shift their perspective away from the earlier eurocentric influences to try and view Africa from within and not from outside. However, most of these writings have been scrutinised as not totally devoid of the colonial theme in as much as they only look at the dilemma of whites caught in an outmoded and embarrassing social order fashioned out of racial division. While Afrikaans literature was seen as vindicating and supporting racism, the English speaking white writers deemed themselves to be the voice of reason and fairness.

What Alvarez-Pereyre and Gardner say carries a lot of weight when one looks at the works of white English-speaking writers immediately after South Africa was ejected from the Commonwealth. The younger generation of white English writers found themselves compromised by the international community which seemed to group them together with the despised racist Afrikaners.

Much of the writing at this time, mainly poetry, expressed an introspection and reflexive disgust at the inferred complicity, tinged with a loss of hope. Christopher Hope is singled out by Alvarez-Pereyre as bringing out a kind of poetry which "... seeks to take account of the situation of the country as it really is and not be lulled by illusions". (p 254) Clearly 'illusions' here refers to the identity with European cultural origins rather than seeking new ones with Africa that could accommodate the lone figure of the South African English-speaking white within the African landscape embittered by racial divisions.

The fabric of political life under the Afrikaners was gradually deteriorating into political repression while a large section of the English-speaking whites felt either trapped or unwilling to make any move towards either black nationalism or racist Afrikaner politics.

Perhaps to put the picture more clearly, it is necessary also to briefly lay out what young black South Africans were doing at this time.

The younger generation of black writers who appeared at the beginning of the 1970s had no role models (within South African borders) to follow since most of the well-known writers had gone into exile. On the one hand writers like Wally Serote, Mafika Gwala, Oswald Mtshali, James Matthews, Njabulo Ndebele (though he was writing from across the border in Lesotho) and Mandla Langa, to mention but a few, had to resort to poems to express what was happening in their community. As already noted poetry had become the only vehicle they could use to avoid quick detection by the censors. Gordimer pinpoints a distinguishing feature of the literature of this era saying:

for the first time, black writers' works are beginning to be bought by ordinary black people in the segregated townships, instead of only by liberal or literary whites and the educated black elite. (1983 : 51)

For the most part the new poetry came from ordinary individuals like Mtshali who lived and worked in Johannesburg as a messenger. Mandla Langa went into exile after facing harassment; he has written three books, one of which will be examined when I consider the effects of exile later in this study.

Young white writers like Christopher Hope, on the other hand, had plenty of role models within the country as writers like Nadine Gordimer and others remained at home writing. Christopher Hope is one of the writers who emerged in the early 1970s, with his collection of poems Cape Drives published by the London Magazine Editions whilst he still lived in Durban.

In Cape Drives Hope locates this white complicity as being due to cultural identity with Europe and economic wealth. In the title poem "Cape Drives" Hope portrays the undying need for South African whites to fashion their homes with fake European appearance, through objets d'art such as the "Bacchic frieze" on the walls. This helps them hold on to the past and old socio-cultural identity while hiding away the new but uncomfortable Europeanness experienced in South Africa. The unease in this poem is furnished by these lines:

The neighbours smile and wait, it'll have him yet,

They say, this badly buried dead man's hand.
How he regrets the future, keeps his glance
Sideways and sharp, and ... (p 7)

Hope begins to look within the white myth in his country to find a mixture of white identities and socio-cultural beliefs and practices that do not form a complete whole. "The badly buried dead man's hand, ..." a tribute to Herman Charles Bosman's story (1978 : 131) puts into perspective the restlessness of the white man in Africa whose burial place is not defined by customs and traditions of the place¹. Later Hope says:

How well the English made him reparation
That he should owe so much to Wilberforce.
Less gift than fate, there's no escaping this ;
The blood that bound the Trekkers to their slaves
Still stains their veins as it discolours his: (p 8)

The other white South Africans owe a debt to the British 1806 settlement in the Cape Colony. However, Hope sees this not as a gift but as binding them not just to the land but also with Africa and they therefore remain bound with the Afrikaner and hence with an African identity.

In "The Old Men Are Coming From The Durban Club" we see the image of ownership and wealth that affords some a leisured life contrasted with the lives of those who have to hassle and work hard for their daily bread. The old men's stomachs are bulging not only from that day's lunch but from habitual affluence. Their eyes see nothing wrong because they are hardened like 'oysters' and give fat slimy laughs.

Hope tries to play down the old men's image of opulence and self-imposed greedy dignity when he uses an image of them sitting in a lavatory doing a very ordinary thing like relieving themselves.

Hope's short poem "The Crunch" ridicules South African identities based on colour. The

crunch of the white teeth on the neatly arranged colours of a liquorice sweet immediately mixes the colours in one's mouth. The line "... Observe what little pressure bruises these colours together ..." (p 22) shows the fragility of division based on colour. It is a hopeful poem that is almost begging others to see the emptiness of apartheid beliefs.

Hope's pessimism is evident through in "Grandfather" and "The Flight of the White South Africans". He examines the tenuous links with 'home' and Africa. In "Grandfather" Hope locates his own origins as an English-speaking white South African dating back to his grandfather, an Irishman from Waterford who settled in Balfour, a predominantly nationalist enclave near the Reef goldmines.

Later Hope re-worked this theme in his autobiographical book White Boy Running. In the poem, Hope uses the image of an Irishman sent to represent the Balfour community in Pretoria. Hope looks at the early fortunes the old man had until he lost them when he gambled by backing the wrong horse - the English-speaking community in South Africa.

Not Afrikaner in origin, the old man's Irish background clouded with memories of strained relations of another era at another place - Ireland, ... he declined to stand for parliament:

Then was ill for three days when Smuts went.
... He himself went lumberingly, with the aplomb
Of an old bear ... (p 37)

These neat lines enact the despair that follows defeat. It seems as if white English-speaking South Africans never recovered from the defeat in the 1948 general elections. The lines "... with the aplomb / Of an old bear" show the mark of wounded pride. The elections also signalled the shift in political power and the decline of the British Imperial might.

In "The Flight of The White South Africans" Hope has the following lines:

To stand at the urinal complaining aloud
Of filth, flies and spit, amazed that this

Is it, an Africa the white man bowed
Before, growling outside the walls of the Gents. (p 38)

Inside the Kinshasa airport urinal, the white conqueror of past times is faced by the rawness of an Africa that is always capable of shaking off its colonial shackles. Hope, on the one hand, invokes the Conradian despair as he sets his poetic narrative right there in the Congo which has been the symbol of African identity and its refusal to be diluted. On the other hand, Hope invokes the Xhosa legend Nongqause [in Hope's text this name is incorrectly spelt as Nongquase] as having her revenge on whites who still refuse to abandon Africa and go back home, but [they]

...blink and are blinded by the Congo sun
Overhead, as flagrant as a raped nun. (p 39)

The image of "a raped nun" invokes feelings of not belonging, of the white man in Africa being an oddity; something that should never have happened. Later this image comes through in:

Nongquase, heaven unhoods its bloodshot eye
Above a displaced people; our demise
Is near, and we'll be gutted where we fall. (p 39)

In these lines, seeing heaven through the sun and its "bloodshot eye", seems to conspire against the white man in Africa to make sure that Nongqause's prophecy is fulfilled. Hope's poetry at this stage separates Africa and Europe as entities that should not have met as there is no hope in any future relationship.

The liberated state of Zaire in modern day Africa is portrayed as not having risen beyond the Congo as portrayed in Conrad's Heart of Darkness.² It presents an unwelcoming exterior fortified with the resilience of not wanting to be conquered again.

Above, I have looked at some of Hope's pre-exile writing. This was later followed by his first satirical novel A Separate Development. By the time this novel was published, Hope was already

living in England. This however, did not stop the censorship authorities in South Africa from banning it on very flimsy evidence, as is shown by Margaret De Lange in her unpublished Ph.D thesis (1993).³

A Separate Development is a story a South African youth growing up in the white suburbs of Johannesburg believing himself to be white, until he is kicked out by a bus conductor who says he should not be riding the bus. Hope sets the story in the 1950s, and as De Lange says it coincides with the authors' schooling years, but "Harry doesn't represent any group, least of all coloureds or blacks ...". (p 152) Whilst in agreement with the latter part of the statement, I however take a different view of why Hope portrayed Moto as an outcast. Hope's writing is about individuals and groups - how individuals fare within certain groups whether by choice or not. Hope explains this in his book White Boy Running:

... Even more valuable, and ultimately more crucial for me, was the lesson learnt from our embattled position as the whelps of Rome, the step-children of the Scarlet Woman encircled by the hoplites of Calvin. This had the effect of concentrating the mind on the difference between groups, as well as on the hateful, stultifying, lethally boring business of having to belong to a group in the first place. And, of course, groups in South Africa are obligatory ... (1988 : 136)

Hope explains how, as a catholic youth at Christian Brothers' College in Pretoria, he always felt the presence of groups. He says the presence of the Afrikaner pupils on the other side of the fence was always filled with tension. To ward-off any possible identification with Calvinist styles of cropped hair and short pants, they would take on the Elvis Presley image of stove-pipes and Bill Harley kiss-curls. They never wanted to be identified with the Calvinist youths. It is in the characterisation of Harry Motto in A Separate Development that Hope developed the theme of the complexity involved in belonging to groups in the South African context.

In A Separate Development, Harry Moto attends school at a catholic place called St. Bonaventure's College for Boys. The school is exclusively catholic except for a few boys whose rich parents can be tolerated. The school is also surrounded by a catholic parish and a Convent of the

Lady of Sorrows, attended by some of the girls that Harry Moto and friends start to date. Moto has a group of young boys and girls that meet for swimming at the house of Jack Wyner (a richer boy). Moto's closest friends are Rick van Dam who is Dutch, John Yannovitch, a Yugoslavian and Theo Shuckel, a Jewish youth.

It is in this setting that Harry Moto begins to worry about how he looks and fits into all these surroundings. Moto worries about his hair and swarthy complexion which everyone in the group keeps teasing him about. Moto says:

The question of skin colour had surfaced in my mind about the age of ten and grew steadily more menacing. It was an issue for me long before van Dam's mother made her now famous mistake of taking me for a potential garden boy in search of a job. It worried my mother and father. It was never something we could discuss over the breakfast table - though it lay between us, somewhere above the salt and to the left of the marmalade, all the days of my boyhood. (p 17)

Harry Moto is a youth who lives in the suburbs like all his friends, but they, though foreign, have the right kind of skin colour. They are white. The subject of skin colour is never a welcomed discussion at anytime, let alone at breakfast. Moto tells us that it was after a visit to granny Moto in an old age home in Cedar Grove that the link becomes clear. Granny lives among "olive Lebanese who of course knew instantly the special case we were and they'd wink and whisper and point behind our backs". (p 19) Though Moto's granny does not tell, it is clear that the blood line is not pure white.

When Moto and Goble argue over who is to date Mary Smithson, Goble describes Harry as

a little coffee-coloured creep who gives the impression his old lady was jumped by a garden boy. With your complexion, crissy hair and all, next to you even my kaffir girl's good looking. (p 56)

Harry Moto defends himself and chases Goble away and later has the pleasure of dating Mary for the matric dance.

Hope repeats this part of his impressions of South African suburban life in White Boy Running when describing the half-Greek parliamentary messenger who killed Dr Henrik Verwoerd on September 6, 1966. The messenger, Tsafendas, was nicknamed 'Blackie' because of his dark complexion. 'Blackie' bears a striking resemblance to Harry Moto in A Separate Development - the youth who tries everything he knows to change his image. Moto exercises to change his developing chest and dyes his hair to make it less wiry. Hope seems to almost celebrate the death of Dr Verwoerd at the hands of an outsider within the white minority group:

For the truth of the matter is completely the opposite: life, as ever in South Africa, goes in contraries. If one were to go in for the business of establishing whose ideas were truly responsible for bringing the demented messenger to his victim that day, then I would imagine that the answer is very close to home. For who else produced the climate of prejudice and humiliation, of racial rejection, from which 'Blackie' Tsafendas suffered so horribly, and who expressed it in its most pure and merciless form, if it was not the Prime Minister who fell beneath the rain of blows from the hunting knife? (1988 : 150)

Hope sees the death of Verwoerd as tragic in the classic sense of the Greek tragedies in terms of its dramatic qualities but he also sees the sordid side as befitting the demise of the most cruel individual.

Although A Separate Development may have been conceived in South Africa, the fact is that it was published five years after Hope had been in exile. Hope seems to have come into his own after having left South Africa. The next chapter will suggest how Hope through his writing worked out the anger and anxiety that he felt about his 'home'. After leaving 'home' it took Hope five years before he produced any significant work, though since then he has been prolific.

The second part of this study looks at the works of these chosen artists that were written in exile. Chapter 3 examines all the selected works of these writers in order to show the effects of exile. The chapter is basically about exile and what it is to be a writer in exile. It also suggests different modes and levels of experiences as lived and witnessed by some South African writers in exile.

I would like to point out that two of the chosen writers, Mandla Langa and Rian Malan are examined in the following chapter for the following reasons: though Langa wrote some poetry before leaving South Africa, there is little that is available⁴ and Malan was a journalist before he wrote his book. It has been necessary, therefore, to examine the works by these writers in the following chapter.

Notes for Chapter 2

1. Herman Charles Bosman's characters in the story - "Unto Dust" - tell of the story of two dead people, one white and one black, whose bodies were switched at the burial site. Only the blackman's dog could distinguish the identities by perpetually sitting on the grave of its owner.
2. Conrad's Heart of Darkness (1987).
3. de Lange (1993).
4. See Alvarez-Pereyre (1979: a mention on 43 & 242).
See also Mkhize (1991 : 33 - 35).

CHAPTER 3

EXILE : FIGHTING TO SURVIVE OR DERACINATION?

Exile as a physical state in which the individual has to contend with rootlessness is a very difficult thing to try and define. Some writers have based their analysis of exile on Freudian psycho-analytic observations of the ego-centre, the self, instead of looking at the environmental conditions, or indeed at the circumstances surrounding and impacting on the socio-cultural part of the self that could also be examined for possible disorders. Andrew Gurr categorically chose to look at the effects of exile on the individuals [the selves] as writers rather than on their writing pattern. Gurr's exercise in looking at writers in exile is based on the following :

... the awkward equation between deracination and freedom, the tensions between the motives for escape and the nostalgias of exile, the compulsion to write about the familiar with the help of distance, the reality of the inward life which becomes stronger and more tangible as the outward life becomes alien, the chronic need for stasis in a changing world, a need which only memory can satisfy, and ultimately the question of homecoming. (1981 : 32)

This is how Gurr sets the scene for his analysis in looking at his chosen exiles. His formulations seem to me to be valuable in so far as they provide a convenient starting-point for the examination as well as confirming the arguments pertaining to South African writers chosen for this study.

Some of the writers chosen for this study do show signs of the schisms between wanting to escape the world of South African political commitment while others show total commitment. Hope's writing, for example, does demonstrate the need to escape total involvement even though his writing remains political. As another example, Rian Malan who had earlier left South Africa, came back to research and write his book at the height of the unrest period and found the experience both harrowing and confusing (details of life in exile for South African writers will be dealt with in full on Chapter 4). It could then be argued that Gurr's idea of exile as space to

distance oneself as a writer from those subjects of interest, is very expensive in terms of human emotion and fresh and incisive knowledge on the socio-political developments of 'home'.

Taking into account what Gurr says, I will examine the four chosen South African writers and the selected works to see how each writer coped with being in exile.

La Guma's book In The Fog of the Season's End comes before another South African political watershed, the 1976 Soweto riots, which left many children dead and the Bantu education system in shambles for many years to come. La Guma's last book, Time of the Butcherbird, was written in the wake of those turbulent years at the end of 1970s and points towards yet another watershed, the violent years of the late 1980s which La Guma never lived to see (He died in Cuba in 1985). Mandla Langa's writing covers the decade of the 1980s and deals partly with the then current strategies and policies of the ANC Movement-in-exile.

In the Fog of the Season's End (1972) traces the beginnings of the armed struggle that would culminate in the recruitment of people who would train as soldiers of Umkhonto WeSizwe in remote villages of Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. The South African jails, which were already brimming with convicts and no-gooders in his earlier works, have by this time begun to fill with political activists. Elias Tekwane, Beukes and Isaac are hardened activists who, in the wake of the 1960s banning of the liberation movements, have had to operate underground. The network of friendship and comradeship works on trust regardless of one's colour or race. (1972 : 110 - 120)

Through the need to struggle for the liberation of South Africa, La Guma creates characters that are free from the need to be concerned with defining their personal identities. Their network of underground activists depends not on one's colour, race or creed but on trust and belief in the struggle for liberation. Elias Tekwane, Beukes, and Isaac come from different race groups and family backgrounds but they all believe in liberating South Africa through the armed struggle as well as making the general population aware of the brutality of the Nationalist government system.

The network of fringe activists like Tommy who represents trust, (p 48) Arthur Bennet who represents the dangers of infiltration by the police system, (pp 137 - 147) Abdullah, (p 95 - 6) Polsky the Portuguese who helps with the printing and the good doctor who fixes Beukes's arm are all part of the liberation project. As early as 1972, when this book was published, La Guma had a head-start in analysing the possibilities that could render South Africa free. It is possible to say that La Guma saw the different South African and racial identities as a problem and looked for a way of going beyond personal identity in fighting for a common goal - liberation. This book does point to the emergence of the mass movement, the United Democratic Front (UDF), which Rian Malan discusses in his work to be briefly examined later in this chapter.

The interesting thing is that in the course of their struggle for freedom, La Guma's characters connect and network with each other using combat names. The characters assume non-personal identities that allow them to be who they want to be and do what they want to do. Beukes tells the new recruits: "But they will be named Peter, Paul and Michael ... We are making use of the saints". (p 143) This reflects the freedom to create that exile afforded him by giving him the space to recollect things seen, witnessed, heard and done in the past.

These combat names are given to the new recruits to be taken by Henny April to cross the border for training. Isaac has now become Peter, as he explains to Beukes. (p 179) Again, La Guma traces his idea of an insurrection that will need every South African to stand up and join as Charlie Pauls says. The novel emphasises that, as much as active ground work is needed within the country, the struggle for liberation requires the training of the liberation soldiers for the armed struggle. La Guma saw the two - active political awareness campaigns inside the country and some kind of militarism - as necessary and inseparable in the advancement of the South African struggle for liberation. (Abrahams, 1991 : 60)

By the time La Guma wrote Time of the Butcherbird (1979) it was three years after the 1976 watershed. Hundreds of young South African youth had crossed the border for military training, swelling the numbers of Umkhonto WeSizwe combatants. Those that remained inside the country had continued suffering under the apartheid laws. The pass-laws, imprisonment and forced removal had become part of their daily lives.

We meet Shilling Murile, Mma Tau and her brother, chief Hlangeni, each battling to understand and interpret their circumstances. Murile, who is returning from a long term imprisonment for a crime not considered to be worth the sentence, is full of revenge against the Meulens, especially Hannes, for the death of his brother Timi. Mma Tau, an old activist from the townships now returned home to the rural areas of the Karroo, is fighting her brother, Hlangeni, for giving up too easily over the government's removals of his people. In some odd way, Murile and Mma Tau represent the new South African black who has been made aware of the ills of the apartheid system, has suffered and is prepared to stand up and fight. Mma Tau has the people behind her and Murile uses his suffering despite warnings that single handed acts of revenge weaken the struggle of the masses.

La Guma's commitment to the struggle seems to fork out in two directions in this novel. Firstly, the one thing that is not lost is the belief in mass action. In this regard, La Guma is one of the few South African writers that pointed the way to the future of toyi-toying mass action campaigns. In mass action campaigns leaders are no longer born to the throne but are those brave ones willing to take risks by facing the enemy with bare hands. Hlangeni's people become Mma Tau's people as they willingly engage the government officials who have gathered with trucks to take them to the station. The sheer numbers and determination of those willing to defy the government officials' orders are enough to send them away and make them look completely inadequate in their jobs. (1979 : 111 - 115) In a way, through this scene, La Guma is able to address the humiliation suffered by black people during the 1952 defiance campaign and the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. In fictional terms, the scene could perhaps be said to partly close the gap left by ANC leadership imprisoned or in exile.

Secondly, Murile's determination to avenge Timi's death, by killing Hannes Meulen, is itself a demonstration by La Guma that those who represent capital will (in his fictional future) have to join in transforming South African politics to avoid the masses turning against them. This is shown by the great need by the Karroo white inhabitants to pray for rain and the cry about a possible drop in prices.

The conversation over dinner between Hannes Meulen and Oom Steen explains what they see as the need for the Africans to be moved from their land:

'... Well, the corporation has accepted the geologists' report. They accept that the land in question must hold certain mineral deposits'.

'Goed, goed,' Steen nodded. 'That is one blessing'.

'... They will set up the company, fifty-two per cent held by the government through them and the other forty-eight per cent will be offered to the public.

I, of course, pointed out that you and I are interested in buying a substantial amount of those shares'.

'Allemagtig, you did well, boy'.

'As soon as the kaffirs are moved' - (p 61)

The context of defending capital among Afrikaners is of importance even though it is at the expense of the black majority. The calling for a mass prayer meeting for rain by Afrikaner 'volk' is also important in defending the only other economic base that most Afrikaners have, namely land. Whilst people like Hannes Meulen and Oom Steen, who are economically and politically powerful in the area, discuss their shareholdings in the minerals industry, it is also politically expedient to care for the discomforts of those Afrikaners whose livelihood depends on the land. To those in power, sheep and vegetable farmers' concerns are also noted as the weather affects them equally in terms of prices:

'Ai, is the weather not verskriklik? It's all I can do to keep the plants alive'.

'Wragtig. Piet is trying to keep the pump going - the poor sheep'.

'Ja, it will affect the prices, I tell you'. (p 103)

This cry to protect capital gain is also carried by Dominee Visser's sermon in which he asks all white people to rise up and defend the God-given land. (p 106) The control over land is tied up with economic needs as this is also a community that depends on farming produce. Community leaders like Hannes Meulen represent both electoral power and control of the community affairs.

Hannes Meulen is requested by the local Bantu Commissioner to help by providing transport for the removals. As he walks to Kaspar Steen's house, Hannes thinks of his father Christofel whom he would like to emulate. Hannes's father immersed himself in 'Public affairs' and attended secret meetings of the 'volk' in the fight to defend the land. In essence Hannes Meulen's beliefs are emphasised by Oom Steen when he says:

'It all depends what they mean by change. We should be willing to see things in a new light, but nothing should be done at the expense of our kultuur, our honour. In the cities the blacks are stirring, they complain about money, wages, and rights. We are doing our best to give them rights'. (p 63)

Both men defend the same principles and will not give up the fight to protect the land. The removals of the Hlangeni people signify the need for the Afrikaner to keep the hold on the land on which their economic power rests. Mma Tau is quick to point out Afrikaner double standards saying:

'It is strange, ... them praying for rain. I remember when they used to mock us when we sang the rain songs'. (p 89)

The killing of Hannes Meulen and Edgar Stopes by Shilling Murile is significant in that it points the way for La Guma's fictional project of a type of armed struggle that will engulf South Africa in order to liberate its people. The combination of a lone gunner full of revenge for past injustices and the mass demonstration against present injustices signifies the turning point in South African politics. The significance of the killing of Meulen and Stopes by Murile, in the context of the liberation struggle in South Africa, will be discussed in the next chapter. For the moment we can note that Meulen's position in the white community represents the oppressive nature of the then apartheid state. Edgar Stopes is part (even if a small part) of the economic cycle. Earlier in the book, La Guma sets the tone and gives a direct connection between Stopes and Muelen by making Kroner, the barman, introduce Stopes to Hannes Muelen on the day of his arrival in the town.

When the two men exchange pleasantries it is clear that, for survival, English-speaking whites need to stand together with Afrikaners :

'Mister Stopes, he keeps the dorp in supplies. Sees to it that all our shops are always stocked up' ...

... 'Yes, it is needful to keep in touch with the countryfolk, Mister Stopes. You are lucky in that your affairs bring you among us. I am really talking of contact between the English-speaking people and the Afrikaans. In these times it is necessary that we stand together'. (p 28)

Further in the conversation, Edgar Stopes agrees with Hannes Meulen who is emphasising that neither white group can survive without the other. Meulen clearly puts the emphasis not on just keeping the 'dorp in supplies' but far beyond that, on what amounts to political as well as racial survival across political party alliances. It is this shared sentiment that irritates Stopes throughout the evening and the next day, until he dies together with Meulen. As much as through economic survival, the fates of English-speaking whites and Afrikaners are also sealed by mutual concern for staying in power in terms of control over the black majority. Although Stopes does not articulate it verbally as Meulen does, it is an understood and mutually agreed concern. It is this kind of ambivalence among English-speaking whites that La Guma finally questions in his work.

The question of deracination and freedom has already been examined in Chapter 2 in terms of the reasons why South African writers like La Guma and Mandla Langa,² despite the freedom offered by their metropolitan environments, London/Cuba and London respectively, should still have felt constrained to write about 'home.' Gurr's analysis of deracination raises the fundamental dilemma of writers who become exiles, though in South Africa the situation has changed since the coming of elections in April, 1994.

Having looked at La Guma's writing within the context of South African writing in English and of ANC/SACP political thinking, now I want to look at Mandla Langa's writing which shares the same political perspective. For the purposes of this study, my examination will focus on one novel A Rainbow on the Paper Sky which compares and contrasts interestingly with La Guma's

Time of the Butcherbird. The two novels are ten years apart and both were written in the aftermath of the 1976 watershed and in exile. La Guma and Langa were both full-time ANC activists abroad.

It has never been openly stated when exactly Langa went into exile. One might hazard from the writing that it must have been after 1976, when a large number of youths left South Africa to join the ANC outside the country. It is also significant that Langa's political roots are different from those of La Guma who came from a long standing SACP tradition of activism within the Cape coloured community. What Langa's writing reveals is a strong ANC empathy and support, with a special concern about northern Zululand, especially the Ingwavuma political struggle against incorporation into Swaziland.

There is an interesting and telling paragraph that Langa uses on partings and reunions which reveals a lot about Langa's feelings on being an exile. The narrative gives Khethiwe a lot of unanswerable questions when the Ndungane children - Mbongeni, Thokozani and Khethiwe - are united for the first time after ten years, at their aunt Margaret's place where she has come to live:

She felt something rising inside her, something as unyielding as a rock. She knew she was crying silently when Axe disengaged one of his long arms to offer her a handkerchief.

'Wipe the tears,' he said in his playboy voice, never missing a step. " It's not every day that big brothers surface after all these years". (p 23)

Langa further likens this particular reunion to "finally coming home after walking for miles". (p 23) Khethiwe's feelings are far from joyous. They are heavy and full of fear of the unknown, hence, they fail to feel free in their reunion. The language used is reminiscent of a very fragile reunion whose future is not sure. Langa justifies the fragility in the story as Mbongeni does disappoint Khethiwe by pandering to capital gains and hence he is considered a 'sell-out' and a danger to the struggle. However, one can still argue that the piece reveals Langa's own inner torment about life in exile when family, relatives, lovers, friends and fellow activists meet with the

knowledge that parting is part of their lives. Interesting, too, that Axe is particular about the time spent apart - ten years.

Langa sets the story in two parts. The first part provides the background to the characters as well as the history of the Ndaweni people and their continued struggle against incorporation beginning in 1954. Two years before Khethiwe was born, chief Ndungane's people were already engaged in a fierce resistance plan against "armed members of the Patriotic Brotherhood, together with soldiers from the Jozini garrison, ... who were hoping to make them start respecting edicts from the president of the Brotherhood". (p 2) Clearly, in earlier times, Ndungane and his people had been in the process of resisting moves by Pretoria to become part of the Territorial Authority. Here, Langa describes the area and the people of Ndaweni in readiness for what happens in Part II of the story as we follow the progress of Ndungane and his off-spring.

In the text, the political survival of Ndaweni is dependent on Ndungane and the people staying resolute. In turn, Ndungane hopes his children will support him as his wife Nomusa had done. Ndungane asks Mbongeni if he can be counted on to fight snakes "with two feet" (p 51) but is met with a stony silence. Here Langa articulates the inner struggles that an activist has to go through, where even family cannot be counted upon. Nomusa's sudden death completes Ndungane's alienation and fear but the feelings are countered by the resolution to go with the struggle in order for all to be free. It is during these kinds of inner explorations that Langa the writer merges with Langa the activist in expressing the kind of pain and alienation which is fully felt in exile. Langa uses part of Arthur Nortje's poem³ which clearly depicts anxiety about exile:

The long silence speaks
of deaths and removals.
Restrictions, losses
have strangled utterance
How shall I now embrace your rhythms?

Khethiwe used this poem to express her own sorrow on the death of her mother. However one

can also argue that it aptly expresses Langa's dilemma in exile as indeed it expressed Nortje's. I say this because this argument is that the poem seems to be 'floating' and unconnected to the story of a 16-year-old girl trying to express sorrow at her mother's death. As Langa says, Nortje died in isolation in exile and his later poems speak volumes on how he felt the dislocation from the land of his birth.

The intriguing part is why Langa found it necessary to use Nortje's expressions of frustration when dealing with issues of psychological dynamics and instability. It is surely logical to infer that the silence felt by exiled writers that made them feed on daily newspaper-snippets on South Africa from the English media strangled Langa's own utterances as a budding novelist in exile. (This point will be elaborated upon later in the discussion of his work in exile). The rhythms that Nortje speaks of are the rhythms of home - South Africa - which a writer needs to feed from to continue writing fruitfully.

Langa also expresses fear and alienation in Part II when describing Hugh's wrestling with the fear of wild animals. The narrator tells us that Hugh had learnt to deal with animals but:

The most frightening beast, though, was the one that came in cloaked in the *kaross* of loneliness ... Only with the unit's victory over loneliness could they regard themselves as tried and tested warriors of the Movement. (p 157)

Again, the activist and the exile merge in Langa's writing. In the forest, Hugh has to deal with his own fear before making sure that the unit is assured and strengthened in its resolve to serve the 'Movement'.

Part II puts the struggle in the 1980s when the ANC trained Umkhonto WeSizwe guerrillas were coming back into South Africa to confront the enemy. The Ndaweni people were also preparing for their struggle against incorporation into Swaziland. Langa's treatment of this bitter struggle is well timed in that the resistance to incorporation was one huge political gain that the ANC made against the South African government following retaliations after the Sasol

bombing in June 1980. The attempt at incorporation took place between the years 1981-1985 during which the South African government used all means to entice or coerce the neighbouring countries to eject the ANC personnel. The signing of the Nkomati Accord was South Africa's major victory against the ANC in that period. (Schiere, 1991 : 57 - 75)

Khethiwe and Thokozani are representative of ANC thinking and political activities. Mbongeni is representative of those South Africans who choose to concentrate on their careers and stay away from political affiliations.

What Langa is cautioning against is that there is always a danger of being infiltrated or used by the system: in the end Mbongeni becomes a weak link within the Ndungane family as Shelley says "He is working for the enemy". (p 172)

There is another dimension that Langa brings into play here, a mapping of political events in Natal examined against other national and international pressures on the South African government to overthrow apartheid. Langa's writing shows clear signs of the influence of the ideas of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). As argued in the unpublished M.A. thesis by Jabulani J. Mkhize, BCM political thinking was very influential among many young people in the 1970 - 1980 period:

The leaders of the Black consciousness movement and the students from all the major institutions around Durban met in rallies where the role of the workers in the struggle for freedom was reaffirmed. The country was finally on its toes. (1991 : 61)

Langa's narrator tells us that BCM politics has been influential in organising the workers and medical health institutions. The Iscor Metal Union workers like Thokozani, Zwane and Mpinga are hard core activists in the factories as much as Shelley and Khethiwe are activists at King Edward hospital. Later, the intellectual Mark Mgobhozi tells us of the plan of action: that besides just toppling capitalist giants like Oppenheimer, there is a need to prepare for more bloodshed in the future by training more doctors and nurses. (pp 72 - 73)

This discussion of Langa's writing leads us to look at the other two writers - Christopher Hope and Rian Malan. Even before exile, the South African situation before the new dispensation made the writers' need for distance, detachment and space [to analyse the environment to which they belong or find themselves in] vulnerable depending on what kinds of identities they seek to address or define in their writing. They become like exiles within their own country. The works of Christopher Hope and Rian Malan show two things: that some whites in South Africa did not oppose the apartheid governments because of either personal fear or a simple unwillingness to be involved. Both writers approach their writing in a similar manner - their methods are largely autobiographical. Their positions as writers both as exiles and as South Africans reinforce much of what Gurr (1983) says about exile writing.

Gurr portrays a paradox, in that on the one hand exile can operate in terms of the intellectual commitment of the writer to the art of writing regardless of physical borders as in the cases of Katherine Mansfield, V.S. Naipaul, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and briefly Nadine Gordimer. Of the first three writers, Gurr surmises that for each one of them, the setting up of 'home' was the choice to become a writer or chronicler of one's history rather than to tell tales about physical deracination. In other words, there is always in the art of writing the desire to combine the two states of mind: that which can be recollected from memory through experiences and that which can be created out of freshly lived experiences whether they are personal or collective.

On the other hand, exile means that the physical rootlessness of the individual writer can actually create the physical as well as mental space that a writer needs to put in order memories and experiences according to both emotional and intellectual need. South African literature in English is riddled with self-conscious attempts at crossing the borders of race, colour and religion. All of these three seem to define what it is to be a South African. The identity of being South African is fought out on this turf rather than that of a broad nationalism which seems to operate in other countries or states. South African writers have over the decades battled with this subject and each attempt seems to come up with fragmented identities that do not seem to make a whole.

Njabulo Ndebele admits to failure in crossing the borders of race, colour and religion in order to write a novel called The Mask of the Fatherland. The book was going to be about a

young Afrikaner who joined the Defence Force during the Angolan War. Ndebele says that the failure is due to his lack of knowledge about the lives of Afrikaners or indeed of other races in South Africa. Ndebele says:

At the bottom is the fact that I do not know the people that my hero belongs to as a real, living community ... South Africans do not know one another as a people. Can we as a nation write the novel of the future under these conditions? (1994 : 151 - 152)

Ndebele's predicament is not new. Many other South Africans have tried to cross racial boundaries but have either come under heavy criticism or have had their works confiscated and/or censored by the heavy arm of the law. The question of identity is as much a personal a question as it is a national one. The truth in Ndebele's statement is that in South Africa the personal is also political. However, I am not going to expand on what has come to be termed 'the national question' in this study. What is of interest is how such problems of one's own identity impinge on the literature that writers in exile have produced.

Christopher Hope is one such South African who has openly stated his identity. In White Boy Running Hope says :

Well, it was more accurate to call myself an English-speaking South African ... I was also a White, English-speaking South African. Anything else? Yes, I was also a Roman Catholic, English-speaking, White South African ... (1988 : 87)

Hope calls the Afrikaans whites in South Africa, "Calvinist, Afrikaans-speaking, "white South Africans. The third definition of being South African is that of the African majority of whom Hope says:

... At the very best people felt we ought to call such people Africans, or natives, or Bantu, or more often as not, nothing at all. They were just

'them' ... we were 'us'. There were no other South Africans then, there were just them and us. All other claims to nationality were no more than polite affectations, pretensions, or threats ... (p 88)

In this book, Hope traces his ancestry from Ireland where his grandfather, Dan Mackenna, originated. Throughout the book, Hope places the developments that surround his family fortunes and himself within the background of the white general elections of 1987. This was an election year when the then Prime Minister, P.W. Botha, following his 'Rubicon' speech in 1985, prepared the white voters for reforms. (Schrire, 1991 : 147 - 159)

A particularly important aspect of Hope's book in this study is not the elections and what took place but the fact that as an exiled South African writer living in London, Hope had felt the need to come back to South Africa to actually research the book by watching events. Hope's travels during that time cover a long trail. The questions that arise are : Why come back at all? Could not the writer have sat in England and followed the events in the media in order to form opinions on what was happening at 'home'? What do South Africans and indeed the world learn about South Africa from this book?

Although already a writer of notable standing at the time, with four works of fiction, three volumes of poetry and two children's books to his credit, Hope felt the need that he had to come back home to view how white fellow South Africans prepared themselves to vote for the Nationalist party reforms. Whilst in exile, Hope could not sit back and project how the various sections of South Africans were reacting to the new reforms. The result was a book that not only covers the electioneering speeches but offers a gathering of broad feelings about the elections and not what it really meant for each group.

In order to understand what was going on inside South Africa and inside those who stayed behind despite the political turmoil, Hope had to see for himself how they coped. It also meant his coming to terms with the situation that was unfolding at the time such as the violence that was spiralling in places like Kwa-Zulu Natal. Hope's tour which covered the three corners of South Africa - Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban - was

necessary because of the nature of South African history and his own as a South African white, brought up in suburbia. It would have been impossible for him to stop in one or two of these places and draw conclusions about South African developments.

What I would like to argue here is that in White Boy Running we get a kind of fear of political engagement. The kind of fear that is both personal as well as group-oriented among the WESSAs, as seen by Hope's observations of the WESSAs in the various South African cities and towns. The fear is also prevalent amongst the stoic and fearless Afrikaners who see themselves as the most hardy breed of white people upon the African continent. Individual WESSAs are feeling threatened and unsure of the tide that is engulfing them in the form of the UDF and Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), while the Democratic Party ratings are dwindling away. (Schrire, 1991)

In Pretoria, Hope finds that the main white groups, the Afrikaners and the English, have become more fragmented than he remembers from his boyhood. In the museum, Hope likens the artist's impressions of the near extinct Elephant Bird of Madagascar and the extinct Dodo to the existence of the Afrikaner and English-speaking whites in South Africa.

The two birds represent, for Hope, the South African dilemma:

Therein lay my predicament when I came to consider my own identity. The two White role models that I was offered as potential South Africans had turned into candidates for extinction. This led to yet graver problems. For if we did not really stand up to close scrutiny, then neither did the country from which we purported to take our names. Having no South Africans meant no South Africa, whether or not the place happened to appear in the atlas. (p 103)

Here lies the nub of Hope's analysis of South African life, not just for himself but for the racial groups that reside in it, except perhaps black people, whom he does not include in this dilemma. For Hope, identity means not just a place of residence but a sense of self in relation to

one's image of belonging to a country: a people and some kind of nationhood. Identity goes beyond group belonging and group interests which seem to be forever under threat of further fragmentation. This ever-present threat of extinction of the two main white groups is demonstrated in the conversation with the government acquaintance at the Voortrekker Monument who laments the fact that the AWB wants to slow the reform process because they are lunatics and out of touch with South African reality. (p 101) Even the Afrikaners are now split. There are those who favour the reforms and there are those who fear possible extinction as a group. Hope, however, sees these splits with accusations and counter accusations as nothing different from the plea and warning on behalf of the Elephant Bird of Madagascar and the Dodo.

Hope finds it difficult to shed the fear of reality without the ingredients that make every individual feel safe, belonging to and naturally integrated with the environment and surroundings. Without all South Africans living and sharing together, there is no South Africa ... no country, no nation and no belonging:

We were taught to take for granted our absolute right of ownership to great estates while all the time knowing in our hearts that really we had only taken possession of the maps. Only the paper belonged to us. The real world where events occurred, people acted, lay elsewhere, so we could not lay claim to a history, all we had were politics, and if you discounted the politics, all we had left were fictions. (p 104 - 105)

Hope's point here is that one cannot not wholly claim self identity when that claim is based on a piece of land owned despite not paying for it. Hope feels that politics alone, especially when it excludes those most deeply concerned in the issues at hand, cannot be the sole basis for claiming identity. In White Boy Running Hope feels that politics without belonging is a feeble attempt at solving the South African problem.

The crux of Hope's thesis is also about fear of the unknown future. Whilst all South Africans were engaged with each other in the political sphere, the fear of what might be in the future was as great during the 1987 elections as it had always been in the past. The smaller the

group or fragment, the greater the fear:

We were all a little mad, all on the run. Quite what we were fleeing was never mentioned, but there was enough fear around to keep us edgy; there was moral sin and the massing Black hordes and the Calvinist ascendancy. Fear was a home industry. It was about this time that I first heard the following story: 'He was walking home, this guy,' the story went, 'late one night, in the middle of town; it was dark and he took the short-cut down an alley between two very tall buildings, a long alley. This wasn't a wise thing to do but it was late and he was anxious to get home. After a while he heard footsteps in the alley behind him. Of course he didn't turn around, he didn't want to show that he was nervous, but he began to walk just a little faster, because up ahead he could see the lights of the main street and he knew that up there he'd be safe. The steps behind him speeded up. That's when he broke into a trot - I mean who wouldn't? But the steps behind him matched his own. Well - that was it, he put his head down and ran for it. Behind him he heard the other man running. What's more, he was gaining! Then, with his heart pounding and the blood singing in his ears, the guy breaks into the safety of the main street and the bright lights - when, very close to his ear, right beside him, a voice says, amused, scornful : "Why are you running, White boy?"

I can hear that voice. It is anything but threatening.

The question it put was a joke, a practical joke, and the voice knew it. There was nothing to be afraid of, but all the same it was a question no one stopped to answer. It was a question to which there was no answer. Who told me the story? Did I make it up myself? I do not know. (pp 112 - 113)

The image of a panicking individual is the strongest that Hope has used to demonstrate fear among South African white English-speakers. The most vivid image in this is the image of the fearing self (which in Hope's case, as then, represents the Catholic sub-group in South Africa

who felt squeezed between the calvinists, the black majority and moral sin). The run is part of the self searching for an escape only to find that there is no need to escape from anything because there was no threat. If there is any threat, it is within.

If we look at Hope's writing, as seen in the poems in Cape Drives, A Separate Development, The Hottentot Room, Black Swan and other works not included in this study, we find the writer faced with an inner dislocation. It may not be too far fetched to suggest that this kind of dislocation is as much about the self of Hope as a writer as it is about Hope as a South African.

Among all these works, the above passage from White Boy Running is the most significant because it clearly knits together the writer's anguish in finding his own identity as an individual, as a writer and as a South African.

On the one hand, the passage shows the impossibility for the narrator of completely identifying with the active liberation struggle due to the fear of the unknown 'other'. On the other hand, it confirms the flight which manifests itself as the search for an escape from the 'mocking voice'. The self in Hope feels that exile started long before the actual leaving of the country. Exile had already been embarked upon from childhood as witnessed in A Separate Development as Harry Moto succeeds in learning to hide himself from Johannesburg suburban life, his parents and his school friends, for fear of his colour. Later, Moto learns to hide from the police too until his former school mate decides to trap him with the fear of the 'panga man' which is as ridiculous a hoax as are the footsteps heard by the 'guy in the alley' in the above quoted passage.

The ugliness and futility of this racial tension is shown in Hope's description of the gruesome murder of the then leader of the Nationalist Party, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, inside parliament in 1966 by a member of one of the white minority groups, Dimitrio Tsafendas. During a visit to Cape Town, Hope retells the story of Dr Verwoerd's tragic death at the hands of the half-Greek Tsafendas out of whose life the author fashioned Harry Moto, the hero of A Separate Development. In White Boy Running Hope looks at the opposing forces that led to that dramatic confrontation in 1966:

... on one side was the most powerful man in the country, a gentle fanatic filled with a sense of divine mission, and an unshakeable, bewildering belief in the tribal exclusivity of the white Afrikaners, the apostle of apartheid who believed in the absolute separation of different groups; and on the other side a swarthy, fat, ugly misfit with wiry hair, his life one long humiliation, rejected by his parents and his friends at school, who mocked his dark complexion and nick-named him 'Blackie', a lonely, tormented drifter who lived in a dozen countries, spoke several languages and believed himself to be guided by instructions spoken by a snake coiled in his belly. (p 148)

The passage shows the attacker as just as unfit to perform the act of ridding South Africa of its problem as the victim was unfit to lead the country. Tsafendas's act of killing Verwoerd does not fulfil Hope's understanding of classical tragedy where the reader or spectator does sympathise with the victim. Even though he admits that it affected the course of South African political history, Hope sees this as just a 'put - down' of apartheid's grand plan that Verwoerd had laid out. In all the outpouring of grief from the beneficiaries of apartheid that followed the assassination, Hope identifies with those that did not share it:

As the only one in the place without tribal or familial connection to the dead man I felt rather like an infidel in a convent which had just received news of the death of a beloved Pope ... (p 149)

Hope's fear of commitment to the liberation cause is shown on his visit to Natal. The Natal coast seems to burst with a determination based on sheer courage and numbers whilst failing to resolve ethnic differences. Hope seems not to understand the reasons behind the 1985 Durban riots in Phoenix between Zulus and Indians.⁴ Hope, again sees the futility of trying to address South African political issues:

... a delegation of Indian students from the local all-Indian segregated

University college has flown to Lusaka for consultations with the ANC about their future. It makes sense. And this, despite the claims that the Black opposition in this country recognises all non-Whites as fellow sufferers beneath the skin. Walking around the ruined settlement of Phoenix I have to wonder whether it will ever rise from the ashes and I realise once again how unutterably complex, savage and foolish are South African affairs ...

And yet, and yet ... on the wall of the broken, gaping, blackened printing house building where the grass is growing through the floor and birds fly through the windows, someone has written one word on the wall: 'Sorry'.
(p 179)

Both The Hottentot Room and Black Swan are works that show Hope as a writer grappling with the fear of total commitment to the struggle for liberation. Black Swan in particular reveals the uncertainty about the armed struggle as the answer to South Africa's problems. Though both works are political and largely based on South African experiences, they are to a large degree not committed to the advancement of the struggle for liberation. Though these works are critical and very poignant about what was happening in South Africa, they are neutral in approach and almost resemble a torch light being swooped around a dark cave.

The Hottentot Room looks at various exiles, some South African and others east European, and how they survive and manage to keep sane under the harsh conditions of the host country, England. The setting is inside the Hottentot Room Bar, run by an east European exile, Frau Katie, who has become a matriarch, that welcomes and looks after newly arrived exiles from other countries including South Africa. Of all the patrons in The Hottentot Room, only Frau Katie, her daughter Rose, and the ex-government spy Caleb Looper, are fully realised characters. All the other characters are cardboard characters that seem to have disappeared into the mire of the English weather without trace. Even Wyngate Hossein, leader of the "Pro-Soviet Via Africa" South African liberation movement in London, fails to appear as a sober and decisive character, and instead is shown to be withdrawn into himself or sulking over Rose or Biddy Hogan.

In the novel, it is never resolved why Frau Katie chooses Looper to be heir to her political beliefs as manifested in the responsibility that Looper accepts to take her remains back to east Berlin where she was born. Frau Katie is represented as an exile who has dreams of "eloping" back to her birth place in East Berlin which she remembers in detail even after years of living in London. Frau Katie is able to reconcile her past with the present through reminiscences of who she is, where she comes from and why she left her 'home'. In England, Frau Katie learns to look at the German-Jewish racial conflict without anger and remorse. She almost understands why it had to happen even though she disagrees with the theory of racial supremacy.

Hope gives Frau Katie the knowledge and wisdom to recognise her mistake in thinking and acting like an aristocratic German, ignoring her Jewish roots. Frau Katie remembers the walks with her father to the Jewish quarter which at the time meant looking at how filthy the poorer Jews were. Through these memories, Frau Katie is able to put blame on those economically independent Jews, as much as on the aristocratic Germans for supporting Hitler as a young political upstart. When Hitler came to power and started to exercise his theories of race, the rich Jews complied in that they did not feel part of the larger Jewish community who were threatened by the state. Rich Jews in east Berlin continued to live their lives and inter-marry with Germans as if there was no threat to themselves. This is demonstrated by the way in which Frau Katie's father carried on arranging the marriage between his daughter and the young German aristocratic soldier.

The lesson that Frau Katie learns from the German-Jewish racial conflict is that class interests blinded rich Jews from seeing the writing on the wall and thus prevented them from moving to protect themselves not as a class but as a people. Rich German Jews did not believe that Hitler would turn on them, as is shown by Frau Katie's father choosing to kill himself rather than emigrate to America. Like her father, Frau Katie also tried to evade reality by hiding in various places in East Berlin before deciding to finally escape the horror. Her freedom comes with the decision to shoot the policeman asking her about her identity as a Jew which until then she had denied even to herself. The shooting of the policeman is symbolic of her realization of who she is and of the need to escape in order to survive.

The point being made here is that Hope wants us to look at Frau Katie's character against the background of the Hottentot Room Bar and its members. Frau Katie's daughter, Rose, feels no connections with east Berlin and thinks her mother should feel the same after forty years in London. Her mother's decision to cut her name Katerina Abrahamson, with all its Jewish connotations, to Katerina Brahm shows a need to sever all links with the Jewish past. Rose believes in living her life as any English young woman at the time would; an example of this is her believing in the Thatcherite economic success. As soon as her mother dies, she changes the Hottentot Room Bar into what would be an economically viable concern by calling in the assistance of an economic adviser.

Rose does not believe in the notion of social welfare which she thinks her mother had espoused by turning the Hottentot Room Bar into a home for exiles. Likewise, Rose is not concerned when Looper, through sentiment, decides to take Frau Katie's remains to East Berlin.

With the exception of Frau Katie and her daughter Rose, Hope's characters do not show any emotion. All the characters are frozen in their fear of the reality which is exile. Hope seems to suggest to us that, like Frau Katie, one can only fully function as an exile after coming to terms with one's own identity and accepting past mistakes as well as the possibility of never returning alive to one's country of birth. Looper is the only other character that accepts these maxims, hence his bond with Frau Katie. Even when Looper tries to return Frau Katie's remains to east Berlin, he never succeeds in locating the exact house and gets lost in the snow where he also dies. "It all had to do with the question of going home. What you meant by it. And what you were prepared to settle for". (p 196)

For Hope, home for the exile is like a blank-space on a vast map whose exact location is doubtful. It remains located with all its glory and pain in the mind of the exile : so Frau Katie had painstakingly reconstructed her Berlin. Looper finds that Frau Katie's Berlin does not exist anymore because the war and the wall have altered its history as well as its face.

The former priest, Morris Morrison, is not quite sure why he joined the struggle instead of remaining in the church. When Frau Katie is ill his only wish is to offer prayers for her soul.

Hossein, the liberation movement leader, is overwhelmed by exile and cannot function properly as a leader and as a loving husband and family man. The visits to the Hottentot Room Bar are almost an act of escape from life. The barman, Gerrie, hides behind serving drinks and scrubbing and polishing the floors of the Hottentot Room Bar, even on the night Frau Katie dies. The newly arrived dancers and the runner are shown as novices to the world of exile life. They are incapable of coping with the strains and stresses that even hardened exiles find difficult to accept. The dancers have no idea of the English weather, or have no wish to, as they dance in loin skins and bare chests in freezing conditions. The runner takes her practice runs at wrong times, to the distress of her Zimbabwean coach, and cries every time she thinks of home and her running partner, the springbok.

For Hope, as an individual and a writer in exile, these are questions that have to be resolved. How much of one's past intrudes on the present, and how then can an exiled person deal with these personal conflicts in order to cope and move forward? Sentimentality as shown by the majority in the Hottentot Room Bar, Rose's cut-throat insensitivity or Hossein's liberation dreams are not what Hope is offering the reader. Hope seems to suggest that maturity lies in a resolve to work out the personal as well as the political results in such a way as to produce a well rounded identity, whatever the location might be.

The quest for identity in the South African context has been tackled by other writers besides La Guma and Hope. I would like to briefly look at what Rian Malan, an exiled white South African of Afrikaans descent, says about identity.

In My Traitor's Heart, Rian Malan also comes back to South Africa to do research on the South African situation. Malan follows almost the same narrative method and writing technique as Hope. Malan's search for identity and what it means to be white and Afrikaner in South Africa before and during P.W. Botha's reform years also takes him through large parts of the country. Malan does something else too: through events, acquaintances and research on white fear and guilt, he wants to understand black anger. Malan sets himself a massive task which most writers at various stages of South African history have tried with varying degrees of success or failure. Whether he succeeds or not will be briefly examined here.

Malan looks first at his lineage, which begins with one Dawid who went against the Dutch Cape community lifestyle and ethics by loving and eloping with a black woman. Later Dawid reinstated himself by rising up as one of the formidable soldiers in the frontier wars against both the 'Bantu' in the Cape and English domination. Later in the book Rian Malan pays a special visit to the heart of the Natal province and Zulu identity, Msinga. Malan also looks at the English-speaking white presence in Natal to assess what the relations are between the English, Afrikaners and Zulus. Malan finds that Natal, especially in the Msinga and Empangeni areas, is where the real conflict of identities is fully played out. Malan seems to argue that in Natal, white South Africans of all groups have one common concern: fear of the black majority and the possibility of them taking over power. Not just political power or how it is attained: it is the fact that black group assertiveness may mean that the large group identity is likely to overwhelm others.

The argument here is that the fear of one another among South African racial groups, that locks up all avenues of knowing each other as Ndebele (1994) puts it, is a reality. For a holistic South African identity to emerge, this fear has to be reckoned with politically, socially and economically. Hope sees a grain of hope in the future through the "Sorry" in White Boy Running written on the wall of the Gandhi mission in Phoenix. Malan expresses similar hope in the way Creina Alcock says :

"You said one could be deformed by this country, and yet it seems to me one can only be deformed by the things one does to oneself. It's not the outside things that deform you, it's the choices you make. To live anywhere in the world, you must know how to live in Africa. The only thing you can do is love, because it is the only thing that leaves light inside you, instead of the total, obliterating darkness". (Malan, 1990 : 409)

Malan seems to say that it is white South Africans like Creina Alcock who have replaced the 'obliterating darkness' with 'light inside' them that could love Africa for what it is and thus find their own identity within its vastness. I do not think that Malan's story advocates that everyone should be like Neil and Creina Alcock, but that each South African has a choice of defining him or herself within the mutual respect agreed upon.

Malan, however, understands and accepts the Hammerman's anger at the South African way of life and is helped by Creina Alcock's conviction and acceptance of not only the strange life in Msinga but it being part of who she is. What is worth mentioning here is that, in My Traitor's Heart Malan finds the estrangement of the Hammerman from his family a serious problem. The family explanations confuse Malan's understanding because they are located within the deeper meaning of Zulu culture that is locked within Zulu identity. This is what Ndebele (1994 : 151) means when doubting about writing about 'each other' sincerely.

Though in his book we follow the historical leadership role of the Malan clan in its contribution to Afrikaner history, the writer fails to give the same treatment to the identity of the Hammerman. The story of the Hammerman's birth and his social relations with family and friends becomes an allegorical treatise almost similar to Hope's characterization of Lucky in Black Swan (1987). The weight of the sentence meted out by the judge for the killings is lost when weighed against the non-human face of the killer projected at the end of the trial. It is as if the Hammerman was sentenced because of his animal behaviour in a civilized world, disregarding his plea to the judge to put him out of his agony.

These two writers can be said to explore white fear and are representative of the need for white people in South Africa to find a way of identifying themselves with the needs and fears of the other groups. Both writers, returning from exile to write about South Africa in the mid-1980s, found it difficult to read the canvass of South African politics of the time. The irrational fear of whites becomes real with the Hammerman whereas blacks suffer from both sides - from the police and from each other. Though Malan places some semblance of hope in the then United Democratic Front (UDF), he does not think its hands are clean. Fear seems to wreck the lives of black people in the spiralling rival killings between UDF and BCM followers, as much as it wrecks those of white people for a different reason. Malan, though, does not weigh the one against the other except to register the pain. (p 328)

The South African writing examined here does reflect the paradox clearly laid out by Gurr. While the writers feel the need to use exile as the space required for personal growth as writers, the emotional state of an exile impinges upon that physical need or gain. In the end, the writing

does reflect some kind of schism. Memory, as Gurr says, plays a large part in successful writing. But Hope has confirmed that being away from South Africa works for him:

So it might be true to say that to some extent I am an involuntary exile - not because there are legal restraints on my return, but because the country which I see behind me I find impossible to live in, for the reasons which I describe in my books. And so I have voluntarily escaped from the place, but I have also found that in doing so I have locked the doors (and I have done it myself) behind me, and certainly the feeling I have, when I reflect on it all, is that I have the feelings of an exile (Joffe 1989 : 93)

Christopher Hope describes who he is and the circumstances of his leaving 'home'. There is another very important point in this passage that Hope touches on - what it feels to think of that 'home' which has become very distant. Hope feels that having voluntarily stayed away gives him the needed creative space to write so profusely.

Chapter 4 will look at the possibilities of common threads that may exist in the writings of these chosen artists. I shall argue that, though these writers come from very different backgrounds in the racially divided South Africa, there is some bond that unites them in writing about 'home'.

Notes for Chapter 3

1. The ANC held bases for military training in Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and Zambia which were demobbed before the 1994 elections.
2. Mandla Langa, Rainbow on the Paper Sky (1989). Langa's writing to a certain extent covers the 1980 decade in terms of what strategies and policies the ANC movement was developing both inside and outside the country.
3. Langa uses a stanza from Arthur Nortje's poem, "Dead Roots" published by Heinemann, London, 1973.
See also: Alvarez Pereyre (1979 : 155 - 157).
4. A de V. Minnar explains some of the wider reasons behind some of the clashes that occurred between Inkatha supporters, UDF supporters and the Indians in the Phoenix area. In fact the discussion covers the whole of Kwa-Zulu Natal (1991 : 39 - 44)

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE FROM EXILE: SEARCHING FOR COMMON THREADS

Andrew Gurr (1983) has argued that some people go into exile because their social needs are not satisfied at home. Such people become 'expatriates' "because they leave home in search of social stimuli and the fact that their economic means can sustain the move to another country with ease". (1983 : 18) Exiles, however, are "like a bird forced by chill weather at home to migrate but always poised to fly back ...". (p 18) South African exiles belong to both groups. Some people disagreed with the social and political system but felt they had no space to oppose it inside the country, and decided to go voluntarily into exile.

In the South African situation, the writers chosen in this study fall into two groups: those forced into exile by political circumstances and beliefs and those who chose exile. Rian Malan and Christopher Hope fall into the group of voluntary exiles because it was through their own choice that they left South Africa. (Hope, 1987 : 102 - 104) Hope left for exile because he felt that in South Africa "WESSAs are trapped between competing nationalisms: the Calvinist racial pathology of the white tribe ... on the one hand and rising black nationalism on the other; despised and detested by the former and increasingly marginal to the ambitions of the latter". (1987 : 17) Malan left for exile because of what he describes as the 'paradox' (1990 : 93 - 94) Other exiles, particularly revolutionaries who belong to liberation movements, were forced to leave their countries by political repression (including persistent bannings, detentions and censorship), and/or the need to advance the struggle by joining others already outside. Alex La Guma and Mandla Langa belonged to this group. In an interview with Cecil Abrahams (1991) La Guma explains that "the decision to leave South Africa in 1966 was more of a mixture of decision and requirements of political struggle. It was felt that after having spent four years under house arrest and going to the fifth year ... one could be more constructive outside ...". (1991 : 25)¹. Although there is no known published interview on this subject with Mandla Langa while he was still in exile, as one who also underwent a lot of harassment from the police in Durban, La Guma's statement covers

both of them.

Hope chose exile in order to free himself of apartheid and thus guilt by association. Hope's assessment of the English - speaking white voters in White Boy Running is that they lived in "a mixture of bravado and deceit, a form of whistling in the dark, and pretending things are not too bad ...". (Hope, 1988 : 65) It can be argued, too, that following the success of Cape Drives (1974) in Britain, Hope decided to write about apartheid but recognized the need to escape censorship which had prevented publication or sale of many writers' works at home. So, England was to be home for Hope. (Hope, 1989 : 1) Malan, a former journalist with The Star in Johannesburg, chose exile because of frustration and a will to forget apartheid after reporting on its daily ills. (Malan, 1990 : 64 - 77 ; 90 - 91)

These reasons for choosing or deciding to live in exile divide the writers as I have said into two distinct groups, those whose writing has been directly involved in the liberation struggle and those who wrote just to show disaffection and despair at the racial issues of South Africa. Be that as it may, what is clear in each book examined is the need to write about home, the understandable desire to influence change or to express frustration. In this chapter, I shall try to show that writings by La Guma and Langa do present a voice that directly advocates change in South Africa. Since a considerable distance in time exists between La Guma's and Langa's writing, it can be argued that Langa's writing is strongly influenced by La Guma's later works and the fact that they are both ANC activists. For instance, the themes and concerns shown in Langa's first novel Tenderness of Blood, published in 1987, two years after La Guma's death, are closely related to those expressed in Time of the Butcherbird. Two years later, Langa published Rainbow on the Paper Sky. Though there is an eight-year gap between Langa's two novels and La Guma's last one, both authors share a common bond - they are senior ANC activists in exile, share the same ideology and have been involved in many ANC cultural activities abroad. In Chapter 3 I have shown that by the time La Guma wrote The Stone Country, In the Fog of the Season's End and Time of the Butcherbird he had deviated from his earlier project of looking at apartheid as it affects the Coloured community in the western Cape. La Guma had started looking at the Coloured community as part of a larger network of underground activities of the ANC struggle against apartheid and at times basing some of his characters on personal jail experiences and on

those people he knew him. In Abrahams, La Guma talks about In the Fog of the Season's End saying:

... trying to convey a picture of South Africa one must also realize that apart from people bewailing their fate, there are also people struggling against it, and that the political and revolutionary movement had to appear somewhere in the picture and this is the start (1991 : 26)

La Guma affirms that instead of looking at how apartheid devastates people, his later novels moved to looking at what people or communities in South Africa are doing to fight against oppression. La Guma shows South African people deciding to stand and put up a formidable fight against whatever they see as oppression, for example mobilizing themselves against removals and corrupt and weak chiefs. The theme is to encourage South African people to mobilize themselves as resistance forces using their sheer power and numbers - to dare to challenge the state machinery.

In his work, Langa picks up some of La Guma's ideas in that he also works on the same themes of mobilising to fight against removals, to stand up against the might of the military and state police and to work in cell groups that connected to an underground network of trained Umkhonto WeSizwe guerrillas.

I have decided to focus on three aspects of exile within which these writers seem to interact with their audiences, namely: exile and identity; exile, distance, and memory; and exile: the implied reader and the international market. Within these three categories, I wish to argue that there are some similarities and differences in these writers' social and political thinking, which are related to the manner in which each writer grapples with exile.

I have argued that the works of the four chosen writers do not form a body of exile literature sharing the same ideology. Apart from that, there exist some common threads in the way their writing shows the experiences of exile - the feeling of statelessness and the wish for a common South African identity.

Exile and identity

La Guma's Time of the Butcherbird and Langa's Rainbow on the Paper Sky are clearly novels created from the ANC's political ideological stance. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, both authors were high-ranking office bearers in the ANC in exile. The two authors were then living in London, therefore, involved in the organisation's debates on the future political and cultural issues.²

Although La Guma's Time of the Butcherbird was published in 1979, exactly ten years earlier than Langa's Rainbow on the Paper Sky, the two novels in their narrative show a similar political commitment. In both novels, the fictional characters are collectively engaged in fighting for their political rights in a directly confrontational way that is very different from what we find in the earlier works of La Guma described in Chapter 1. The earlier period of struggle, prior to the 1976 watershed, had been based on sporadic reactions on the part of the ANC to the senseless bannings and imprisonment of its members inside South Africa and the political challenge posed by the Black Consciousness Movement. (Shava, 1989 : 95 - 119)³ After the Sharpeville massacre, there had been a long silence when liberation movements were silenced as their leaders were either in prison, under - house arrest or in exile. When the 1976 uprisings happened, they took the ANC in exile by surprise. The ANC responded with a two-pronged strategy to expose South Africa's atrocities to the world and inform blacks at home, whilst helping them to believe in organising themselves to overthrow the Nationalist's government.

In Time of the Butcherbird, La Guma emphasizes the need for people in the rural areas to stand up and fight against the discriminatory policies of the government such as forced removals, which destabilized the rural communities. The earlier years of struggle had also been epitomised by the waiting for the revolution that would be led by the trained guerrillas of Umkhonto WeSizwe. In this novel, La Guma is finally putting his project of collective engagement of the enemy into place. Using the experiences of the 1976 spontaneous uprisings, La Guma makes his characters in the nameless Karoo town defy their chief Hlangeni and march

against the threat of removal from their ancestral land.

Through the characterisation of Mma Tau, whose belief in and experiences of 'the power of numbers' comes from the 'city', (p 81) La Guma is able to advocate collective action by both rural and city people. Mma Tau puts it this way:

It is strange, how they set a trap for themselves each time. One becomes too troublesome in the city, so they send one to the countryside, so one becomes troublesome in the countryside. Doesn't the countryside have grievances? They send home workless men who starve in the city to starve in the country. So we will work to join the people of the country with those of the city. It is a trap they find themselves in each time, and one day the trap will snap shut eh? (p 81)

In his works La Guma clearly identifies with the struggle waged by the poor to free themselves from poverty and slave labour and also with the struggles around the issue of land.

Some of the recent criticism of this novel has tended to pick out Shilling Murile as the main protagonist. (Maughan-Brown, 1991 : 19 - 37) Whilst it is not my aim here to critique this criticism, I suggest that in his latter works La Guma puts forward a number of different potential protagonists in one story. In Time of the Butcherbird, there is equal weight in what Mma Tau and Shilling Murile do or say. Mma Tau shows the power of persuasive talk in winning the villagers onto her side. Later, blinded by teargas and bird-shot, the villagers forcefully march through the streets of the town, scattering and then regrouping to defy the column of police. (p 115) Though Murile does refuse to join Mma-Tau and the villagers in collecting their debt, he is in agreement with her that it ought to be collected.

Langa's Rainbow on the Paper Sky also uses characters that are fashioned out of ANC political policies on how to mobilise the rural community against removals from land. The story that Langa tells is of the Ndaweni community in northern Zululand threatened with incorporation into Swaziland. As was already stated in Chapter 3, this is based on a historical fact. In the early 1980s the ANC in exile faced a damaging campaign by the South African state which approached

the Swaziland government with an offer to cede the Kangwane and Ingwavuma areas to it. In an article on how the South African state used neighbouring countries to destabilize the ANC campaign after the 1976 riots, Robert Schrire shows that the incorporation of northern Zululand into Swaziland was part of the new Nationalist government strategy. (1991 : 54 - 55)⁴

Whilst La Guma in Time of the Butcherbird had fully endorsed the actions taken by his characters, Langa is cautious. Langa uses issues like "The writer and National Liberation" brought up in the ANC cultural debate (Coetzee & Polley, 1990 : 79 - 117)⁵ to measure individual commitment from those who support and believe in the organisation and its capabilities. Langa seems to say that, however passionately La Guma had envisaged a collective uprising against mass removals which still continued to haunt rural people, it had not taken place. In a way echoing some of the determination shown by Shilling Murile to collect a personal debt, Langa in Part I of Rainbow on the Paper Sky, portrays Khethiwe as questioning the disappointingly long wait for a new momentum when those who have gone for training have not come back:

They had proclaimed at the 6th General Students' Council of SASO that there was no longer any need to talk student politics. What was needed was action, armed action. That had been in early 1972. Now, a year later, hundreds of young people from most of the townships of the country had crossed the border into Swaziland, Lesotho or Botswana. (p 74)

Amidst the noise from the party music, Khethiwe hesitantly asks Mark : "I was wondering about all the people who have gone ..." "You mean dead people?" "I mean people who have left the country ...". (Ibid) Langa's technique of flashbacks collapses in this part. For example, a closer examination of the two quotes reveals that hundreds of young people had left South Africa for exile between the years of 1972 and 1974. However, the historical facts of the years between 1972 and 1976 are that Black Consciousness Movement student groups like SASO (Adam, 1973 : 140 - 163)⁶ failed to capitalize on the absence and silence of the major political liberation movements. It was only after the 1976 riots that the ANC undertook a massive recruitment drive to train cadres of Umkhonto WeSizwe in camps in Mozambique, Tanzania and Angola as well as eastern Europe.

The above-mentioned facts are testimony of how Mandla Langa the activist shares two political histories. Khethiwe's reflections and questions are surely not historically based on how the ANC operated at the time. During the years 1972-1976 any active political work was done by BCM followers. Organisations that operated under BCM included SASO, BPC and BAWU which put their efforts into community activities that were geared to uplift the black community's 'sense of power', its becoming 'aware of its own identity' and its capacity to 'organise itself'. In his novel, Langa himself refers to these historical events - the 1973 workers' strike that took Durban by surprise:

The leaders of the black consciousness movement and the students from all the major institutions around Durban met in rallies where the role of the workers in the struggle for freedom was reaffirmed ...

The strikes ended; while there hadn't been major concessions gained, it was clear to all ... that the lion that had been slumbering for more than a quarter of a century had awakened ... (Ibid : 61 - 62)

Thokozani's activist role as a shop steward at the Metal Union comes from this era of BCM history. Langa's Part I in the novel represents his earlier political activities within BCM thinking. His early poetry also dates from this period. (Mkhize, 1991 : 33 - 35)

In Part II, Langa sets the debate on liberation in the early 1980s. The Soweto riots had come and passed. The BCM generation of youth had suffered great repression in 1977 when the government clamped down on them with bannings and detentions. Hundreds of other youths had fled the country to join the ANC guerrillas in exile and by the early 1980s those inside were waiting for them to come back to fulfil their promise. The people of Ndaweni are also waiting for this promise - that the Ndaweni people be trained to fight against incorporation into Swaziland. Langa tells us that Hugh "was one of the wide-eyed youths who wished to learn how to fight with an aim of returning home and putting the training into good use. Years passed". (p 113) The waiting had been going on for a long time before attempts at fulfilling this promise commenced. In the forest, which has become their military headquarters for training local cadres, we also meet

the five guerrillas and are shown their military arsenal that have become familiar ANC weapons of struggle. (pp 85 - 93)

If we examine Langa's and La Guma's accounts of the ANC attempts to advance the struggle towards freedom, it is clear that both authors had privy knowledge of the strategic plans of the organisation as well as reading articles from South African newspapers and other writings available abroad. For example, Langa's story about four guerrillas caught trying to help the Ingwavuma people's resistance to incorporation into Swaziland appears in Work in Progress. (WIP, 1986 : 35 - 36)⁷ However, what distinguishes one from the other, is that Langa's ability to use this knowledge in writing his novel is at times problematic. Firstly, Langa seems to fail to reconcile the two phases of his growth: from BCM to ANC ideologies. Langa's writing in this novel is divided into two: Part I represents the early years of his involvement within the BCM ideology and Part II represents the second phase under ANC ideology. Even though the plot seems to suggest that the strength of the novel lies in watching Khethiwe grow from BCM to embrace the strength of the ANC thinking, this evidence seems to rely on the ANC outside rather than what was happening at home. For instance, there were other structures like the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) that could have been supportive to people like Khethiwe. Secondly, the writing differs from La Guma's in that it depends too much on ANC policy and historical events. Langa fails to detach himself from his immediate political concerns in order to create an effect which interests and absorbs the reader. When Langa offers his description of the ANC military arsenal to the reader, it is flat and matter of fact, and somehow remains too close to the descriptions of the original article in Work in Progress of 1986. It prompts one to suspect that this is a deliberate ploy to scare the enemy inside instead of simply telling a story!

Langa's writing in the second part of the novel is very strongly influenced by ANC debates on culture that must have been taking place at about that time. In this context the words of Steve Tshwete, at an ANC conference for South African writers held in Zimbabwe, are germane:

... the ANC holds the view that you have a role to play in this broad coalition against apartheid, against that very system. In your own way, in your own constituencies, reaching out to other writers, to other artists, writing about the

evils of that system itself and how that system deserves to be removed ... (Coetzee and Polley, 1989 : 17)

However, one has to be critical of the way Langa in his novel stretches this political involvement of writers in struggle in his novel. As already pointed out, Langa's work seems to exercise what Tshwete was imploring in a manner that is too practical without the necessary distance or detachment needed for a convincing and enriching fictional description.

Graham Pechey also hints at a similarity between Langa's novel and a manifesto : he sees Langa's writing as failing to offer "a sense that the destiny of the character is being shaped by anything other than an abstract logic of illustration and exemplification". (Pechey, 1990 : 4) Pechey's criticism is perhaps too strong, but it can be taken into consideration. Pechey's criticism can be viewed as echoing La Guma's words recorded in an interview with Cecil Abrahams. (1991 : 20 and 38) Explaining how an artist can use materials gained from the struggle La Guma says:

On the whole I must say that the life and the struggles of the South African oppressed people have been a source of inspiration to conscious writers, and it is only a matter of how this wealth of material is used. (p 38)

What is of note here is the continuing debate over how writers engaged in literature of struggle have to maintain a balance between political commitment and aesthetic value. Later on, La Guma points out the difficulties caused by "absence from the scene" which is often compensated by "the writer's imagination and sensitivity ...". These become assets that help the writer to project him/herself into situations that are physically distant from them. Referring to Time of the Butcherbird, La Guma confirms that knowledge and experience from the past do serve a writer with a good sense of imagination and sensitivity. La Guma also emphasizes the problems presented by exile:

... having to keep in touch with developments. Fortunately my continued association with the revolutionary movement helps me to follow what is going on quite intimately (Abrahams, 1991 : 39)

Often in the art of writing, the desire to render something distinctly visible gets blurred and overshadowed by what Pechey has called "exemplification". What La Guma says affirms that care should be taken to make sure that observed or read material blends well into the fictional world of the novel in that it leaves the reader enough space and distance to conjure up images of what the real thing looks like.

Having said all this, it remains clear that the two authors found that their identity with the ANC in struggle gave them the necessary vision and commitment for their creative activity. Being involved in ANC strategic planning meetings, they could identify with the issues that the organisation was fighting for, and could draw material for their writing from the cultural debates, historical events and practical action that the organisation was involved in at the time. My argument is that, although La Guma is right in applauding it, this kind of proximity to political realities can also create problems for a writer in that it needs a careful processes of analysis and imaginative composition before it can be turned into effective literature.

As far as identity in exile is concerned, the writing of La Guma and Langa differs from that of Hope and Malan in the way in which it projects identity in exile. As writers writing within the ideology of the ANC, La Guma and Langa use subject material that is readily available to them within the organisation in a very militant voice which is to advance the liberation struggle. Hope's and Malan's writings, on the other hand, project their own identity from exile using the broad and fragmented definition of being white South Africans. Though writing from the white South African perspective, Hope and Malan fail to project a unified white South African voice from exile.

Through the projection of fear and alienation in their writing, Hope and Malan share identity with numerous other white South Africans inside or outside the country at the time. Both authors seek identity with South Africa in their writing but what they find is fear amongst whites. Their own alienation from the process of domination by the then repressive Nationalist government on the one hand and from the rising militancy of the black majority on the other did not provide these writers with a feeling of identifying with either.

Hope, as already argued in Chapter 3, saw exile as a perpetual life-cycle that haunts the English-speaking white South African, who is unable to take Africa as home. Europe, though often referred to as home, was also an illusion, as the WESSAs remained total misfits in the world of post-colonial Europe - as indeed in the rest of Africa. In A Separate Development Hope through the use of satire and black humour looks at himself as part of a Catholic minority within the minority white group. Through the main character, Harry Moto, Hope finds a group further divided among itself. Moto is not sure of his own identity and his parents will not divulge much about their parentage until a visit to an old aged home in the outskirts of the Vaal triangle gives him a clue to a possible Lebanese descent. This fear of not belonging to the white group continues to show in Hope's writing in Hottentot Room, Black Swan and White Boy Running. In an article, Hope talks about the dilemma in which South African writers in exile find themselves:

What makes the novelist political is precisely that he/she writes about life in South Africa. It is a vocation, it is also a trap Write about South Africa and you write about politics. It is less a choice than a dilemma. (Hope, 1985 : 41)

Hope finds writing about South Africa an entrapment and a dilemma because as much as it is a vocation, it is also political and thus not a neutral subject. I think this is the crux of Hope's problem with South Africa as a writer's subject matter. Hope finds that a South African writer writing about home is bound to be judged on the political effect or message of the work regardless of the writer's intention. Later, in a magazine interview, Hope crystallizes this dilemma:

WESSAs are trapped between competing nationalisms: the Calvinist racial pathology of the white tribe Thomas Pringle called the African Boers on the one hand and rising black nationalism on the other; despised and detested by the former and increasingly marginal to the ambitions of the latter. (Hope, 1987 : 17)

This is where Hope the writer and Hope the South African white English-speaking individual confront the dilemma. Though South African political landscapes and problems continued for a long time to engage Hope's writing, as an individual he did not align himself with any liberation movement. White Boy Running seems to be the last of Hope's attempts to grapple with the

political scene at home. Hope's autobiographical account traces his roots back to Ireland, in a way questioning his ties with Africa and South Africa in particular. Hope's life story in White Boy Running seems to imply that, though born in South Africa, the author does not really feel any particular ties except to record the absurdity of the happenings witnessed.

Cape Drives in the poems already examined in Chapter 3 expresses similar doubts and regrets. In the autobiography, Hope doubts his grandfather's wisdom in believing that an alliance with the Afrikaners would save both South Africa and the English-speaking subjects in the future. (p 51 - 52) Likewise, in the poems Hope shows the shame and despair suffered by people like grandfather McKenna and their group. Hope's works show people's fear of aligning themselves with any group aspirations because of lessons from the past. Whilst all the evidence for such fear is drawn from the past history of white South Africans and other colonials in the rest of the continent, no similar historical evidence is drawn from black people's history to endorse his fear of the liberation movements. Other arguments on this issue will be dealt with in the section on exile and the international market.

Rian Malan suffers the same anxieties of fear and alienation in My Traitor's Heart as the stories of the Greytown and Empangeni whites unfold. As Malan interviews Creina Alcock and the victims of the 'Hammerman' their fears become his. The problem comes with the interwoven journalistic and research styles of writing with which Malan presents his story. The first part, the genealogy of the Malan clan, is researched from available archives. The story of Dawid Malan is resurrected from such records and carried on down to the moving of the Malans into government in 1948 and then on to General Magnus Malan who was still holding office in the pre-liberation government.

In this book, Malan presents the reader with raw facts either from records, newspaper readings or clips, and eyewitness reports on the beat. There is no distance to give the reader enough space to judge the reality as it unfolds. Malan the author is there parading as the white man and guiding the reader to every detail and judgement. Malan the author is no different from the reporter in The Star newspaper, always there to record and speak on behalf of black people whilst making sure that there is no personal danger lurking around. Malan tells of how he, like

other white people, always tried to help black people,⁸ and his confession that "... We all hated apartheid, but when the chips were down, and it was high noon on the township streets, and the killing started, there were no whites on the black side of the barricades. None. Ever". (p 170) In My Traitor's Heart, Malan, who identifies himself as a white liberal, chronicles many well-meaning efforts by people of his class and ilk⁹ which never amount to much as compared to the enormous burden of suffering experienced by black people.

Through the depiction of faction fights between the ANC/UDF and Inkatha in Natal, as well as between the UDF and the BCM-backed Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) in Soweto and the Eastern Cape, Malan discovers that "In South Africa's townships, the middle of the road has become a place where nobody dared stand". (p 319) Malan misses the point that the carnage seen on the streets of the black townships in the mid-1980s was actually a product of a long insurrection by people in urban and rural townships which rendered the country 'ungovernable'.¹⁰ It was also a product of the undeclared war against the ruling white minority represented by the state whose bombings into the neighbouring countries and whose para-military police operation in every township at the time left hundreds of black people dead, in detention or homeless. A year earlier, in Rainbow on the Paper Sky, Langa showed how people countered these operations by portraying the resisting Ndwani people and the determination shown by Shelley and Khethiwe. At the same time, Mark Mgobhozi and the loss suffered in Maseru represent the risks and dangers of such a war in which hundreds of people lost their lives. What Malan chronicles is the full manifestation of these realities of a divided South Africa engaged in war, but seen from the point of view of a white liberal South African whose sympathies, if any, are trapped in observing the 'spectacle'.

The issue of chiefs and removals in the rural communities is a common thread seen in three of the writers: La Guma, Langa and Malan. La Guma has Hlangeni as the epitome of the outmoded chief who still fears the 'baas' - the defeated chief who will not stand up for his people. What Mma Tau does in Time of the Butcherbird is to give South African rural people a new way of looking at life - the view that chiefs, although they inherit the chieftaincy, can be deposed if they do not join the progressive forces. The issue of chiefs is still a contentious issue some time after the April 1994 elections that led to the present Government of National Unity.

Langa's portrayal of Ndungane as the progressive chief involved in the struggle offers an example of a chief who listens to his people and works towards the realisation of their needs. Ndungane leads the struggle against incorporation into Swaziland. Even the trained Umkhonto WeSizwe guerrillas have to listen to his advice very carefully. (Rainbow on the Paper Sky : 126 - 128) Mostly the guerrillas learn from and rely on Ndungane - learning about the forest and the Ndaweni people as well as some tactics that the chief had used in an earlier rebellion in 1956. In fact, Ndungane acts as the co-commander to Hugh except that perhaps he lacks the expertise about the new arsenal the combatants have brought with them. Ndungane is in charge of his own people and confident of their loyalty as he says, "Don't worry about me There are men here who are prepared to die before anything can happen to me". (p 128)

Although Hope comes back to South Africa to research White Boy Running, he does not concern himself with issues such as the rural-urban divide or see them as affecting South African socio-political judgement in the 1987 elections. Hope does not even try to engage the rural black community. His only visits to black areas are to Soweto and Phoenix in Durban. The first visit to Soweto is on a coach tour used by international visitors. The second visit is to an unnamed library in Soweto for readings from a poem and The Hottentot Room. The three visits related in the book (pp 163 - 178 ; 252 - 260) are about the only real encounters that Hope has with the local majority.

White Boy Running concerns itself rather with what and how whites are feeling about the coming white elections of 1987. Black political leaders like Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Bishop Tutu and others are mentioned only in passing or in relation to what has been said by white political leaders of the time. United Democratic Front (UDF) leaders of the time are also not interviewed. Hope even fails to personally interview these black political figures, but relies on newspaper comments. The fear that is prevalent in most white South Africans has him just moving within white institutions and suburbs following either National Party or Progressive Federal Party (PFP) politicians. Great emphasis is put on fringe political leaders. It is as if Hope does not only stay white but foreign as well - as the Soweto youth's comment: "Ah, Chris - you've been away too long" (p 178) aptly puts it.

Malan's treatment of the long struggles of the people of Msinga against the South African government is one of the most touching in the whole book. Identity with Msinga, and indeed with a South Africa seen through Creina's love, frightens Malan. Malan remains alienated and in fear of blacks. The story of the 'Hammerman' is a case in point, as already discussed in Chapter 3. Though at first Malan sympathises with the character, the search for the psychological reasons behind the Hammerman's actions shows the distance between his and Malan's social and political worlds.

Exile, distance and memory

I would like to stress that distance in this study refers to the way an exiled writer copes with the anguish of being away from what Mphahlele calls "the tyranny of place, time and memory". In this book, Mphahlele explains the forces that led him to come back home:

After January 1975, I knew more clearly that the search for self was really a search for a community to which I could abandon myself in terms of what I could give as a writer and teacher; a community which in turn could sanction that which I give by thrusting it back at me. I needed the community so much because much of what I could give depended on what I could get from it. I needed to be engaged with the struggles of my people and it was this bonding which had collapsed during exile. (Manganyi, 1989 : 290)

I would like to pick out three words from Mphahlele's statement: community, sanction and bonding. Wherever a writer settles in the world, these three words become the most crucial in deciding what kind of themes and issues to explore. A writer's community is what feeds and sanctions the writing. Bonding is the result of these two elements between writer and community. Exile shakes or obliterates these pillars, leaving the writer unsure and barren of ideas. Exile can also broaden a writer's community, themes and issues. For example, some writers adapt and live on to write about their new communities, as Hope has done since the publication of White Boy Running.

Hope is one South African writer who was 'drying up' from a South African point of view but at the same time adapting to the English audience abroad. In a variety of ways, Hope has tried to survive "the tyranny of place, time and memory". Since voluntary exile in England in 1975, Hope's writing in fiction has had some starts and stops. For fiction, Hope has received three literary awards, namely for A Separate Development (1980), Private Parts & Other Tales (1982) and Kruger's Alp (1985). In poetry, only Cape Drives (1974) has won a literary award. It is of interest to note that between Cape Drives and A Separate Development Hope did not write for six years whilst adjusting to the British way of life.

It can be suggested that in his struggle to survive this drying up, Hope was lucky in that the two genres - fiction and poetry - could be used alternately. Once the fictional genre got literary recognition through prizes, poetry seems to have been put aside. This is contrary to the view expressed in this Sunday Times article: "Hope, Faith and Christopher" which claims "he spends his time writing poetry - his first love - novels, reviews and some commissioned work for the BBC". (Roberts, 1987 : 25) One can agree with the rest of the statement, but, judging from the frequency with which novels have been published since then, fiction rather than poetry has become his love.

There is another way that Hope survived "the tyranny of place, time and memory". In the earlier years, Hope could come back to South Africa and visit or research, whereas political exiles like La Guma and Langa could not. When researching White Boy Running in South Africa, Hope also launched The Hottentot Room (1986). This kept Hope in touch with the audience in South Africa. Visits back home meant taking a working holiday.

Unlike Hope, Malan does not cope well with 'distance from home' in terms of time and place. The research for his book was done in South Africa and he never left for any length of time after returning from America. The only distance Malan suffers is what Ndebele (1994) laments about in Chapter 3, namely that which exists between whites and blacks in South Africa.

Apart from the practical issues considered above, all the works of the four writers chosen for this study suffer from "the tyranny of place, time and memory" in different ways. Place or

community means the writer in foreign lands has to find themes and issues that interest and touch the local audience abroad. All four writers continue to write about South Africa in exile (though some have or are in the process of coming back) because there is a common language - English - and the subject of apartheid touched the international audience. However, this in itself becomes a problem in that the treatment of South African voices carries the tensions of time and place. Time and distance (in terms of place of residence) warp memory.

Hope, who considers himself an escapee from the South African dilemma, uses various fictional devices to remain an observer, detached from his community, South Africa. Hope's voice in Cape Drives, A Separate Development, The Hottentot Room, Black Swan and White Boy Running is satirical, witty and cynical. I will now concentrate on Black Swan and White Boy Running to further show how Hope the writer reacts to the anguish of exile.

In Black Swan, Hope examines the issue of recruitment for military training by liberation movements, using an allegory. The story of the young Lucky (Strike), his grandmother Muriel and German teacher-friend Ilse raises the serious issue of how liberation movements recruit. In order (one suspects) to avoid the trouble of having to double check with liberation movements, and the possibility that they would not give a white writer that privy information, Hope creates Lucky. Lucky is like his name - a happy-go-lucky character who touches the reader in that things just seem to happen to him and Lucky feels and sees very deeply but locks knowledge within himself.

Lucky cannot learn anything except ballet dancing. Lucky discovers the ugliness of South African life through two events: the destruction of his gift from Ilse the German teacher - a film of Swan Lake. Then whilst seeking the 'General' for help, Lucky discovers the mysterious death of his friend Ilse. The 'General' decides to recruit Lucky for training in East Germany. The sound of the word Germany to Lucky recalls the promise made by Ilse that she would take him to learn how to dance in Germany. But Ilse's Germany was on the western side of the Berlin Wall. In East Germany Lucky wants to dance, not to train for war.

The generals in East Germany send Lucky back to the bush in Africa. The commanders in the bush think Lucky is the cleverest cadre that the movement has, trained in just two weeks.

Given weapons and a grenade, Lucky gets lost in the bush. He decides to bury the grenade - which later accidentally kills two patrolling South African Defence Force members. He gets caught and brought back home as a hero. When Lucky is sentenced, only his grandmother Muriel knows that Lucky did not even hear the sentence. Muriel knew each time when Lucky got into his trances: he could do as he liked with other people or fly away in his head whenever he felt like it as he did with Marigold the 'Ngaka'. (p 13) Granny Muriel can tell that Lucky did not hear his sentence because he has entered into a trance as his arms remain outstretched, "he is ready to take off". (p 88)

Black Swan is one of Hope's works that has not received much critical attention. It is easy to see why: the story is so sweet, almost fairy-tale like. As a writer of children's books, Hope is able to wrap-up his lack of detailed knowledge about the military decisions and moves of liberation movements in a simple fairy-tale. Not wanting to align himself with any liberation movement (at least publicly), Hope also distanced himself from the characters in The Hottentot Room, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Malan in My Traitor's Heart and Hope in White Boy Running use the autobiographical "I" which helps avoid too much criticism on the grounds of factual accuracy, because the authors are putting forward their own opinions. The argument is, the facts presented from the "I" point of view do not mean that other people may not see things differently. For someone living and working abroad, there is not much time to stay in South Africa and collect all the details about the state of the nation. Both Malan and Hope employ family histories in their works to supplement lack of adequate knowledge about the African background. This also helps to avoid getting into difficulties in having to deal with African political history. Interestingly, Malan uses the genealogy of the Malan clan at the beginning and forgets about it later in the book. I suggest that that part of the book may have been written in America; then when memory faded, he had to come home. Hope, meanwhile, pressed for time, distributes his historical background throughout the novel to swell the work and avoid sounding like a travelogue writer.

La Guma and Langa are the worst sufferers of the "tyranny of place, time and distance". As political exiles they could not come back to research as Hope and Malan could. In an interview

shortly before his death in 1985, La Guma expresses how as a writer he

would prefer to sit in South Africa and write books there. But of course the subject would not have allowed me to write books in South Africa, so as a writer I am glad that I am here able to produce all these works that I have up to now. From this point of view it is a positive aspect of being in exile. (Abrahams, 1991 : 25)

La Guma acknowledges the space to be able to publish his works, especially his earlier three novels, which had been written while he was still under house arrest in South Africa. Exile was however a mixed blessing for La Guma. The last two novels, In The Fog of the Season's End and Time of the Butcherbird, were clearly works created from memory. The latter novel clearly shows a really struggling memory as La Guma attempts to write about issues that are currently affecting the majority at home. David Maughan-Brown (1991) elaborates on this point, saying La Guma's "plot creaks uncharacteristically" (p 30) and

Except for memories, the exile's experience of South Africa must obviously be fragmentary, deriving from anecdotes, news clips, journal articles, letters, encounters with other exiles or with South Africans travelling abroad, and so on. (Ibid : 32)

This is what Malan and Hope avoid by going back to South Africa and travelling around to get the feel of issues on the ground. The only saviour on their side is the use of the autobiographical genre that hides all the cracks, as I have suggested above.

La Guma is aware of and willing to accept the shortcomings of his last novel Time of the Butcherbird. In the interview referred to above, La Guma says that if a South African writer finds difficulty in relying on memory, then the writer has a choice of writing about other communities, Britain for example. La Guma says he had already written about Vietnam. Talking about writing this "long story" (Ibid : 28), La Guma says his emphasis was on removals of black people and on "the schizophrenic attitude of white people". (p 26)

Whilst taking into consideration what Maughan-Brown says and La Guma's response to such criticism, it is important to recognise that La Guma's last work suffers on two fronts. Firstly La Guma's decision to re-direct attention away from his familiar Coloured people whom he knew so well, towards a wider community. The fact that his project was to deal with issues like the "schizophrenic attitudes of white people" in South Africa, challenged his writing style which depended on economy and a precise use of words. The novel demands an intimate knowledge of the subject, and as Ndebele (1994) says, as a writer it is difficult to write about someone you do not know. Further, though La Guma knew a great deal about the sufferings of black people, he had not lived with them to imbibe their intimate feelings and reactions as a community. The subject of removals is close to his heart, but he did not witness it physically. In In The Fog of the Season's End La Guma escapes this criticism because he is still relying on very precious memories of working in an activist cell whose members' lives depended on each other, with the risk of mistakes and betrayals to the police.

For both La Guma and Langa, writing in exile meant having to deal with issues that were topical strategies for the ANC movement, perhaps without much time to distance oneself from these debates in order to find a fictional approach to the subject. Maughan-Brown puts forward a formidable argument that La Guma was writing contrary to the ideals of the ANC when portraying Murile's private revenge. (p 28) I would like to suggest a "yes and no" approach to this argument. Taking into account the developments around ANC liberation strategies following the publication of this novel, one can find some justification for La Guma's projection of Murile in this manner.

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, following the 1976 Soweto uprisings, the ANC-in-exile had to re-examine a number of its political and military strategies. As a result of this the recruitment of young South Africans became one of its main strategy. A year after the publication of Time of the Butcherbird in 1979, trained guerrillas were said to be coming back to implement destruction of the enemy's hard and soft targets.

It may perhaps be useful to attempt an explanation of the ANC's policy of 'hard' and 'soft' targets. For decades the ANC had a history of restraint. An article about a 1985 ANC Executive

Conference states that at this conference "a shift towards softer targets" was discussed. (WIP 35, 1985 : 6) This article sums up the changing nature of the ANC's armed struggle and how the organisation prepared to fight the South African government towards liberation through new strategies like 'the people's war' - a situation in which the ANC [hoped] everyone of its supporters, and others would become a 'fighter'. (Ibid)

The issues around this debate were not crystalized openly in terms of how writers were expected to respond to it in their work. Five years later, at the ANC conference for writers (Coetzee & Polley) held in Zimbabwe, Steve Tshwete (now Minister for Sports and Recreation) further explained the reasons behind the ANC opting for armed struggle in South Africa dating back to 1961. Tshwete also explained why the ANC spent over 20 years of restrained attempts at engaging the enemy fully, and stated the need to change this strategy:

It was only in 1983 that we attacked enemy personnel in Pretoria. A very restrained struggle. And, in the meantime, in this whole period of over twenty years, liberation movements were springing up around us. In Mozambique, Frelimo. The Patriotic Front here. They shot themselves to victory, having started long after we had declared ourselves to be waging an armed struggle in South Africa. A very, very restrained armed struggle it has been, perhaps precisely because of our long tradition of non-violent struggle. (Coetzee & Polley, 1990 : 21)

Though this was in 1990, it is clear that in internal debates, hard and soft targets must have been in discussion much earlier than that. Hard targets were military installations and police institutions which represented the power and the maintenance of apartheid structures. Following this new policy of 'soft and hard targets', the bombing of Sasol in 1980, the military headquarters in Pretoria in mid-1980s took place. The Sasol bombing was aimed at a hard target while the military headquarters in Pretoria were felt to have included both hard and soft targets.

Hard targets included military personnel. Civilians, including those who might serve in the army and government supporters, often suffered hits that were meant for hard targets. At times

innocent civilians suffered. That was not policy but from the ranks of ANC membership there was pressure to include soft targets.

Mandla Langa was present at the conference and his remarks led to a long debate during which ANC officials present had to explain what was meant by hard and soft targets and taking the struggle to white areas. (Ibid : 26 - 29)

Langa celebrates the ANC attack on SASOL in June 1980 (p 89) when talking about Tsepo. At the conference, reacting to a question on the validity of an armed struggle by Gerrit Olivier, Langa said black people had always been at the receiving end and the armed struggle was to give them political muscle and "I think this also gives an effect of equality, of the fact that everybody's blood is red". (Coetzee & Polley, 1990 : 26)

The point here is that, although the ANC did not condone violence towards individuals, it felt it was inherent in the nature of the struggle as the hard targets, like military institutions, were in most cases within reach of residential areas. While many people might have supported the ANC, the activists at home (who had not been trained) could not be expected to be bound by explicit ANC discipline. It is in this light that the actions of Murile should be seen and that La Guma's projection of the killing of Hannes Meulen and Edgar Stopes may be considered to be one of the ways in which a writer in struggle engages such issues.

Even though Murile cannot be said to be representative of an ANC trained guerrilla, and as Maughan-Brown (1991) has rightly argued the portrayal comes across as solitary revenge, one sees the seed from which the character springs. The point I am making here is that La Guma's writing is weak in plot as Maughan-Brown argues so well, but very rich in insight and in its projection of future strategies of the ANC-in-exile.

The novel does lack the familiar La Guma trademark of detailed and concentrated descriptions of social settings. Lewis Nkosi (1983), lamenting the perils of exile for black South African writers, puts this succinctly :

[He] remains committed to a country thousands of miles from where he lives, with the memory of certain sensations associated with living in South Africa growing dimmer and dimmer. For a fiction writer, obliged to rely on the the memory of these sensations - the colours of the landscape, the smells of plants and flowers, and the peculiar accents of a people among whom he or she has grown up - the problem acquires truly tragic dimensions (p 95)

The dimness of the writing in La Guma's last novel is very apparent. The colours of the Karoo landscape, the smells of its plants and flowers are but dust-covered and lost to the reader. The memory of the Karoo left to a long-time exile is only represented by the waning images of a cruel desert-like space criss-crossed by Murile and Madonele. The presentation of Murile as a local young man who used to shepherd the sheep is very dry. At times it resembles the lone figure of a cowboy in a western movie. Throughout the novel, Murile does not even stop to recognize a familiar site or tree. Even on the visit to the grave Murile is accompanied by Madonele who for a shepherd lacks a sense of affinity with the veld he trundles across everyday. Only the food eaten by the Meulens is described in little details such as the drinks and the 'frikadells'. Despite the semi-desert setting that La Guma chooses, the effects of exile are apparent - the Karoo has its hardy trees, plants and flowers, too.

Langa also does not escape the effects of exile. The smells of Durban, its various communities, the forest, plants and flowers of Ndaweni are as mute as La Guma's desert landscape. Graham Pechey says about Langa's Rainbow on the Paper Sky:

Durban is realized as a city in the urban sequences with words and phrases that sometimes recall those with which travelogues ventriloquize the response of the excited tourist ... and at other times come through as the neutralized localism of street and shop names dredged from the exile's memory. (1990 : 5)

Langa also seems to mask slips of memory by concentrating on descriptions of the river in the forest given by Hugh and Khethiwe. Natural settings with vastness like rivers, forests and mountains are easy to describe because of their timelessness. The critical part of describing them

is the associated emotions; otherwise they become just a public spectacle - amazing, daunting and all the other clichéd expressions one can think of.

Langa's novel, Rainbow on the Paper Sky, as discussed above, clearly demonstrates that there was ready material for exile writers to use as a basis for their writing. The problem that Langa faced as an individual writer in exile was how to use this material effectively.

If we look at how some of these chosen writers coped with writing in exile, one could comment that about thirteen years seems to be the cut-off point when memory starts to fail and they either stop writing on South Africa or change their subject matter. La Guma wrote in exile between 1966 and 1979. Hope between 1975 and 1988; after White Boy Running he has written on other subjects and countries. Langa was in exile from about 1976 and his last novel was published in 1989. I would like to mention that, though Malan has been included in this study as one of the four chosen writers of this period, it should be borne in mind that his work does not fit in some of the categories being described here. Although he spent eight years in America during which he wrote parts of My Traitor's Heart, some of the more difficult events, times and conditions faced by South African writers had somehow altered due to changes in the socio-political scene.

Exile: the implied reader and the international markets

Black South African writers have for a long time suffered the problem of writing in English as a language of choice for local and international markets abroad. Generally, the observation or criticism has been that this stems from the need to address the white audiences and the black elite both at home and abroad. This tendency, however, continued and has been interpreted as the need to expose and explain the apartheid conditions that existed before April 27, 1994 for the international community.

Graham Pechey (1990) says the implied reader (in Langa's novel) is an unspecified non-South African reader who needs to be told¹¹. While this is true to a certain extent regarding Langa

and indeed exiled Black writers, who because of censorship could not be published at home, their writing has also celebrated the coloured and location lingua-francas, which could never have had a chance of exposure outside the locations themselves or South Africa. Putting aside the political gains, this writing made attempts at removing the residues of the colonial novel littered with responses of servitude like 'nkosana', and 'mnumzana'. South Africa is a country of inter-country migrant labour systems,¹² so the writing did communicate to a large Southern African audience which could buy and relate to the books.

White South African writers in general, whether in exile or at home, had never had any problems publishing abroad until the cut-off during the sanctions period. The earlier group of exiled black South African writers, however, had to rely on poor African press houses or presses in other Third World countries. For example, once Mphahlele left South Africa in 1958, it became difficult to publish his novels and short stories¹³. Although this situation did change in later years, it did present some formidable problems for black South African writers in those earlier years of exile.

La Guma's early novel A Walk in the Night was first published in Africa by Mbari Publications in Nigeria, whereas publishers in Britain and other western countries were publishing the works of Nadine Gordimer and others. Some of the essays written by black South African writers took time to become available to South African scholars because they were published in African press houses or magazines. Lewis Nkosi's essays "The Transplanted Heart" (Nkosi, 1975) are a case in point: before Heinemann published them, they were difficult to come by. The argument here is that though African press houses do initially publish works by African writers, unless these works subsequently appear in western press houses, they are likely to remain unknown in larger literary circles. Lewis Nkosi (1981) was published by Longman and all his latter works were then generally available.

The story of Bessie Head and her fight for publishers in her Serowe village is evidence of what some of the writers in exile suffered in their attempts to publish their works. Gillian Stead Eilersen (1995) has recently published a book on Head's unknown works which has actually clarified her earlier background and literary activity¹⁴. I am not here suggesting that Head's or any

other black writer's problems were solely based on publishing problems, but that there were both political and practical difficulties posed by the apartheid situation.

Looking at the writers chosen for this study, the discrepancy in publishing is clear. Malan tells us in Mv Traitor's Heart that he had been sponsored to write a book by a New York publisher. (p 103) The book is a full expose of apartheid's theatre of blood. In Book I (pp 13 - 103) Malan tells about the clan, offers us anecdotes about his childhood and describes his job as a reporter at The Star. What exactly happened is not quite clear, because the next thing that we are told is of a proposal to a publisher in New York and him catching a plane home. One might suggest that the deal had been clinched because Malan could be more productive if he researched at home, as his memory had faded.

From the beginning of Book II, titled "Tales of ordinary murder", the book does not attempt serious fictional distances. It becomes a chronology of murder and counter murders across the board and Malan laments that since coming back he has discovered that everybody has blood on their hands. For an ordinary South African the book fails to heal and give hope. It does not go beyond what Ndebele (1994) calls the 'spectacle'. For an outsider, the book is a minefield of needed information on daily occurrences during the last days of the apartheid machinery. Published in 1990, it comes at the end of a long period of media censorship during the state of emergency when some foreign journalists had been sent out of South Africa. So, the intensity of the information is welcomed by some western readers who were curious to know what was happening in South Africa even though it was not the whole picture. The way Malan presents the information by giving a few detailed scenarios, makes a good and lasting impression about the brutality of the situation. But it does not offer a way in which the reader can then objectively analyse the situation and ponder possible solutions.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. See also Mkhize (1991 : 33 - 35).
2. Abrahams (1991 : 40 - 42). See also the back-cover of Langa's Rainbow on the Paper Sky (1989).
See also Coetzee and James Polley (1990) where Mandla Langa chairs most of the conference sessions.
3. See also Mkhize (1991) in which he shows the inherent limitations of the BCM ideology and how the ANC gained from that limitation. The BCM ideology had been able to ignite the youth's consciences by appealing to their dignity and self-respect. By the time Steve Biko died (co-founder and proponent of BCM) youth in South Africa had been organised and had started working in cells to undermine the apartheid system.
4. See also South Africa in the 1980s - State of Emergency pp 28 - 29 which chronicles the strategies and implementation plans used by the Nationalist government to stop the ANC from making advances inside the country. It also, through the Inkomati Accord, stopped neighbouring states like Swaziland and Mozambique from keeping ANC bases by signing a pact with the South African state.

See also: Work in Progress 40, 1986 "ANC Bases in Ingwavuma" (pp 35 - 37) which tells of the case against four young ANC guerrilla fighters who were sent by the exiled movement to set up bases in the Ingwavuma district and train locals.

Work In Progress 58 - March/April, 1989: "Another site of struggle" (pp 14 - 17) tells of the struggle of the Ingwavuma people against incorporation and destabilisation by the South African army and police in the early 1980s.

5. See also Abrahams (1991 : 51 - 62).
6. Adam says BCM as an ideology started at a Black People's Convention held in July 1972, in Pietermaritzburg called by SASO. BCM followers tended to work in groups initiating grassroot projects to help the poor. (1973 : 4 ; 140 - 163)

SASO stands for South African Students' Organisation which broke away from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in 1969. It was based on BCM ideology. SASM is South African Students' Movement - a high school pupils' organization that also followed BCM thinking.

Mkhize (1991) states clearly that there was no major exodus of BCM members before the Soweto uprising of 1976. In fact Mkhize's thesis argues that BCM as a political movement failed to capitalize on the absence and silence of the major political liberation movements - ANC and PAC - between 1972 and 1976.

7. The WIP article entitled "ANC bases in Ingwavuma" tells of the story "of four young ANC guerrilla fighters, sent into the Ingwavuma district to set up bases and train locals who were caught and taken by security police". Thirteen local people were detained and faced charges of terrorism in the Natal Supreme Court in Escourt.
See Work in Progress 12 (1980 : 24 - 27).

8. Rian Malan tells the story of Merle Beetge, a white woman who selflessly and tirelessly worked as a social welfare worker for the black squatter people of Elandsfontein, just outside of Johannesburg. Merle took upon herself to help connect blacks who were abused or brutally killed to the police or organisations like the Black Sash and the courts. She worked to expose brutal whites like the Viljoens and August de Koker who treated blacks like animals or sport.

9. See how Malan divides allegiances in the South African context: there are four paths open to a white South African :-
- there is the Afrikaner Resistance Movement which stands for white supremacy and no surrender
 - there is the National Party which put forward reforms whose power ended in the hands of the State President (white of course): surrender but keep the power
 - the path of white liberals whose future Malan says was no more on choice other than providing evasion
 - the last path of the lefts: the BCM which did not accept whites and the Charterists (ANC and UDF wing).
10. Minnaar (1991) traces a historical base for the rampant violence in Kwa-Zulu/Natal as coming from tribal clashes on social issues but later on this became politicized in the 1980s, intensified by the availability and frequent use of guns. This shifted faction fights from being rural incidents to the urban areas. (1991 : 36).
11. See also Nkosi (1990 : 19).
12. Because of the large number of mine labourers from the reserves and other neighbouring countries, South Africa has a large volume of cross border immigrants.
13. Manganyi (1983 : 171).
14. See Vigne (1991) on Bessie Head's letters in exile and Eilerson (1995).
The publication of these books has improved the otherwise very sketchy background that scholars had on Bessie Head's earlier years before her life in Botswana.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

South African writers in exile may have had the freedom to write about their home, but this was at a price. Distance from their community eventually robbed them of the basic and most needed ingredient for writing. Being in exile whether voluntarily or by force, at least three of the chosen writers, like all writers in exile, could not sustain their memory of 'home'. To survive and keep writing meant to adopt certain strategies. Es'kia Mphahlele in *The Wanderers* (1972) fully explains the pains of what the writer felt as an exile, doomed to wandering and rootlessness. For this reason, Mphahlele himself decided to come back home in 1978 and end all the misery.

Having examined some works of these writers, I would like to suggest that there is little in common in their fiction that would suggest a body of literature from exile. Whatever thread unites the writing - like the need to leave South Africa and write about home - does not amount to anything like a literary style or coherent set of ideas. While exile was an available route for writers to take when faced by pressure from the state security system, or from the mere fact of the apartheid regime, it did not translate itself into a specific lifestyle or common approaches to writing about 'home'.

Alex La Guma and Mandla Langa have been shown to have a common political commitment to their writing. The works examined here show the great differences in approach each writer had towards the South African situation.

South African life before the 1994 elections did not give its people a common vision or view of life. Coming from very diverse backgrounds, these writers have also been unable to create a common literary genre. Their writing laments this, as each one of them struggles to make sense of what the future of South Africa will be. One feature which unites them, however, is the abhorrence of what apartheid has stood for.

Adelrahman Munif (1991) says that for the exiled writer, geographic distance becomes

psychological distance, because the writer and country develop and change along different paths:

And so, there sits, very uncomfortably, the writer in exile, torn between regaining his homeland through writing - to the point of obsession - or losing it to the point of amnesia! These two conditions are prevalent in writing by exiles. Often, the reality of the native country, a reality that the writer seeks to reclaim, becomes submerged in a dream of the past. (Munif, 1991 : 109 - 110)

Surely, this had begun to be the case with Alex La Guma, the longest in exile of the four writers chosen for this study. After twenty years in exile, 'home' was becoming very distant indeed, as has been shown on Chapter 4. It should also be noted that it was precisely at that point of having spent twenty years in exile that Mphahlele returned home in 1978. For those exiles that fall under the heading of what Andrew Gurr and Ngugi wa Thiong'o call 'expatriates' it was relatively easy to survive as they could come and go in and out of South Africa as their needs dictated. (wa Thiong'o, 1993) This has been the case with Christopher Hope and Rian Malan. Those writers that were physically bound to stay away from South Africa before February 2, 1990, had become part of what Ngugi calls "physical exile which has been part and parcel of twentieth century African literature ... South Africa has contributed most to this category ...". (wa Thiong'o, 1993: 105 - 106)

Ngugi sees the literature from black South African writers in exile as being 'lost' not likely to ever take root in its own soil. It is such concerns as specified by Ngugi wa Thiong'o that South African literary critics need to address by examining their structures very deeply in order to have a strong base from which to build a national literature in a new South Africa. Of the writers examined in this study, Rian Malan came back to live in South Africa after the publication of his book but and Hope still resides in London. Langa has recently returned 'home' to Johannesburg where he lives with his wife. Other writers like Wally Serote, Mbulelo Mzamane, Mazisi Kunene and Mandla Langa have come back but others including Lewis Nkosi are still abroad. There is a possibility that some of them have come back during the time taken to research this study as changes and events in South Africa have enabled a different atmosphere.

When Ngugi says South Africa has contributed a lot to the notion of exile as a twentieth century condition, South Africans themselves need to evaluate this view seriously in terms of a loss to literary scholarship in the past.

Since the big gathering of South African and international writers and scholars in Johannesburg, under the auspices of the Congress of South African Writers (Cosaw) in 1991, no other high-level gathering has been held. It seems that it is taking Cosaw a long time to put together a strong South African body capable of unifying all its various literature structures. There is still a need to compile a comprehensive body of South African literary works of all its writers.

Early in 1995, Breyten Breytenbach indicated very explicitly that he does not think he can still write as a South African writer. Breytenbach says he has learnt that "identity was a temporary awareness which meets and mates moment to moment ... Identity was to be discovered by location". (Gray, 1995 : 32 - 35) He later affirms that Paris, his present location "... is now the only town I know really well". (p 33) The South African landscape has given way to the European one as the Breytenbachs live and holiday there. Christopher Hope has also been featured as one of the literary brains that South Africa has lost. (Anon, 1995)

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