Living in the Cracks of Apartheid: A Critical Narrative Analysis of Resilience, Hope, and Cultural Trauma in The Born Free Generation of South Africa

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the children, adults, and caregivers that have touched my life and blanketed me with love:

To the youth and staff of the Bokamoso Life Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa;

the children of Bonteuweul Care Centre in Athlone, South Africa;

the patients of Valkenberg Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa;

the students and teachers of Blossom Street Primary School in Silvertown, South Africa;

the mamas and the youth of Jipe Moyo in Mjengo Village in Moshi, Tanzania;

the patients of the HIV/AIDS Clinic of Margret Marquart Hospital in Kpando, Ghana;

the youth of the Gbi Special School in Hohoe, Ghana;

the children and nurses of Lala Maryam Orphanage in Rabat, Morocco;

and the patients and staff of Whitman Walker Health in Washington, DC:

You are my heroes of hope, my greatest teachers, forever lighting my way on all of my life's journeys.

A Prayer
by Senator Corey Booker

Tonight, I send you hope.
May it be the lens of your life's vision,
may it always help awaken your passion,
may it help ignite your convictions,
may you be a stubborn, indefatigable hero of hope- hope's champion.
And when dark doubts surge, may you be hope's harbor-
a caretaker and defender of hope.
May you know that through even your smallest loving actions,
your hopeful spirit can banish darkness, subdue despair and conquer negativity.
May your hope be infectious, contagious, may it go viral.
And may you, through persistent deeds,
kindle possibility, spark potential and illuminate a more hopeful tomorrow.
Tonight, I send you love.

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Mom and Dad, Scott and Kate, thank you for your constant support and endless love. To my nieces, Mia, Isabella, and Emily, this work is dedicated to you. May you savor the gifts of learning and education, may you be driven by curiosity and adventure, may you dream big dreams and know, all the while, that you are loved unconditionally

Aunt Elaine, thank you for the care packages full of challah and treats. You are the embodiment of love. Beth and Ed, thank you for your strength and unwavering belief in me. Sarah, you are my sister, forever.

David, thank you for watching over me and guiding my way.

To the youth and staff of Bokamoso, your words, your passion, the tenacity with which you live has taught me to embrace life, to lead courageously, to sing, to dance, and to love with abandon. Thank you for trusting me, and allowing me to spend this time with your words.

On July 22nd, 2008, as I sat on a plane travelling through the dark night sky to Cape Town, South Africa for the first time, I wrote in my journal: "I think that this may just be the beginning." Eight years later I look back knowing that that moment was, indeed, the beginning. I had yet to touch my feet on the glorious earth of Africa. I had yet to see Table Mountain, or stand on Mount Kilimanjaro, or watch the sunset over the savannahs of the Serengeti. I had yet to peer into Nelson Mandela's prison cell on Robben Island, to stand in front of a room of African women teaching kickboxing, to

hold a sick and beloved child in my arms, to educate countless youth on safe sex, and to stand beside a Silverback gorilla in the mountains of Rwanda. I had yet to feel the inextricable pull of a continent that, at the time, I knew very little about.

Years later, I still feel that I am at the beginning, looking out with wonder at a clear open sky full of possibilities.

Abstract

Narrating Their Own Survival: A ritical Narrative Analysis of
Resilience, Hope and Cultural Trauma in The Born Free Generation of South Africa

The generation of South African youth known as the Born Free generation are the first to be born after the abolition of apartheid in 1994. Although they were born as free individuals, they are struggling with economic disparity and social inequality. Cultural trauma theory (Alexander et al., 2004) suggests that this generation may have inherited the trauma suffered by their forebears during apartheid, a time of institutionalized discrimination, inequality, and poverty based on racial classification. This study examined the lived experiences of a particular group of Born Frees: youths who submitted expressive poetry to be published in a series of collections by the Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa. The examination was done in the context of hope theory (Snyder, 1989) and the theory of narrative therapy theory (White & Epston, 1991). A total of 74 poems were examined in terms of organizational structure and overall content. Dominant and emerging themes were explored in the poetry via three rounds of coding. Dominant narratives and counter narratives were also identified. Lastly, an analysis of the use of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives was conducted.

The major findings of the study revealed seven prominent themes in the poetry: (1) identity; (2) environment; (3) emotional expression; (4) gender; (5) heroes; (6) time; and (7) questioning. These findings indicated that the youth used their poetry as a means of expressing multiple identities. They wrote primarily from the first person singular point of view, but also employed ‘in-group’ pronouns (“we,” “our,” and “us”) to refer to their collectivity identity. The poems detailed their struggles with poverty, violence,

domestic violence and crime, but they also articulated the notion that these experiences have not defined their identities or limited their desire to thrive. Through poetry, the youths allowed themselves to be vulnerable and thus the content and language of their poems revealed a wide breadth of emotion. The implicit and explicit content of the poetry suggested that the Born Free generation have struggled in their ability to counter patriarchal customs and values that maintain unequal power distributions between genders. The poems also suggested that they have used poetry to process grief over the loss of beloved local and national heroes. When referring to time, the youth primarily wrote in the present tense, rarely referring to the past and with few references to the future. They questioned the status quo and identified themselves as leaders.

Keywords: cultural trauma theory, narrative therapy, hope theory, South Africa, Born Free generation, critical narrative analysis

Table of Contents

Dedication……..….iv
Acknowledgements……..v
Abstract of Dissertation……viii
List of Figures……...……xiii
List of Tables…….....xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction and
Overview……...…….....…..1
Statement of the Problem…….……...2
Purpose of Study……...…..4
Research Questions.…….……6
Significance of the Study…….……...6
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework…….……...10
Summary of Research Method…….....…….....12
Limitations and Delimitations.……...……...14
Context of the Study.…….……...……....17
Role of the Researcher……....…..17
Definition of Key Terms…….…...20
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature…….…..23
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.....23
Search Methods and Terms Used.....24
Narrative Therapy…….…….....25
Origins.....25
The Therapeutic Relationship.....27
The Therapeutic Process.....28
Mechanisms of Change.....30
Multicultural Implications.....31
Applicability and Current Research.....32
Limitations and Criticism.....35
Summary of Narrative Therapy Theory.....35
Hope Therapy.....36

Origins....36
Agency and Pathway Thinking....37
Measuring Hope....38
Hope, Depression, and Protective Factors....38
Alternate Theories of Hope....39
Summary of Hope Theory....41
Cultural Trauma Theory....41
Cultural Trauma Experiences of Black South Africans....42
Cultural Trauma Theory in the Literature....43
Synthesis of the Theories in the Context of the Proposed Study....45
Critical Narrative Analysis....45
Reasons for Using CNA....46
CNA in the Literature....47
CNA in the Current Study: Questions to be Asked....48
The Experience of the Born Frees....49
Education and the Born Free Generation....51
Power and Agency....52
Legacies of Apartheid....52
The First Born Free Narratives....55
Summary....55
Chapter 3: Methodology....57
Questions Guiding the Study....57
Research Design....58
Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks....58
Methodology....59
Methods of Data Collection....59
Data Analysis....61
Subjectivity Statement....63
Trustworthiness....70
Credibility....70
Transferability....73

Dependability……..…….....73
Confirmability…….…….....74
Limitations and Delimitations…….…….……75
Ethical Considerations……...…….……...78
Summary…….…….…….…....79
Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings……...……81
Theme 1: Identity……..…….81
Theme 2: Environment……..……..……...……89
Theme 3: Emotional Expression…….…….....92
Theme 4: Gender……..…….....98
Theme 5: Heroes……..……103
Theme 6: Time……..……107
Theme 7: Questioning……..……108
Summary……..……110
Chapter 5: Interpretations, Conclusions, and Recommendations…….. 111
Overview……..111
A Note on Subjectivity…….....112
Interpretations.…….....113
Research Question 1……113
Research Question 2…….....119
Research Question 3……124
Recommendations for Future Research……...140
Recommendations for Practitioners and Clinicians……....142
Limitations……...……144
Conclusions……..145
References……...…….…....147

List of Figures

Figure 1. Comparison of usage of first, second and third person pronouns……..……84

Figure 2. Comparison of usage of singular and plural first person pronouns……85

Figure 3. Comparison of usage of gender pronouns……..……99

List of Tables

Table 1. Usage of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives in first, second and third person point of view……...83

Table 2. Questions……...…109

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The National Party introduced the apartheid policy in the year 1948, thereby distinguishing South Africa as a segregated state legally structured along the variable of race. The laws supporting this policy resulted in gross social and economic inequality and systematic dehumanization. The anti-apartheid movement's struggle to bring forth independence and equality in South Africa finally came to fruition in April 1994, when the first South African democratic elections were held, ushering in Nelson Mandela's presidency, and the formal end of the apartheid regime (Puttick, 2011). Contemporary South Africa has outlawed racism and segregation with progressive policies intended to promote empowerment and change; however, racism and inequality persist to be historical and current realities for Black South Africans (Mtose, 2011). Moreover, the psychological, social, and economic aftermath of apartheid left an enduring legacy that continues to influence the generations that followed (Verwey & Quayle, 2012).

The young people of South Africa today are known as the Born Free generation, often called "Born Frees," as they were raised in a democratic society that gives them the right to elect their government (Kasrils, 2013). Born Frees have no firsthand recollection of the cultural protest and struggle that occurred during and towards the end of the apartheid regime (Mokoena, 2014); that said, the remnants of the culture persistent during the time of apartheid continue to affect the lives of the young generation (Malila, 2013). Born Frees were expected to have higher levels of education and increased access to resources as compared to previous generations of Black South Africans. It was anticipated that these advances would enable them to strengthen the young democracy of their nation. Despite these expectations, the race segregation of apartheid has been

replaced by class segregation, and multiple challenges persist among the lives of South Africa's youth.

This study was conducted with an intention to explore how Born Frees deconstruct and reconstruct multiple interwoven narratives, with a particular focus on how this generation articulates their collective and individual identities. By examining how Born Frees narrate their experiences, this study employed their words and direct expression to have a better understanding of the risks they take, the risks they resist, the challenges that enliven them, and the ways they use language as a tool of resistance. Poetry, authored by the youth of the Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, a rural township located outside of Pretoria, South Africa, revealed how Born Frees make meaning of their personal and national past, and how this meaning making process fosters their capacity and ability to envision, enact and embody their hopes for the future. The poems were analyzed to elicit the personal, historical, and institutional narratives and counter narratives of the Born Free generation, with a focus on affective responses of resilience and cultural trauma.

Statement of the Problem

South African youth make up the majority of the population and carry the highest risk burden as compared to other sub-sections of the population. According to the mid-year population estimates released by the South African government in July of 2014, there are approximately 54 million people living in South Africa. Specifically, 30% of South Africans are under the age of 15; 18.5% are between the ages of 10 to 19; and 24% are aged 15-24 (United Nations Population Fund, 2012). These statistics reveal that the nation of South Africa is largely comprised of young people. Research has shown that

these youth are particularly susceptible to challenges like unemployment (Rankin, Roberts, & Schöer, 2012), violent crime (Kaminer, Heath, Hardy, Mosdell, & Bawa, 2013), substance abuse and high-risk sexual behavior (Tibbits, Smith, Caldwell, & Flisher, 2011), sexual violence (Petersen, Bhana, McKay, 2005), suicide (Shilubane, Ruiter, Bos, 2012), teenage pregnancy (Cunningham & Boult, 1996), and HIV/AIDS (Akande, 2001; Cluver, Orkin, Gardner & Frances, 2012).

South Africa is frequently touted as the 'most unequal society in the world.' According to the Gini Index, the standard economic measure of income distribution of a nation's residents, and the most commonly used measure of inequality (World Bank, 2015), South Africa does, indeed, rank consistently as one of the most unequal societies in the world (Bhorat, 2015). Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has seen a moderate reduction in poverty levels, combined with a sharp rise in income inequality.

South Africa's economy is characterized by a growth path that is both skills-intensive and capital-intensive; as a result, a sufficient amount of low-wage jobs are not being generated and unemployment and inequality remain the reality for the majority of the population (Bhorat, 2015). One of the major reasons for this is the incompatibility of the skills being offered by the new generation versus the skills that employers need; this, in turn, can be attributed to limited access to quality education. The rigidity of the labor markets coupled with the slow growth of South Africa's economy have left many South African youth jobless. With the identification of these obstacles faced by South African youth, there must be actions taken to foster resilience and maintain social cohesion (The Institute of Risk Management South Africa, 2015).

In over two decades of transition, the communities most significantly affected by apartheid are still not receiving resources such as welfare (Gray & Lombard, 2008), mental health services (Lund, Petersen, Kleintjes, & Bhana, 2012), and general social work services in an efficient and effective manner. Lester and Glasby (2006) wrote that the need for mental health services have shown to be inadequately provided throughout South Africa, especially in rural townships. South African policy and legislation to increase services have been developed; however, the implementation of these services has generally fallen short (Lund et al., 2012; Gray et al., 2008).

There is a growing body of research related to the psychosocial needs of South African children and adults. However, there is a paucity of existing research exploring the specific needs of adolescents and young adults. This particular subset of the population is particularly vulnerable to the nation's most pervasive challenges. In order to foster the development of policies, programs, and interventions that will promote positive youth identity, we must first identify the needs of youth and examine how they make meaning of the multitude of challenges that they are confronted with in their personal, local, and national context.

Purpose of the Study

The narratives that surround the Born Frees are often situated in the language of deficit, where violence, disease, unemployment and poverty are the expected norm, and narratives of success, health, and prosperity are rare outliers. Born Frees are too often portrayed as at-risk, disempowered, and helpless victims bound by their cultural history and circumstance (Smith, 2013). The lack of narratives coming from the perspective of the Born Frees themselves preserves the politics of oppression and inequality that were at

the core of apartheid policy. Literature that relies on the language of deficit is created by discursive practices that preserve colonizing attitudes, systemic inequalities, and problem-saturated dominant narratives.

To address this significant lack of literature surrounding how Born Frees understand and experience the risks that surround them as well as the lack of literature highlighting their resilience, the purpose of this study was to critically examine how youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa use poetry to reinterpret their past as a way of articulating their present and future needs. Lund et al. (2010) claimed that the psychosocial needs of varying communities in South Africa were not being recognized because of the lack of professionals available to collect such information. Implicit in this statement is the notion that information on a community's needs must be collected by professionals. In these poems, the youth have clearly articulated their unique and collective identities and their needs. They are professionals of their own experience. The poems were analyzed to examine how the youth narrated their own survival and used poetic expression to make sense of their past, present, and future. In this study, I hoped to uncover implicit and explicit narratives, what was said and what was unsayable, as well as the history they claimed and the history they disavowed.

In addition, the poetry written by the youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre served as a rich data source for understanding the psychosocial needs and the mental health of the Born Free generation. According to Smith (2012), the legacy of apartheid has greatly contributed to the psychological stressors and challenges that persist in South African communities, particularly affecting youth. The intention for this study was to promote the psychological well-being among Born Frees by tapping into their

consciousness and bringing forth their own narratives and interpretations of their past and their directions for the future.

Research Questions

The goal of this study was to provide an answer to the main research question, which stated: How does the Born Free generation from a rural township in South Africa use poetry to interpret their past as a way of articulating their present and future needs?

In order to answer the main research question, these sub-questions were used to guide the study:

RQ1. How do historical and institutional narratives intersect with the Born Free generation's construction and reconstruction of their personal and collective identities?

RQ2. How does the Born Free generation both envision and enact their agency within the form and content of their poetry?

RQ3. How do the Born Free generation's narratives explore distributions of power?

Significance of the Study

The lived experiences of the Born Frees are different from the generations that preceded them. As the youth of South Africa, as with any nation, are at the core of its future, it is critical that their challenges, motivations, and aspirations are understood (Mokoena, 2014). This study examined the youths' poetry as a particularly honest and forthright expression of those feelings and views. The process of critical narrative analysis (CNA) (Souto-Manning, 2005) will be used to treat these poetic utterances as a narrative framework to help to understand these youths' experiences.

Very little examination of this new generation of South African youth has been done, in part because of their recent arrival on the political and social stage. South Africa, as a democratic nation, is very young and, as such, it is imperative that its young people are understood by stakeholders and authorities. Furthermore, they are the first generation to not have direct experience of apartheid but, nonetheless, they are very close to its aftereffects, as examined through the lens of the theory of cultural trauma. Thus, their experiences, feelings, and reactions are in critical need of study; they are South Africa's future (Malila, 2013; Mtose, 2011).

The significance of and the implications for this research extend far beyond the boundaries of the rural township inhabited by the South African youth who have authored these poems. The narratives that are highlighted in this dissertation can serve to influence readers on both the micro and macro-level, they can be understood as singular stories embedded within a communal, national and global context.

In the United States we are currently engaged in a national conversation about race. During the 50th anniversary commemoration of the march in Selma, President Barak Obama declared, "...this nation's racial history still casts its long shadow upon us. We know the march is not yet over. We know the race is not yet won" (Obama, 2015). Though the days of federal and state sanctioned segregation are formally over, and the laws of Jim Crow are now in history books, oppression and discrimination persist. The legacy of slavery and segregation in the United States did not leave this nation unmarred.

I urge readers to avoid thinking of South Africa as "over there," a distant, racially divided country rampant with violence and crime. The United States is not immune to systemic oppression, economic inequality, and racially motivated violence: According to

the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of October 2015, the unemployment rate of Black Americans (9.5%) is nearly double the unemployment rate of White Americans (4.5%); one in 12 Black men between the ages of 16-54 are in prison, as compared to one in 60 non-Black men in the same age range (Wolfers, Leonhardt, & Quealy, 2015); and Black teens are 21 times more likely to be killed by the police as compared to young White men (Flatow, 2015). On a daily basis, the reality of this last statistic is repeatedly demonstrated in videos continuously played in the news and on social media of police officers shooting, asphyxiating, paralyzing and beating young Black men. Both in South Africa and the United States: racism is alive and well.

In March of 2015, as I worked on this dissertation, images from the uprising in Baltimore, Maryland played on a loop on the news. "Baltimore is Burning" (Powell, 2015) read the headlines. Under a declared 'State of Emergency' the National Guard had been called in to Baltimore to "quell unrest" (Foreman & Myers, 2015) that had broken out after the funeral of Freddie Gray, a 25 year old man killed in police custody. Heavily armored vehicles and police with helmets, head-to-toe riot gear, and automatic weapons enforced a city-wide curfew. With news and cell phone cameras rolling, the police lined up side-by-side in a phalanx formation, banged their shields with their batons, then marched forward and arrested anyone who got in their way. The streets of Baltimore looked not much different than the images of the 1976 Soweto Uprising or the images that came out of South Africa during anti-apartheid protests in townships and cities across the country.

As I continued to work on this study, I was deeply immersed in images and texts detailing the atrocities during apartheid. The comparisons between the images on my TV

and the images of South Africa in the books I was reading were glaring. American youth, like the youth before them in South Africa, march and protest, resist and mobilize. They are rising up, declaring that Black lives matter.

Three months after the uprising in Baltimore, in June of 2015, as I continued to work on my dissertation, a breaking news story appeared on my TV screen: a 21 year old White man had walked into a historic African American church in Charleston, South Carolina, sat in a Bible study group for one hour, and then proceeded to murder nine people while he shouted, "You raped our women and are taking over our country" (Ellis, Payne, Perez, & Ford, 2015). In the hour after the shooter was identified, his image from a photo on Facebook was broadcast around the world. He stared blankly into the camera, brow furrowed, in a black jacket. On the right shoulder of his jacket he wore two patches. Upon first glance at the picture a chill went down my spine as I immediately recognized the iconic orange, white, and blue stripes of the flag of apartheid South Africa.

In the days following the shooting, news reports explained that the flag of apartheid has become increasingly common in the 'White Pride' and 'White Genocide' movements which have a mission to preserve White supremacy around the world (Sanburn, 2015). The legacy of apartheid is not a South African problem, it is a global problem.

The significance of this study is far reaching as it can inform public health, education, public policy, and mental health interventions in the United States and abroad. The vast knowledge bases of trauma and resilience can be strengthened by imbuing these poems with great value. Perhaps, now more than ever, we need to face the wounds of generations past and learn from and listen to our youth.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The three theories that informed the current study were hope theory, cultural trauma theory, and narrative therapy theory. A theoretical framework (narrative therapy) and a conceptual framework (cultural trauma theory and hope theory) guided this study. The theoretical framework of narrative therapy was used to establish a broader theoretical frame and rationale for the study. The conceptual framework, cultural trauma theory and hope theory, provided the lens through which I analyzed and interpreted the poetry. It is my contention that these theories were complementary and when applied provided a rigorous framework for identifying, interpreting, and understanding the implications of the personal, local, and national narratives and counter narratives embedded in the poetry of the Bokamoso youth.

The Theory of Cultural Trauma (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, & Sztompka, 2004) is an empirical model for understanding the role that trauma plays in the processes and structures of contemporary society. This theory draws upon the concept of a collective memory that implies that the past is a social construction that is shaped by the concerns of the present; essentially, the Theory of Cultural Trauma states that the past is reconstructed on a social level as means of fulfilling present needs. A collective memory and the creation of a common past have the capacity to bind and unite a group and foster a sense of belonging among its members (Trondman, 2008). Examples throughout history include slavery and the formation of African American identity (Eyerman, 2002), the Holocaust as the traumatic reference of German national identity and Jewish ethnic identity (Giesen, 2004), and the aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001 on American identity (Smelser, 2004).

According to Eyerman (2002), trauma can be viewed as a cultural process mediated by various representations that serve to reform the collective identity and memory of a given society. Cultural trauma refers to the dramatic decline in the sense of social cohesion as a result of loss in identity and meaning (Persson, 2014). According to Eyerman (2002), trauma need not be directly experienced; rather, it becomes the root from which cultural identity grows and eventual collective memory is drawn. The cultural trauma process is a crisis of identity; thus, it presents the need to find alternative voices, which can be used to reinterpret the past as a way of reconciling present and future needs. Moreover, recovering from trauma requires an openness to new forms of identification, which sometimes requires the capacity to leave other concepts or ideas behind (Alexander, 2001).

With apartheid being an obvious source of cultural trauma for the South African youth, cultural trauma theory was an appropriate conceptual framework for this study. The youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre used poetry to reconstruct narratives of trauma by presenting alternative counter-narratives of their personal, local, and national past. As such, cultural trauma theory was used to frame how the youth are affected by the collective memory of their nation and how this collective memory affects how they make meaning of their present and future.

Hope theory postulates that people are more likely to achieve their goals when they believe they have the capacity to accomplish goals and are able to articulate the steps that must be taken to achieve the desired results. This theory is colloquially expressed in the saying, “when there’s a will, there’s a way.” The poetry studied, as it was expected, contained many expressions of hope in dealing with difficult

circumstances. The poems in the study provided rich sources of narrative, which is characteristically linked to narrative therapy—that is, the narrative process has the potential to be therapeutic for the authors. It was this characteristic that makes these poems such a powerful lens for examining the lived experiences of the Born Frees.

Cultural trauma theory explained the need to heal the collective wounds remaining from the era of apartheid. Hope theory informed the view that such healing can be successful. Finally, narrative therapy theory provided the rationale upon which this study was based: that narrative, in this case poetry, can provide a cathartic outlet for the Born Frees of South Africa to express their hopes, dreams, and fears and thereby illustrate and, hopefully, help to absolve the cultural trauma that has been passed down to them by their forebears.

Summary of Research Method

The study employed poetry written by youth enrolled at Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa, a thriving center that provides youth with opportunities to engage in expressive and therapeutic arts, mentorship, life skills training, and offers financial support via education scholarships. The youth were invited to contribute to an annual poetry book published by a faculty member of the George Washington University Department of Theatre and Dance. The poems analyzed were written between 2009 and 2014. The participants for this study were those young adults between 16 to 24 years old who submitted their poems to be published. A total of 74 poems in the three most recent poetry collections were used as the primary source of data for this study.

Critical narrative analysis (CNA) (Souto-Manning, 2005), a qualitative approach, was employed, as the purpose of the study was to draw out and analyze the narratives that

existed within the poetry of the Born Frees of the Bokamoso Youth Centre. The CNA approach, a hybrid of critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis, allows researchers to attend to macro-discourse (where the narrative is part of a larger story, often of a group or culture) and micro-discourse (where the narrative is that of an individual's personal experiences) (Souto-Manning, 2014).

When used as a primary analytic method, critical discourse analysis is focused on how people use distinctive ways of talking, reading, writing, thinking, believing, valuing, acting and interacting with things and other people in order to get recognized (and recognize themselves) as a distinctive group by engaging in repeatable practices (Gee, 2009). Narrative analysis is used to explore the construction of meaning embedded within narratives (Cihodariu, 2012). Souto-Manning (2014) contended that by combining these analytic methods into a hybrid analytical approach, CNA enables researchers to analyze not simply what is said but what is said within the boundaries of a social structure.

Each of the 74 poems were entered into a computer software program known as NVivo10 (2012) by QSR which assisted in the coding and organization of the data. The poems were first examined in terms of their organizational structure and by overall content. Dominant and emerging themes were identified within the poetry via three rounds of coding: initial/open coding, focused coding/category development, and, lastly, axial/thematic coding. Once the coding was completed, there were four main components to the critical narrative analysis: (1) I first examined the text in relation to how language was used to construct individual and collective identities; (2) I identified variability and inconsistencies of meaning in the constructions and the assumptions they revealed; (3) I then highlighted the implications of a particular account, to examine what the discourse

achieved; and (4) I identified both implicit and explicit narratives embedded within the poems.

The final step of the analysis examined recurring word choices, specifically the use of pronouns and possessive adjectives. Word counts of the pronouns and possessives adjectives used across all 74 poems were tallied and percentages were calculated.

Limitations and Delimitations

This research was bound by a range of limitations and delimitations. Limitations are defined as shortcomings, influences, or conditions that weakened the study, but could not be controlled by the researcher. Delimitations were identified as choices that I consciously made in an effort to delineate the boundaries of the investigation and narrow the scope of the study.

Limitations. The primary limitation of this research was the lack of access to the demographic and background information of the authors of the poems. I did not have access to the age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, psychosocial, or psychological histories of the authors. The poems selected for the annual poetry collections also may not be representative of all the youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Life Centre, as the sample was limited to only youth who submitted poetry for annually published poetry books. The knowledge that the poems would be published may have been a deterrent for youth who did not feel comfortable with other people reading their poems. The publication of the poems may have also limited their content, as the authors may have been hesitant to discuss revealing or taboo topics out of fear of judgment or reproach from their peers, Bokamoso staff members, family, friends, or other potential readers. It is possible that the experiences of those who chose to

express themselves in this public fashion may differ significantly from those of the youth population in general.

The poetry also represented only the experiences of youth who possessed the fluency and skill to express themselves poetically using English, one of 11 official languages in South Africa. The word choice, tone, and content of the poetry may have been dependent on the authors' proficiency in writing and ability express and communicate in English.

Lastly, I did not have access to information regarding how long the participants were enrolled in Bokamoso at the time that they wrote their poems. As a result, the youth may have had a variety of different levels of familiarity with and exposure to poetry as an expressive and therapeutic art form depending on how long they had been enrolled and participating in the Bokamoso Youth Centre curriculum.

Delimitations. To narrow the scope of the study, I specifically selected poems written by youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre in the most recent five year period, 2009 to 2014. The choice to focus on the three most recent collections of poetry reflected a desire to produce a study that could contribute to a better understanding of the current needs of the Born Free generation. As a result of this delimitation, the poems cannot be considered representative of youth who did not submit their poems, who were not enrolled in the Bokamoso Life Centre, who were not residents of Winterveldt, urban youth, or youth living outside of South Africa. Also, as a result of the decision to only analyze poems written in the most recent five year time period, the poetry does not reflect the full breadth of the post-apartheid years, from 1994 to the present day. It is important to also note that it could be argued that the post-apartheid era began upon Mandela's

release from prison in 1990, thus expanding the broad range of youth and young adults that could be categorized as part of the Born Free generation.

The Born Free generation is quite extensive, as such, the reported experiences of one age group might be considerably different from another age group within this generation. I consciously made no attempt to divide the study population into age groups within the existing category of Born Free. This choice was made in an effort to focus the investigation on the Born Frees' collective (not age-based) identity and experience. As such, the poems, written by youth ages 16 to 24, reflected varying levels of maturity and development.

I did not choose to employ additional methods of data collection such as psychological assessments, surveys, interviews, or observations, but rather chose to study only the form, content and language of the poetry. I made no attempt to identify the authors of the poems for interviews or further questioning as my focus for the study was specifically based on how the youth communicated identity, expression, experience and emotion through their poetry.

The poems also represented only the experiences of those youths who have attained sufficient maturity and skill to express themselves in poetry. The experiences of those who could not or chose not to write poetry were doubtless significant and meaningful but could not be examined in the context of this study.

When considering the gender of the authors, I could have chosen to infer gender by making assumptions based on the the authors' first names. However, I consciously chose not to presume that participants' first names were reflective of their gender identity, and chose to analyze the poems without any identifying information including

the name of the authors. As a result of this decision, the form and content of the language could not be compared and contrasted based on the authors' gender. My analysis included how males and females are referred to and depicted in the poetry, but it is important to note that these findings were based on the content of the poems, not on the gender of the authors.

Context of the Study

Role of the Researcher

In the summer of 2014, I traveled to Winterveldt, South Africa with the George Washington University (GWU) Art Therapy Graduate Program. This program was a part of my coursework in GWU's Counseling Ph.D. Program. Having completed a Masters of Art in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, I had spent the previous five academic years deeply ensconced in the theory and practice of psychotherapy. Over time, the scope of my studies and clinical practice began to focus on narrative approaches to therapy specifically within sub-Saharan contexts. The opportunity to travel to South Africa for further training and experience was a welcome opportunity for professional and personal development.

The bus crawled up the rocky dirt road to the bright orange building. I walked slowly down steep steps and onto the rust-red Winterveldt earth. Within seconds, jubilation erupted. Hugs everywhere. The youth shouted, "Hello! How are you?! Welcome!" Soon the singing began. I was absolutely enthralled with the young men and women of Bokamoso: beautiful, strong voices, with light emanating from every morsel of their beings. We sang. We danced. We clapped. In that moment we weren't strangers, we were a family, brothers and sisters, immediately bonded by song and laughter and joy.

Each morning began with what the youth referred to as “morning circle.” All of the youth, staff, and visitors gathered together in the main hall and stood in a large circle. Singing began organically. Rich, raw harmonies filled the room. Solos and group songs evolved into joyful dancing followed by the reading of poems written by the youth. One by one, the youth would take one step forward and read their words off of crinkled papers in withered notebooks. Some read with gusto, others read with shaky hands and wavering voices. Regardless of the prowess of their performance, the room exploded with applause after each and every poem. I was struck by how this circle fostered such a deeply communicated trust among all who participated. It became clear to me that the circle provided an invitation to take risks and to ask questions; it facilitated a powerful transmission of love leaving all involved, myself included, feeling connected to each other and dedicated to feeling, learning, and healing together. This visceral sensation of collectivity was unlike anything I had ever experienced.

I have approached this work without any pretense of objectivity. I have been deeply immersed in the culture of Bokamoso since I stepped off the bus on that fateful first day in 2014. Over the course of about three weeks, I conducted daily art therapy groups and engaged in clinical supervision with my colleagues and professor. In addition to my more formal obligations, I also seized the opportunity to engage in less formal interactions. The youth guided me on walks through Winterveldt. Together we visited some of their homes, met some of their family members, went to a Sunday morning church service, attended a rites of passage ceremony for local boys, played countless games, perfected our cartwheels, and learned songs and dances in the courtyard. By the

time I left South Africa I felt that I earned the reputation among the youth as a trusted therapist and, perhaps, more importantly, as a trusted mentor and friend.

Over the course of the last seven years, I have worked intermittently in various community health settings in South, East, West, and North Africa. Each experience has been challenging and rewarding, both heart-building and soul-mending. What was unique to my experience at Bokamoso was my lingering curiosity as to how and why these youth were seemingly able to consciously resist the many challenges that pervade their generation. Each morning I heard in their poems their hopes and fears and the way they made meaning of their personal and collective past. By individually writing the poems and then collectively sharing their words with each other, the youth narrated their own survival and facilitated their mutual healing.

Upon returning to the United States, I became deeply dedicated to gaining a better understanding of how and why the Bokamoso Youth Centre has been effective in the lives of so many youth. In part, I was fascinated by the youths' experience but also I was very aware of how profoundly I felt changed after being there for only a few short weeks. In the way of a detective, I began to explore the theatre, art, and poetry of the youth, determined to find some clue explaining the program's efficacy. In October of 2014, I was asked to assist with the publication of the annual collection of poetry to be published in January 2015. In this capacity, I transferred the poems from the youths' handwriting to text in Microsoft Word and formatted the poems to create a booklet-style document that would later be submitted for publication.

Through this opportunity to deeply engage with the poems, I slowly came to the realization that the words of the poetry created an intricate handwritten map navigating

the way to a deeper understanding of the youth and their life experiences. The resounding message that I felt each time I interacted with the poetry was that these youth are the experts of their own experience. As a clinician, researcher, and advocate, I have come to believe that the way I can best serve these youth is to listen to their words without imposing assumptions or judgment and, in doing so, honoring their poems as individual acts of liberation.

Definitions of Key Terms

Apartheid. A policy introduced to South Africa by the National Party in 1948 (Puttick, 2011), deeply rooted in the patterns of racial oppression developed systematically during centuries of colonial rule (Foster, 2012, p.16). Under apartheid, all forms of discrimination against Black South Africans were legalized. Laws mandated forced removals, demolition of homes, economic exclusion through reserving jobs for Whites, inferior education, pass laws, racial classification, and the total separation of Blacks and Whites in public and in private (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003, p. 144). Gobodo-Madikizela (2003) detailed the brutality of this time period:

> The apartheid regime instituted state-orchestrated violence including 'security' police squads conducting covert operations, murder squads, and teams of scientists skilled in biological warfare. During this time there was an increase in widespread torture by security police, the disappearance of political activists, mass killings, and the mysterious deaths of detainees and others, which usually occurred under direct instruction of, or with full knowledge of police (p. 1).

Anti-apartheid movement. A movement that grew from the ongoing resistance efforts within South Africa and the global community as a means of putting an end to the

oppressive policies, racially motivated violence, and rampant inequality that existed in South Africa during the period of apartheid (Zukas, 2007).

Bokamoso Youth Centre. A community youth center that offers programs in expressive and therapeutic arts, mentorship, life skills training, and financial support for education via scholarships. The center was founded in Winterveldt, South Africa in 1999 by South Africans Steven and Mary Anne Carpenter (Bokamoso Youth Foundation, n.d.).

Born Free generation. The young people of South Africa who were born nearing the end of or after the existence of apartheid (Kasrils, 2013).

Collective memory. How the present generation reconstructs their past in a way that reconciles with present beliefs; it entails the incorporation of practices and traditions (Anteby & Molnár, 2012).

Cultural trauma. A dramatic loss of a sense of identity which tears the social fabric of a group of people. Trauma need not be directly experienced by a member of society; rather, it has enduring effects on individual and collective consciousness (Eyerman, 2002).

Discourses. Ways in which people use distinctive ways of talking, reading, writing, thinking, believing, valuing, acting and interacting with things and other people in order to get recognized (and recognize themselves) as a distinctive group by engaging in repeatable practices (Gee, 2009).

Mental health. Endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a universal human right and a globally important goal for health care systems; it constitutes 14% of the global burden of disease, and most of the people affected, almost 75%, reside

in low-income countries and do not have access to treatment that they need (Singh, 2015).

Narratives. An important medium for fixing and understanding the meaning of past events as well as the cultural and social construction of reality; narratives are often used in the social sciences when focusing on the construction of meaning (Cihodariu, 2012).

Poetry. Evokes emotions and provokes ideas regarding complex social issues; it is a vehicle for expression and a way of acquiring new concepts (Hughes, 2007).

Racism. The belief that all members of a particular race have features, abilities, or qualities which distinguish it as either superior or inferior to another race or sets of races (Hoyt, 2012).

Social cohesion. A society's capacity to ensure each of its members' well-being, avoid polarization, and minimize the gaps between members (Browne, 2013).

Social inequality. Differences in income, resources, status, and power within societies, which are often maintained by people in positions of power through the introduction of institutions and social practices (Warwick-Booth, 2013).

Township. Refers to underdeveloped urban and rural residential areas that were created as enclaves of cheap labor supply for the comfort of the White settler population (Mngxitama, 2013). During the existence of apartheid, Black and Colored South Africans were forcefully removed from their homes and required to live within the confines of townships, which were usually situated on the peripheries of cities and towns (Sekhampu, 2013). Upon threat of arrest and imprisonment, all Black South Africans over the age of 16 were forced to carry 'pass books' (a passport-like identifying document) when outside

of the townships in which they lived. Townships were often designed with only one entry and one exit so that the population could be easily controlled and monitored (Mngxitama, 2013).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study. It included an explanation of the study problem, its purpose, and significance. A brief overview of the proposed methodology and research questions was given. The following chapter presents the literature review that was used to provide theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents an overview of the literature relevant to the study topic and the research questions. Search strategies and search terms used are explained. The review examines broad related topics, reviews the theoretical framework, and explores specific concepts related to the study.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study examined the multiple narratives revealed in poetry written by youth from a rural township in post-apartheid South Africa. I identified, interpreted, and explored the implications of these narratives by using narrative therapy theory (White and Epston, 1991) as the theoretical framework (the rationale for the research), and hope theory (Snyder, 1989) and cultural trauma theory (Alexander et al., 2004) as the conceptual framework (the lens through which I analyzed and interpreted the data). Together, these three theories provided a culturally competent guide for the analysis and discussion of the identified narratives.

Search Methods and Terms Used

In building the literature review, several scholarly databases were used. While it is often customary to limit such searches to the prior five years, this range was broadened for two reasons: a) a relative paucity of literature dealing with the topics to be examined during the last five years preceding this study (2011-2015), and b) the fact that many of the seminal works on the three theories discussed below were written and published in the early 2000s.

Search terms used were narrative therapy, hope theory, cultural trauma theory, Born Free, apartheid, poetry, narrative, and trauma theory. Most such searches were

executed using combinations of the latter five terms along with one or more of the three theories.

Narrative Therapy

Origins

Narrative approaches to psychotherapy are based on a "philosophical position that human lives are inherently narrative in form: people constitute and are constituted by the stories that they live and the stories that they tell" (as cited by Lee, 1995, p. 43). The narrative approach presents a model of therapy as a life-story modification process (Howard, 1989). The person is regarded as an author, a storyteller, or a commentator who "proceeds through life with the fundamental task of making sense of his or her existence" (Howard, 1989, p. 199).

Storytelling occupies a natural role in African culture. Tales and folklore have been the traditional way of passing on cultural values to the next generation. The conceptual framework of narrative therapy is embedded in African mores as within this culture, storytelling is an age-old healing tradition.

Modernism presumes that singular essences of objects in the material universe can be either accurately or inaccurately represented by immaterial humans (Hansen, 2010). Contrastingly, post-modernism is inherently anti-essentialist as it presumes that there is no correct essence of things and no singular truth. Postmodern paradigms propose the notion that multiple perspectives co-exist, an idea that laid the framework for social constructivism. Social constructivists conceive of the self as being continually constructed by social interactions and that identity shifts in relation to the relational context in which a person is presently immersed (Hansen, 2010). Therapeutic

perspectives within a constructivist worldview stress the client's reality without disputing whether or not it is accurate or rational, as reality is accepted as entirely subjective (Corey, 2005). The use of language in stories creates meaning and each story is true for the person telling it.

Michel Foucault asserted that the power of the dominant narrative in a society (i.e. the belief system that maintains the status quo) pervades all aspects of life and subjugates individuals in the society through the “normalizing” power of language (Walsh & McGraw, 2002). Narrative therapy is based on Foucault's belief that when dominant narratives remain unquestioned, individuals play a role in their own oppression. Narrative is used to empower individuals to reject the dominant narratives that oppress them.

Narrative therapy proposes a dramatic, postmodern perspective shift from traditional methods of therapy (Boroff, 2009). David Epston and Michael White (1991) established narrative therapy as a means of using the metaphor of story to help clients live fuller (Boroff, 2009). Michael White (1992) believed that therapy is, in part, a re-establishment of personal agency from the oppression of external problems and the dominant stories of larger systems. This theory posits that we live our lives by the stories we tell about ourselves and that others tell about us (Corey, 2005). These stories, in essence, "construct and constitute" our sense of self. Baroff (2009) declares that narrative work is much more than a series of techniques; it is a perspective, a way of thinking.

The poems examined in the study were a rich source of narrative, which, in my view, can be characteristically linked to narrative therapy—that is, these poetic expressions were therapeutic for the authors. It is this characteristic that made these

poems such a powerful lens for examining the lived experiences of the Born Frees.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Terms such as “assessment” and “diagnosis” are not employed in narrative therapy as they convey a pejorative and “absolute knowledge” connotation (Walsh & McGraw, 2002). Collaboration between client and counselor is considered more important than assessment. As narrative therapists listen to the client's story, they stay carefully attuned to details that provide evidence of the client's willingness to challenge oppression. This perspective moves away from the view that some underlying structure or pathology is the cause of one's problem (Lee, 1995). Differing from psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral and other more traditional theories, narrative therapy characterizes client problems as external and does not place clinicians in a position of power or privileged authority (Boroff, 2009).

Narrative therapists disavow the role of expert (Corey, 2005). They prefer a more collaborative, consultative stance. Contrary to the notion of the therapist as all-knowing, clients are viewed as experts of their own lives. Narrative therapists wholeheartedly reject the view of clients as pathologized victims and are sensitive to the power dynamics that can be implicit in the therapist/client dyad.

Narrative therapy is greatly influenced by the work of Carl Rogers. Rogers' (1961) core conditions of unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence are essential in narrative therapy. Therapists attend to clients with a "not knowing" stance, i.e. they do not assume to know what the client is thinking or feeling. It is of vital importance that narrative therapists do not impose their values on the client but rather explore the client's frame of reference without interpretation or judgment.

The Therapeutic Process

Narrative therapy does not employ systematic interventions or rigid techniques. For narrative therapists, questions are the agent of change in the work, generating experience for the client rather than information for the therapist (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Baroff (2009) stated that narrative therapists work with clients to co-author new and preferred narratives, with the therapists asking questions that "excavate buried accounts of clients' identities" (p. 9).

Within the framework of narrative therapy, people seek therapy when their life stories become ineffective, necessitating editing or modification (Neimeyer, 1993). However, at the start of therapy, most clients may not yet have a sense of their “life story” and, thus, are not yet able articulate how the narration of their story may or may not be serving them. Initial sessions often begin with dialogue between counselor and client exploring why the client is seeking help, with a specific focus on identifying and describing what may be impairing the client or decreasing their quality of life. When entering therapy, clients often believe that something is wrong with them, that they or something about them is problematic (Carey & Russel, 2002). Once the client has verbally articulated the problem or problems that are causing them distress, the focus of the work then shifts to the externalization of the problem.

Externalization. White (1989) identified the concept of externalization to concretize his belief that “It's not the person who is the problem, it's the problem that is the problem” (p. 34). Externalization is defined as "an approach to therapy that encourages persons to objectify and, at times, to personify the problems that they experience as oppressive" (White & Epston, 1990, p. 38). Externalization is the process

of separating oneself from the problem, i.e., dismantling clients' beliefs that a problem is a defining part of their identity. Problems are phrased as metaphorical opponents, capable of being defeated (Lee, 1995). The goal of externalization is for the clients to consider the problem external rather than internal.

To facilitate externalization, a narrative therapist may ask something like, "If we were to give this problem a name, what would we call it?" (Patterson, 1998). Externalizing the problem is the centerpiece of narrative therapy as it establishes the separation between oneself and the problem. Problem names can be descriptive, like "The Endless Tears" or "The Rage." Sometimes it can be helpful to create an anthropomorphic name like "The Lonely Lion," or a metaphorical or symbolic name like "The Shattered Statue." For example, if a client has identified him/herself as 'worthless,' this feeling can be externalized as "The Worthlessness." Conversations between the therapist and client may then shed light on how "The Worthlessness" has come to dominate the client's life. Ultimately, the client would begin to feel empowered to reclaim their life (Carey & Russel, 2002).

One of the most significant aspects of externalising conversations, is that within them, broader considerations can also be taken into account. When it is understood that people's relationships with problems are shaped by history and culture, it is possible to explore how gender, race, culture, sexuality, class and other relations of power have influenced the construction of the problem (Carey & Russel, 2002). Using the example above, feelings of worthlessness may have been internalized by the client as a result of dominant narratives within the society in which they live. Once the client begins to be able to understand the problem as outside of themselves, this shift in thought can

facilitate a new relationship with the problem and the client can feel empowered to reject the dominant narrative.

Mapping the influence of the problem. Mapping the influence of the problem is an exploration of how the client makes meaning of the presenting problem. A timeline is used to trace the problem from when it first started to the present. White and Epson (1990) used the term "sparkling moments" to describe an instance where a client sees hope for a different life. A turning point occurs in the therapy when a client makes a conscious choice to create an alternative story. The development of alternative stories or narratives is an enactment of ultimate hope (White and Epson, 1990). Once clients have identified the problem, they then begin to "re-write" their own life stories. This "re-writing" is often done through verbal conversation with the therapist. The therapist asks the client to envision and describe a future without the problem.

Re-membering. Using the narrative process of "re-membering," clients are provided with an opportunity to consider significant figures, either still in their life or no longer present, who might support the alternative emerging story (White, 2007, p. 129). Once these figures are honored with "membership" in the person's "club of life" (Payne, 2006, p. 173), the client is invited to speculate about what this significant figure would think or say about the emerging story. They can also dismiss people from their "club of life" if the relationship is damaging or becoming a detriment to their well-being.

Mechanisms of Change and Evaluation

The process of change is facilitated but not directed by the therapist. Instead of "curing" or "correcting" a problem, narrative therapists foster the creation of alternative stories in which people can perform new meanings (Lee, 1995). In traditional models of

therapy questions are used solely to gather information, narrative therapists believe that questions alone can be the agents of change (Boroff, 2009). The client engenders the change process, not the therapist. Change is made possible by separating people from their oppressive, dominant stories and empowering them to engage in both generating and applying counter narratives or alternative stories (Lee, 1995).

There are no prescribed methods for evaluating narrative therapy. White (1991) viewed patient outcomes through the lens of *equifinality*, the concept that multiple outcomes of an event are potentially present and that no one is any more correct than another. At its core, narrative therapy is a constructivist therapy as it is based on the idea that there are no essential truths (Walsh & McGraw, 2002).

Multicultural Implications

Narrative approaches recognize a fundamental non-comparability in diverse views and particulars in one's experience. No one view or frame of understanding is superior to other views (Lee, 1995). This assumption is in direct contrast to some of the major theories of psychotherapy that privilege Western, specifically European and American, worldviews, and pathologize non-Western, collectivist values. Narrative therapy provides clients with the space to explore their beliefs and life stories within the framework of their own cultures. The therapist is not to impose his or her own values or belief systems on the client. This type of therapy helps the client to get a better understanding of how social, cultural, or political systems and practices may oppress them.

The limitations inherent in this approach relate to the egalitarian positioning of client and counselor. Some cultures prefer a directive therapist to work from a more authoritarian/expert point of view. The non-directive way in which a narrative therapist

works may foster a lack of confidence in the therapist by clients of certain cultures. Despite this limitation, narrative therapists can work with a client to understand the power dynamics of their relationship and perhaps this conversation can be a way to come to understand the client's relationship to authority.

Narrative therapy in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of research related to narrative therapy in sub-Saharan Africa is mostly focused on mental health interventions for people with HIV/AIDS. Nwoye (2007) posits that when people come for counseling with HIV diagnosis, they have a story to tell and healing will come if they are given the space to tell their story. In a study of a narrative therapeutic approach implemented in South Africa, Zaleen et al. (2010) found that storytelling projects in rural areas of South Africa are vital, because this form of expression seems to suit the local context better than nationwide health educational programs, which are normally disseminated through mass education.

Simbayi et al's (2007) study suggested that HIV/AIDS is perhaps the most stigmatized medical condition in the world. The authors found that internalized AIDS stigmas have the potential for adverse behavioral and emotional ramifications, including not seeking treatment and care services. This study is one of only a few research projects that specifically focused on the effects of the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Narrative therapy provides HIV positive clients the opportunity to re-author their lives and re-frame the stigma of HIV as an external source of oppression that can be challenged and ultimately conquered. A database search including the terms "narrative therapy" and "Africa" revealed the concepts outlined in the following section.

Applicability and Current Research

In a review of the research on narrative approaches, Etchison and Kleist (2000) noted that although there has been a high level of interest in narrative therapies, a minimal amount of research has been conducted. Narrative therapy does not lend itself to quantitative research, nor is it easily testable in a randomized control trial. A qualitative research approach is more congruent with this style of therapy, as it seeks to understand the lived experience of participants. There are fewer researchers comprehensively trained in qualitative research methods than researchers trained in quantitative methods. Case examples and anecdotal support are often used to support narrative therapy as a viable therapeutic modality. These forms of evidence, however, do not meet the standards that the American Psychological Association (APA) has set for best practices. Narrative therapy research is often criticized for highlighting only success stories (Walsh & McGraw, 2002).

Despite the fact that narrative therapy has not (and potentially cannot) be empirically proven as an effective treatment modality, an increasing number of clinical studies that utilize storytelling and narrative with trauma survivors have been published (Fry & Barker, 2002; Meyer-Weitz & Sliep, 2005; Reisner, 2002). Producing the trauma narrative is a component of many cognitive-behavioral forms of intervention (as cited by Foa et al., 2008) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is widely accepted as the most efficacious treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The uses of journaling, writing, and storytelling are common narrative techniques used in the treatment of PTSD. These narrative forms are used as ways to elicit clients' narratives of their traumatic experiences, often termed "re-storying."

Often, the concluding stage of narrative therapy involves having clients share their re-authored stories with an audience or "outsider witness." This sharing experience can be both formal or informal and performative or non-performative in nature. For example, theater and dance performance by trauma victims, exhibitions of victim's artworks, and public reading of victim's narratives serve to educate the public about trauma, destigmatize the condition of PTSD, and offer the victims themselves an avenue for reintegration into society (Jones, 1997; Losi et al., 2002; Mapp & Kosch, 2004). However, studies of the effectiveness of these narrative approaches do not support the narrative therapy framework. Instead, studies indicate that the effectiveness of these techniques is due to the use of empirically supported therapeutic factors of imaginal exposure, cognitive/narrative restructuring, stress management skills, resilience enhancement, and testimonial methods (Foa et al., 2008).

Despite the range of past applications of narrative therapy, the limited breadth of research on narrative approaches precludes statements from being made about the efficacy of narrative therapy in treating specific problems (Etchison & Kleist, 2000). However, it should be noted that narrative therapy has been used with many different populations and employed to treat many different problems. Narrative work has been applied in family therapy (Walsh & McGraw, 2002) and in group therapy. Problems and populations treated with narrative therapy include the prevention of illness-related stress disorder (Petersen, et. al, 2005), adolescents and adults with language-literacy deficits (Wolter, DiLollo, & Apel, 2006), women (Lee, 1997), adolescents with Asperger's disorder (Cashin, 2008), female body image (Duba, Kindsvatter & Priddy, 2010),

trauma treatment for Latina survivors of domestic violence (Murcia, 2009), and addictions (Duvall & Beres, 2011).

Limitations and Criticism

Minuchin (1998) criticized narrative therapy's attempt to work with clients in a collaborative fashion without acknowledging the fact that it is impossible for the therapist not to bring some personal opinions and biases into the therapy session. Some professionals in the field argue that narrative therapy does not take into account the variety of factors that may influence the client such as material influences, unemployment, poor living conditions, and abusive relationships (Doherty, 1991). In this same vein, Fish (1993) claims that although narrative therapy does well in enabling clients to change their narrative from problem-focused to a more positive view, it does little to address the cultural discourse within which their story is present.

These criticisms all point to contradictions within the theoretical framework of narrative therapy. Doan (1998) stated that narrative therapy holds the social constructionist view that there are no absolute truths, only points of view. However, in narrative therapy, the voices of clients are considered privileged and other theories are not given equal respect. In addition, Minuchin (1998) wrote that narrative therapy neglects the family and shifts the focus of the therapy to the deconstruction of the broader dominant culture, thereby marginalizing the importance of family experience.

Summary of Narrative Therapy Theory

In this section, I have presented a brief overview of the theoretical framework of narrative therapy as well as how the approach is used in practice. I have explored the applicability and multicultural implications of narrative therapy. Finally, I have presented

the limitations and criticisms of this therapeutic modality. I propose the notion that narrative therapy could be an effective therapeutic approach for South African youth as storytelling is embedded in African traditions. In the next section, I will explore Hope Theory (Snyder, 1991) and ultimately, I will present a rationale for employing an integration of narrative, hope, and cultural trauma theores as a critical lens for examining the poetry.

Hope Theory

Origins

Over the course of the last two and a half decades, Hope Theory (Snyder, 1989) has emerged as a strength-based construct originally derived from the field of positive psychology. Psychologist Martin Seligman is often singled out as the father of positive psychology. As President of the American Psychological Association (APA), Seligman (1998) argued that the field of psychology had been "sidetracked" by the study of weakness and damage, and a shift was needed to the study of strength and virtue. Seligman (1998) believed that psychology had turned into a victimology whereby therapists viewed the human being as essentially passive. Mental illness was treated within a theoretical framework of "repairing damaged habits, damaged drives, damaged childhoods and damaged brains" (p.2).

Seligman (1998) began a major shift in the field away from pathology, and towards a systematic study of the competence of individuals. He ushered in a new era in psychology whereby clinicians and researchers began to focus on "not just what is broken but in nurturing what is best within ourselves" (Seligman, 1998, p.2). He wrote, "We have discovered that there is a set of human strengths that act as buffers against mental

illness including: courage, optimism, interpersonal skill, work ethic, hope, honesty, and perseverance ” (Seligman, 1998, p.2).

In the mid-1980s, C.R. Snyder, a clinical psychologist, had been researching how and why people make excuses when they make a mistake or fail to perform to satisfactory standards. While in discussion with the research participants after the excuse experiments, Snyder (2002a) noticed that several participants commented on their desire to reach out for more positive goals. These interchanges led to Snyder’s (1989) investigation of hope as the “other side” of the excusing” process” (Snyder, 2002a, p.249).

By 1994, Snyder had solidified a theoretical conceptualization to explain hope as a dynamic cognitive motivational system. His two-prong system extended beyond the common definition of hope as an emotion (Snyder, 1994). Hope Theory (Snyder, 1994) suggested that in order for people to attain a goal, they must view themselves as agents capable of developing and implementing the actions necessary for their specific goal pursuit (Snyder et al., 2002b). Snyder challenged the colloquial statement, “If there’s a will, there’s a way” by delineating the unique cognitive processes that are compulsory for goal attainment. He explored the notion that some people may have “the will” but lack “the way.” In these cases, Snyder suggested that without the capacity for deciphering and implementing strategies an individual will be unable to create high hope cognitions and, therefore, will be incapable of achieving the desired goal.

Agency and Pathway Thinking

According to Snyder’s (1989) theory, hope reflects individuals' perceptions regarding their capacities to clearly conceptualize goals, develop the specific strategies to

reach those goals (pathway thinking) and initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies (agency thinking) (Snyder et al., 2003). Agency thinking, the motivational component of hope, reflects the cognitive drive that translates into a "can do" attitude. People with high levels of agency thinking use self-talk agency phrases such as “I can do this” and “I will not be stopped” (Snyder, 2002a). High-level pathway thinkers are able to conceptualize various strategies to reach goals and plan for alternate routes in the event that they come across barriers to achieving their goals along the way (Snyder et al., 2002b). Although these two types of thinking, pathway and agency, are reciprocal, additive, and positively related, it is important to note that they are not synonymous (Snyder et al., 2002b).

Measuring Hope

Snyder et al.’s (1991) Hope Scale was developed with the intention of creating a measurement tool that could reliably and validly assess an individual’s level of hope. The Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991) measures hope in adolescents (and adults) age 15 and higher. Having been used with a wide range of samples, the Hope Scale has exhibited acceptable internal consistency (overall alphas from .74 to .88; agency alphas of .70 to .84; and pathways alphas of .63 to .86; test-retest reliabilities ranging from .5 for three weeks to .82 for ten weeks; and concurrent and discriminant validities (Snyder et al., 1991).

Hope, Depression, and Protective Factors

Researchers reported that lower hope predicts more depressive symptoms (Kwon, 2000), and it does so independently of appraisals and other coping strategies (Chang & DeSimone, 2001). Shorey and Snyder (2001) found that the majority of people classified

as having secure attachment had high levels of hope, and those with preoccupied and fearful styles were low in hope; more than half of persons classified as dismissing also had high hope. Correlational findings indicate that a child's higher hopeful thinking is positively associated with perceived competence and self-esteem and negatively associated with symptoms of depression (Snyder, Hoza et al., 1997). In this same vein, Shorey (2006) suggested that high-hope people maximize mental health benefits from their achievement-related successes by remaining socially invested; they have well-developed social support networks, take pleasure in getting to know others, are socially competent, and express interest in other people's goals.

Alternate Theories of Hope

In response to Snyder's argument that hope is a two-part cognitive motivational system, researchers have challenged the notion that hope is multidimensional, comprised of both agency and pathway thinking (Stotland, 1989; Tong, Frederickson, Weining & Zi Xing, 2010; Farran, Herth & Popovich, 1995; McGreer, 2004). In 1989, Stotland published the first overview of the psychology of hope. This early work proposed that an expectation of a goal outcome was a vital component of hopefulness. Stotland's theory (1969) is in line with Snyder's (1989) agency-thinking component, but does not include a goal execution (or pathway thinking) module. In Tong et al.'s (2010) study, it was found that people who believe that a specific goal can potentially be attained are likely to feel more hopeful regardless of whether or not they believe that they can personally attain it.

A criticism that has been levied against hope theory is in regard to Snyder's lack of domain specificity. A goal, as defined by Snyder et al. (2003) can be anything that an individual desires to experience, create, get, do, or become, i.e., a goal may be a lifelong

pursuit or it may be an everyday goal (Snyder et al., 2003). Some researchers have criticized Snyder's (1994) theory for not taking into consideration the importance of the nature of the type of goals an individual sets forth to attain (Shorey et al., 2012). For example, if a gang member had high levels of pathway and agency thinking and the goal of shooting a rival gang member, according to Snyder's (1994) theory, this person would be categorized as having high levels of hope. Snyder (2002a) refuted this argument by stating that conceptualizing hope as a virtue limits hope's utility in explaining how people pursue goals in their daily lives. Hope, Synder argues, should be value-neutral.

Scheier and Carver's (1985) theory of optimism places the emphasis on outcome expectancies and less on the cognitive processes occurring in the process of goal attainment. This theory defines optimism as a generalized expectancy that good things will happen (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Snyder (1995) criticized a unidimensional view of optimism, suggesting that while an optimist may believe that things will turn out as he or she wants them to, they may or may not possess the pathways necessary to pursue and acquire the goals.

Catlin, Chon, and Averill (1990) assert that social norms are established in a given societal context and, therefore, hope cannot be understood as a universal, cross-cultural theoretical construct. This social constructionist perspective challenges the assumption that hope is understood similarly in all cultures. Using survey research, the researchers examined how both Americans and Koreans describe hope. Their findings suggested that hope is a social construction that varies according to an individual's cultural context and social location.

Summary of Hope Theory

In this section, I have presented a brief overview of the theoretical origins and framework of Hope Theory (Snyder, 1989). I have explored Snyder's (1989) concept of hope as a two part cognitive process consisting of agency thinking, the motivational component of hope, and pathway thinking, the strategic conceptualization component of hope. Finally, I have presented limitations and criticisms of hope theory and reviewed alternate theories of hope. In the next section, I will explore Cultural Trauma Theory (Alexander et al., 2004; Eyerman, 2002) and ultimately, I will present a rationale for employing an integration of all three theories as a critical lens for examining the poetry.

Cultural Trauma Theory

Cultural trauma theory posits that traumatic experiences, if significant and widespread enough in a culture, can affect even those individuals who have not directly experienced said trauma (Alexander et al., 2004; Eyerman, 2002). Such individuals often include the children and grandchildren of those who directly experienced the trauma; moreover, according to the theory, the inherited trauma affects every member of the culture in some way.

In the specific case of the Black South African youth whose poetic works are to be examined in this study, the shared cultural trauma is apartheid and its lingering effects on South African society (Mokoena, 2014). The theory of cultural trauma states that while the effect of cultural trauma across the generations may lessen over time and figurative distance from the traumatizing events, such modulation occurs relatively slowly and to a lesser degree than one might estimate (Alexander et al., 2004).

Cultural Trauma Experiences of Black South Africans

For generations, Black inhabitants of South Africa were dominated and oppressed by a small White minority, descendants of colonizers in the late 19th century (Verwey & Quayle, 2012; Zukas, 2007). While apartheid has ended, its effects persist in the form of income inequality, poverty, and racism (Kasrils, 2013; Mtose, 2011).

South Africa is still divided into distinct social and ethnic groups: Whites, Coloreds, and Blacks. White South Africans are comprised of individuals of Dutch, German, French Huguenot, English and other European descent. Culturally and linguistically they are divided into those who speak Afrikaans (generally people of Dutch decent) and people who speak English. Colored South Africans include people of mixed racial heritage, with a variety of lineage including Malay (descendants of the historic slave trade that brought Asians to South Africa), the indigenous Khoi community, and the Bantu people; additionally, Colored South Africans may have Middle Eastern, Indian other Asian lineage (McKaiser, 2012; and Henrard, 2002). Black South Africans are comprised of multiple tribal or ethnic groups including people of the Zulu, Xhosa, Venda, Tswana, Tsonga, Ndebele, Swati, Pedi, and Sotho tribes (Henrard, 2002). The constitution of South Africa enumerated 11 official languages. Despite Mandela's intention to create an integrated Rainbow Nation, the political unification of these various groups has not occurred.

The majority of Black South Africans live in poverty, while the majority of White South Africans live in wealthy, fortified enclaves (Nnadozie, 2013). Colored South Africans have more social and economic mobility than Black South Africans; however, poverty and unemployment are prominent problems in Colored communities. Thus, the

separation if not the oppression of apartheid continues, and racism is still a part of the everyday lives of South Africans (Nnadozie, 2013; Hoyt, 2012). Racism has prevented the consolidation of South Africa into one cohesive, functioning whole; apartheid still exists even if it is no longer an official policy, since the economic disparity between groups serves to keep them from forming a single national community (Mokoena, 2014).

As Eyerman (2002) noted, cultural trauma can persist well beyond the end of an institution that imposed that trauma. Eyerman (2002) discussed slavery and the fact that contemporary African-American youth deal with the emotional, economic and social aftermath of being descendants of slaves, but his observations are equally relevant to the Born Frees of South Africa. They are the descendants of a societal class that was systematically treated as inferior for generations (Mtose, 2011) and thus, have inherited the traumas associated with such treatment.

Cultural Trauma Theory in the Literature

The basic premise of cultural trauma theory is that from a sociological perspective, cultural trauma is very much like other, more well-known types of trauma such as physical injury or psychological trauma (Alexander et al., 2004). The unique aspect of cultural trauma is that it diffuses among members of a given culture, whether or not those members directly experienced the trauma; cultural trauma is a collective experience and phenomenon (Trondman, 2008).

Any change, whether ultimately beneficial or harmful, can be traumatic. This was referred to by Sztompka (2000) as the "other face" of social change. At the time, cultural trauma theory was in its infancy and was only beginning to be recognized as a useful lens through which to examine the lived experiences of a society in flux. Other authors such

as Alexander et al. (2004) built on this concept; since the 1990s in particular were a time of great social upheaval and change, this theory was timely in looking at the dynamic forces in play when societies undergo a metamorphosis.

When two cultures coexist but one is clearly dominant, a sense of loss can be felt by members of the subservient culture (Stamm, Hudnall, & Higson-Smith, 2004). In many cases, the dominant culture is the "arriving" culture, whereas the subservient culture is the "original" or native culture (Stamm et al., 2004). This has been the case in many instances throughout history, in colonization and conquest, and South Africa is no exception (Zukas, 2007). The sense of loss in the case of Black South Africans during the period of apartheid was one of the most basic: a sense of not having a country of one's own. However, the regaining of their nation did not result in an unequivocal resolution of their problems

Alexander et al. (2004), in their contribution to sociology with the cultural trauma theory, spurred much discussion on how it might contribute to the understanding of cultural phenomena on a national scale. Their theory was by no means universally accepted at first; as Joas (2005) remarked, it had not been empirically shown that cultural trauma was necessarily passed down from generation to generation. Politically, whether and to what extent this phenomenon does occur can have a great impact on the future of South Africa's youth (Mokoena, 2014).

As cultural trauma is a collective experience, it has an effect on collective identity. As Smelser (2004) observed, if one considers societal trauma to be similar to the trauma experienced by an individual, which was the guiding assumption for his work, then one could apply the existing observations and theories about individual

psychological trauma to the traumatic experiences of a collective society such as the Born Frees (Mokoena, 2014). It could be considered a collective trauma that the Born Frees are the product of a generations-long underclass (Mokoena, 2014).

Synthesis of the Theories in the Context of the Proposed Study

The three theories discussed above provided a theoretical underpinning for the proposed study. Specifically, cultural trauma theory explained the need to heal the collective wounds remaining from the era of apartheid. Hope theory informed the view that such healing can be successful if both agency and pathway thinking are present. And, lastly, narrative therapy theory provided the approach upon which this study is based: that narrative, in this case poetry, provided a cathartic outlet for the Born Frees of South Africa to express their hopes, dreams, and fears and thereby illustrate and, hopefully, help to absolve the cultural trauma that has been passed down to them by their forebears.

In this literature review, I have detailed the theoretical framework of this study: the theory of narrative therapy (White and Epston, 1991); and the conceptual framework: hope theory (Snyder, 1989), and cultural trauma theory (Alexander et al., 2004). It is my contention that these theories are complementary and when applied together provide a comprehensive framework for identifying, interpreting, and understanding the implications of the personal, local, and national narratives embedded in the poetry of the Bokamoso youth.

Critical Narrative Analysis

In this study, poetry written by youth at the Bokamaso Youth Centre was the source of the narratives examined. While poetry, almost by definition, is not strictly literal, as McHale (2009) observes, narrative in poetry has a rich tradition and has been

present in almost every society in human history, including ancient and/or preliterate cultures. Therefore, the poetry written by these youth was a valid source of narrative material and data for analysis in this study.

Reasons for Using CNA

Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA) is a tool for examining narratives that are embedded in various kinds of discourse (Souto-Manning, 2014). Souto-Manning draws the distinction between macro- (where the narrative is part of a larger story, often of a group or culture) and micro-discourse (where the narrative is that of an individual's experiences). Of course, both types of discourse can be contained within the same narratives.

Souto-Manning (2014) considers discourse in the context of social structure. Such structure necessarily contains boundaries, which form constraints on what can be said. The social structure of South Africa until 1994 contained many such boundaries and the dissolving of apartheid did not instantly erase them; therefore, strictures on what can be said still remain. Certain topics are still largely taboo and the discussion of pre-apartheid days is sometimes truncated (Cihodariu, 2012).

Poetry is one of the most powerful and versatile forms of expression, especially in saying what cannot or "should" not be said in other, more conventional forms of expression. Poetry has few boundaries, and as Hemphill (2009) noted, it is a particularly effective medium for young people to express themselves, noting that their "meaning-making strategies" were often creative and unusual in retelling personal experience. What a person may be reluctant to state directly in conventional narrative may be manifest in his/her poetry (Souto-Manning, 2014).

It was therefore most appropriate to use CNA as the methodology for this study. In the context of analyzing poetry written by Born Free youth, it is necessary to examine the types of discourse given, which could refer to the goals of the youth in writing their poetry (Souto-Manning, 2014). Everyone writes poetry for his or her own reasons (Hemphill, 2009), including simple self-expression or, alternatively, to reach outward; to communicate an experience, emotion, or point of view. CNA can be used in examining the themes contained in any form of written narrative (Webster & Martova, 2007).

CNA in the Literature

Narrative analysis is perhaps the most versatile of all methods in examining the lived experiences of a group or an individual. As Webster and Martova (2007) observe, CNA is broad in scope; it does not create a narrowing of focus, as so many other research methods do; the researcher has very little idea of what he will hear and thus, no preconceived notions. Furthermore, the authors note, life experiences are often themselves structured as narratives lending verisimilitude to the reporting of those experiences in narrative form—in poetry or prose (Webster & Martova, 2007).

In the context of fidelity, Moss (2004) noted the phenomenon of intersubjectivity. Simply because a narrative is subjective, as is certainly true in most narrative poetry, it is not necessarily any less faithful to the truth. Furthermore, a factual narrative filtered through the lens of a given person's experience is no less true for that. In this study, I intend to assume that all elements of a poetic narrative are true unless the author explicitly states otherwise (Moss, 2004).

In his treatise on critical discourse analysis, Rogers (2011) expanded on Moss's (2004) notion of subjective truth. Rogers did not draw any distinction between

conventional discourse and other types of narrative reportage and noted that many types of narrative are actually discursive in nature. In the current study, the narratives contained within the Bokamoso youths' poetry were intended by the authors to be discursive, in that they knew that their poems would be published.

The use of CNA in the analysis of narrative poetry has not been treated extensively in the literature, perhaps because poetry and narrative are not as intertwined in Western consciousness as they once were. Poetry is more esoteric of an art form (or narrative form) in the West than it used to be, and as Scholes, Phelan, and Kellogg (2006) remarked, the epic poem, once the storehouse of narrative traditional for many preindustrial societies, is now "as dead as the dinosaur" (p. 3).

CNA in the Current Study: Questions to be Asked

CNA is both a method and a strategy to be used in the course of analysis. In this study, the methodology included both subjective and objective analysis. I asked several questions in the course of the analysis:

- How is language used to construct the ideas or information?
- Is there variability/inconsistencies of meaning in the constructions and the assumptions conveyed in the narrative?
- What are the implications of this particular account? What does this discourse achieve?
- What is explicitly conveyed versus what is implicitly conveyed?

It was my goal to identify as much of the content, both explicit and implicit, as possible. This goal was the rationale for my use of several simultaneous approaches to the analysis as well as the overarching approach of CNA.

The Experiences of the Born Frees

The lack of research and resulting literature on CNA as applied to poetry could be from the approach's relative newness; it could also be because what research does exist has been applied almost exclusively to conventional narrative, such as in ethnographic and phenomenological studies. Yet, as Scholes et al. (2006) observed, poetical narratives can be rich sources of material.

The Born Free generation is facing unique challenges as its oldest members reach maturity (Lund et al., 2010). Despite the fact that racism is no longer explicitly written into government policy, the marginalization and oppression their parents faced under apartheid, in many ways, persists today. The government of South Africa has in many ways failed to meet the needs of the Born Frees (Gray et al., 2008) and even if their material needs were being met, there still remains the issue of understanding their unique experiences and perspectives as children of an oppressed and marginalized people.

It is of utmost importance for the future of the South African nation to recognize that the Born Frees are unique. Moreover, research has shown that these youth are particularly susceptible to challenges like unemployment (Rankin, Roberts, & Schöer, 2012), violent crime (Kaminer, Heath, Hardy, Mosdell, & Bawa, 2013), substance abuse and high risk sexual behavior (Tibbits, Smith, Caldwell, & Flisher, 2011), sexual violence (Petersen, Bhana, & McKay, 2005), suicide (Shilubane, Ruiter & Bos, 2012), teenage pregnancy (Cunningham & Boult, 1996), and HIV/AIDS (Akande, 2001; Cluver, Orkin, & Gardner, 2012), among many. Added to all of these challenges is the cultural trauma that they share with their parents and all those who directly experienced apartheid.

There is a significant risk of the loss of social cohesion if the needs of the Born Frees are not recognized and addressed (Institute of Risk Management South Africa, 2015).

In the process of this research, I sought out any mention of the Born Free Generation in both scholarly articles and in less formal writing. I identified only one book about Born Frees actually written by a Born Free. The book *Memoirs of a Born Free: Reflections on the Rainbow Nation*, is written by Malaika Wa Azania (2014), a young woman born in 1991, one year and eight months after Mandela's release from prison. She is a South African writer, political commentator, essayist, blogger and columnist. She also serves as youth ambassador for the African Union's Youth Charter. Wa Azania (2014) wrote of her disillusionment with the current government and the lack of resources and multiple obstacles that plague her generation:

> I may not have been born during times of constitutionalized apartheid, but I still remain product of an epoch of systematic, individualized, and institutionalized apartheid. So nothing about me is free. My story, my journey is not a reflection of the freedom spoken about in the romantic speeches of government officials. It epitomized the ongoing struggle for liberation and for emancipation from mental slavery. (p.8)

Wa Azania (2014) declared that the category of Born Free is a problematic definition architected by those who want to "keep our people blinded about the real face of the effects of colonialism and apartheid" (p.4). In her memoir she recounted her experiences growing up in Soweto, the difficulty of accessing quality education, her family's struggle with housing, and rampant levels of unemployment; all the while dealing with the challenge of poverty, frequent crime and violence in her township. When

she discussed the effects of the economic state and high rates of unemployment among the Born Frees, she wrote, “Laws continue to protect the haves when the have nots are on the receiving end of exploitation and outright abuse” (p. 100). She wrote of the plight of Black South Africans living in “a country asphyxiated by structural inequalities” with “a judiciary that remains untransformed” (p. 100). She posited that “Blacks will never engage in this battle on an equal footing with their rich White counterparts. And that is the reality of the democratic South Africa: injustice has a face, and that face is working class, poor, and Black” (p. 100).

Education and the Born Free Generation

The Born Free generation faces an unusual situation regarding how their parents may value education. The history of apartheid includes the use of oppressive educational policies to separate out Blacks, such as the Bantu Education Act of 1952 and the mandatory teaching of Afrikaans in schools (Malila, 2013). Thus, education was as much a tool of oppression for the parents and grandparents of the Born Frees as it was a societal benefit (Mokoena, 2014). It can be inferred (though it has not been studied empirically) that as most values are passed down from parents to children, the impressions of those parents and grandparents has also been passed down; thus, one inhibitor for Born Free students could be that their parents are cautious, and perhaps even suspicious, of the formal education system in post-apartheid society (Patrick, 2011); this effect is also explained by cultural trauma theory.

Despite the fact that South Africa is a society and nation in a state of transition, many of its aspects remain strongly traditional; this includes the concept of respect for elders (Verwey & Quayle, 2012). Thus, if the Born Free youths’ parents display an

indifference to education, not expressing that they value it very highly, it is likely that the youths will adopt a similar indifference. According to many parents of Born Free youth, it is employment, not education, that is important (Verwey & Quayle, 2012).

Power and Agency

A recurring motif in the experiences of apartheid-era Black South Africans was their powerlessness in the face of an oppressive regime. Alexander et al.'s (2004) model of cultural trauma applies when examining the collective mindset of the Born Frees. If the Black apartheid-era population felt a lack of power and agency then cultural trauma theory would suggest that the Born Frees share such a perception even if it is not objectively true. Iheduru (2004) noted that Black economic power in the new post-apartheid South Africa is as much a function of perception as of new opportunity. The lesson is that it is not enough to have power and agency; one must also believe that one has them (Mtose, 2011).

The current study carefully examined the poetry of the Bokamoso youth for themes of power and agency. As poetry is often a vehicle for the expression of emotions that the author may feel ashamed or inhibited to admit in other ways, and a lack of power and agency in one's life can be seen as shameful (Iheduru, 2004), such expressions can be telling in evaluating the experiences and attitudes of these youth. In this fashion, the poetry of the youths of Bokamoso can serve as an expressive vehicle for all of the Born Free generation.

Legacies of Apartheid

In the context of the current study, it was important to determine if the lived experiences of a young population, in this case the Born Free generation of South Africa,

aligned with the traumas and issues of the nation as a whole. Cultural trauma theory suggests the traumas are the same for the Born Frees and the nation (Alexander et al., 2004). This national experience may be unique in world history, in terms of the speed of the transition that Black South Africans experienced from a disenfranchised majority to the builders of essentially a new nation (Mtose, 2011). It could be naturally assumed that such a transition could never be smooth or easy, and it was not so for South Africa. Barchiesi (2011) detailed the transition of South Africa's economy into a labor-oriented union-controlled demographic. Black workers, formerly pushed to the fringes and paid unfairly low wages, were now competing for essentially the same resources but demanding higher wages.

Tensions among unions, workers, and the government are increasing. Protests and strikes are frequent and violence has become common. In 2012, 44 miners were killed by police and hundreds were injured during a wage-related strike in Marikana, South Africa (Eastwood, 2012). Reports indicated that 34 of the 44 victims were shot in the back by police (Laing, 2012). Other victims were shot at close range or crushed by police vehicles and there are no reports of injured policemen (Marinovich, 2012). Three years after the massacre, a commission of inquiry placed blame on the police but no officers were tried and all government leaders were exonerated (Conway-Smith, 2015). The Marikana Massacre was the worst incident of bloodshed at the hands of the police since the fall of apartheid.

The imposition of an unfair system meant that when apartheid came to an end in 1994, serious inequities remained and were imperfectly addressed by the new South African government. As Barchiesi (2011) observed, it was an unrealistic expectation that

this new society would dispense social justice evenly or fairly, no matter how much it tried. The Born Free generation's parents experienced disillusionment in that things were generally better after the end of apartheid, but sometimes not that much better (Kasril, 2013). The African National Congress (ANC), according to many citizens and observers, largely failed in its task of improving the lot of South Africa's poorest citizens (Kasril, 2013). Again, such disappointment and disillusionment could easily have filtered down to the Born Free youth via cultural trauma.

Income inequality still persists in South Africa. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few Whites, such a major issue in the apartheid days, has not changed to any significant degree (Marias, 2011). An exclusive class of Black South Africans have achieved financial prosperity; however, economic advancement is accessible to only a small minority of the Black population, often living in urban areas. In 2010, the reports of the unequal economic conditions established a portrait of a country divided into "haves" and "have nots." Smith (2010) reported:

> About 1.6% of the [total] South African population earns a quarter of all personal income. Only 41% of South Africans have a job and just 58% have attended secondary school; 9% don't have access to water, 23% don't have toilets and 24% don't have electricity. Average life expectancy is 52, the lowest since 1970. (para. 16).

Marias (2011) believed that South Africa was in an ongoing crisis and that the modest improvements in national income did not compensate for the fact that those improvements were very unevenly distributed and that half the population still lived in poverty. There is most likely a strong sense of disillusionment in that the poverty and

inequality of apartheid did not end with the changes that were imposed after its abolition.

The First Born Free Narratives

The purpose of this study was driven by the lack of research on and studies of the Born Free population. This research gap is doubtless due at least in part to the fact that only the very first Born Frees are attaining their majority and therefore, their collective voice has yet to be heard. However, collecting such narratives is vital to understanding the needs of any population (Moss, 2004) and those of the Born Frees in particular (Malila, 2013).

The poetry of the Bokamoso youth was therefore a vital cultural resource and warranted study. The history of the Bokamoso Youth Centre is still being written (Bokamoso Youth Centre, n.d.) and should be studied carefully as that happens. A careful analysis of the youths' poetry revealed surprising themes and motifs and suggested new strategies for stakeholders to alleviate their collective cultural trauma.

Summary

This literature review illustrated the fact that the lived experiences, attitudes, and hopes and dreams of the Born Free generation have not been reviewed in the literature to any significant degree. This could be because the first of the Born Frees are only attaining the age of 21 as of the date of this study. With apartheid having been abolished in 1994, there has been no practical way to gather data on them in terms of their self-reporting of their lived experiences. As such, the poetry of the youths of Bokamoso is one of the very first available sources of such data.

As post-apartheid South Africa is still in the process of nation-building, it is experiencing growing pains in terms of an imperfect democracy, income inequality,

poverty, violence, and challenges in power-sharing and unionization (Barchiesi, 2011). Given the demographics of what is an extremely young population, the lived experiences of the Born Frees are of particular importance.

The three theories that informed the current study were hope theory, cultural trauma theory, and narrative therapy theory. The first two theories were used to analyze the youths' poetry; the last was the rationale for examining that poetry. It was anticipated that the analysis would serve as a rich source of themes that illustrate Black South African youths' collective traumas, struggles, hopes, and dreams.

The analysis strategy of CNA was used to examine the narratives contained with the poetry. Poetry contains some elements of ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative. It is a unique form of expression, thousands of years old, and serves and has served as a vehicle for many to express themselves when other forms of expression were unavailable.

This literature review provided the rationale for this study, the theoretical and conceptual framework supporting it, and an examination of the background of the study problem. An integrated approach was justified and the particular data to be collected were outlined. The particular issues of the study population, the Born Free Generation, as well as the characteristics of post-apartheid South Africa were examined and outlined in the review. In the following chapter I will provide an overview of the current study's methodology, sampling population, data analysis procedures, and trustworthiness.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of Black South African youth who are part of the Born Free generation: those born nearing the end or after 1994, the year of the abolition of apartheid. This was accomplished by the examination and analysis of poems written by youths enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre. The methodology used was Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA), as described by Souto-Manning (2005, 2014) and Webster and Mertova (2007). For the purposes of this study, the poems written by the youths were considered narratives.

The following sections will detail the study's methodology, population sampling, data analysis procedures, and concerns of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Questions Guiding This Study

The primary research question for this study was: How does the Born Free generation from a rural township in South Africa use poetry to reinterpret their past as a way of articulating their present and future needs? This question in turn generated several sub-questions:

RQ1. How do historical and institutional narratives intersect with the Born Free generation's construction and reconstruction of their personal and collective identities?

RQ2. How does the Born Free generation envision and enact their agency within the form and content of their poetry?

RQ3. How do the Born Free generation's narratives explore distributions of power?

Research Design

Research Paradigm: Critical Narrative Analysis

Critical narrative analysis (CNA) is a way of examining narratives (Webster & Mertova, 2007) in order to extract dominant themes and thus, uncover the psychological and experiential factors embedded in the creation of those narratives. The poetry of the youths at Bokamoso contained their most deeply felt emotions and experiences and thus, were an ideal vehicle for exploring the research questions and sub-questions.

Poetry is a powerful form of expression and has been used for millennia to convey thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Its lack of constraints and broad stylistic scope allows for expression that may not be available in other kinds of narratives. The poetry collections published by the Bokamoso Youth Centre were a rich source of data on the Born Free generation's lived experiences and narratives.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The primary theoretical perspective used in this study was narrative therapy theory. The Born Free youth of South Africa, by definition, have not directly experienced the trauma of apartheid, but they do suffer from its effects, per cultural trauma theory as explained by Alexander et al. (2004). Thus, it was assumed for the purposes of this study that the impacts of apartheid are felt by these youths and expressed in their poetry.

Conceptual Framework to be Used in the Data Analysis

In the coding of the themes, the additional theoretical perspectives of hope theory and cultural trauma therapy were used. The presumption of the former is that narratives that are utterances of hope contain unique signatures; that of the latter is that expressions of narrative are inherently cathartic and therapeutic. Thus, the examination of the

emergent and dominant theories contained in the youths' poetry were in part through the perspective of these theories.

Hope theory implied that individuals express hope when they have goals to be reached, even when those goals are distant and/or unrealistic. It was therefore anticipated that the inherited cultural trauma and the resultant struggles that these young authors express will also elicit expressions of hope, but without necessarily being accompanied by solutions or "ways out."

Methodology

A qualitative approach was used to draw out and analyze the narratives that existed within the poetry of the Born Frees in the Bokamoso Youth Centre. Sandelowski (1991) stated that narratives serve as frameworks for understanding the subjects from a qualitative perspective. For the purpose of this study, critical narrative analysis (CNA) (Souto-Manning, 2005) was used to investigate the narratives in the poems.

A qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study because the narratives within the poems contained themes; therefore there was an element of subjectivity in such analysis and the themes therefore cannot be validly analyzed according to frequency alone. As Sandelowski (1991) explained, the analysis of lived experiences via examination of narratives naturally lends itself to qualitative analysis. It was anticipated that the coding and analysis of the themes presented provided more than adequate material to answer the research questions and sub-questions.

Methods of Data Collection

The study employed poetry written by youth enrolled at Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa. The youth were invited to contribute to an annual book of

poetry book published by The Bokamoso Youth Foundation. The poems that were analyzed were written between 2009 and 2014. The participants for this study were young adults between 16 to 24 years old who submitted their poems to be published. A total of 74 poems were used as the primary source and themes for this study.

The titles of the annual poetry books were as follows: *Voices of Bokamoso* (2009), *Remembering Mandela and Other Poems from the Bokamoso Youth Centre* (2013) and *Remembering Bra Solly and Other Poems from the Bokamoso Youth Centre* (2014). The first collection consisted of 17 poems, the second had 29 poems, and the most recent collection included a total of 28 poems.

In order to be a part of these poetry books, the youths must have submitted their poetry to a Bokamoso Foundation Board Member, with the knowledge that their work would be published and publicly disseminated both in print and online. Once the poems were published, they were publicly available and were therefore considered secondary/existing data. There were no specific requirements for the poetry included in the poetry books, i.e. no limitations on length or word count and no required topic. Some of the poetry was written in response to various expressive arts activities, resulting in some recurring themes. Each year, the poetry book has a general theme that is selected after the poems are collected and reflects the themes that emerged from the writing. Criteria for inclusion in the annual poetry books were only that the poems be legible, written in English and authored by young adults who were, at the time of publication, enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre. The years selected for study, 2009 to 2014, were chosen to reflect the poetry written in the most recent time period.

As these poetical works were published as of the time of this study, the data-gathering protocol was to simply gather and analyze the published volumes described above. No other material, poems, or other types of narrative were used in this study. Even if the authors whose works were examined have other, similar output available, they were not included.

I did not make any value judgments or apply any selectivity to the data. All poems published in the aforementioned volumes were deemed worthy of inclusion in the study, regardless of length, subject matter, or authorship. In terms of authorship, the authors' names were not part of the coded data.

Prior to selecting the topic and the data for this dissertation I had already been exposed to some of these poems in the course of my work at the Bokamoso Youth Centre. I was present during the creation and sharing of some of the poems while in South Africa in July and August, 2014. In the winter of 2015 I was involved in the publication of the 2014 poetry collection, *Remembering Bra Solly and Other Poems from the Bokamoso Youth Centre*. In fact, witnessing the youth write and share their poetry was the impetus for my interest in the form and function of the poetry and, ultimately, what inspired selection of the poems as data for my dissertation.

Data Analysis

Each of the 74 poems were entered into the computer software program NVivo10 which assisted in the coding and organization of the data. The poems were first examined in terms of organizational structure and by overall content. Dominant and emerging themes were identified within the poetry via three rounds of coding: initial coding, focused coding, and, lastly, axial coding. During initial coding I broke down the poems

by parts and then line-by-line, then closely examined each line for similarities and differences (Saldana, 2016, p. 295). Focused coding involved the identification of frequent or significant initial codes based on thematic or conceptual similarity (Saldana, 2016, p. 294). In the last stage of coding, axial coding, I described the characteristics or attributes of the categories and examined how the categories and subcategories related to each other. (Saldana, 2016, p. 291). Once the coding was completed, there were four main components to the critical narrative analysis: (1) I first examined the text in relation to how language was used to 'construct' identities, ideas and information; (2) I then identified variability and inconsistencies of meaning in the constructions and the assumptions they revealed; (3) I highlighted the implications of a particular account, to examine what the discourse achieved; and (4) I identified both implicit and explicit narratives embedded within the poems.

The final step of the analysis examined recurring word choices, specifically the use of pronouns and possessive adjectives. Word counts of the pronouns and possessives adjectives used across all 74 poems were tallied and percentages were calculated.

As mentioned, the process of data analysis was inherently subjective. Another researcher examining these poems could quite plausibly identify an entirely different set of themes. This was a limitation but also a strength of the current study. Interpretation is an integral part of the process of poetry; the author leaves open the question of what the poem "means." That a given poem may elicit a variety of reactions is to be expected. While I tried to be objective in terms of identifying the emergent and dominant themes in the poetry, my reactions influenced how those themes were chosen and recorded. This was not only acceptable but also desirable, as it can be assumed that the authors meant

for their poems to be read by people who seek to understand their experiences.

Subjectivity Statement

I am a licensed professional counselor in the District of Columbia. I work within the clinical and theoretical framework of narrative therapy, guided by the notion that narrative approaches to psychotherapy are based on a "philosophical position that human lives are inherently narrative in form: people constitute and are constituted by the stories that they live and the stories that they tell" (as cited by Lee, 1995, p.45). Since 2008, I have worked as a counselor in community-based organizations, NGOs and health facilities in Cape Town, South Africa (2008); Moshi, Tanzania (2010); Kigali, Rwanda (2010); Rabat, Morocco (2011 and 2012); Hohoe, Ghana (2012); and Winterveldt, South Africa (2014). In the United States, I have worked in resource-limited settings with underserved populations in New York, NY and Washington, DC. This study will inevitably be influenced by my professional and personal experiences both within and outside of the United States, my theoretical and clinical orientation to counseling, and my values as a mental health practitioner.

As I write this subjectivity statement, I am keenly aware of the intensity of my passion for South Africa, and my dedication to and love for the youth of the Bokamoso Youth Centre. My personal and professional life has been deeply intertwined with not only the struggles of the youth of Bokamoso but those of South Africa in general. I am motivated to perform this study by a sincere desire to better understand the Born Free generation, a group whose needs are not fully understood and who, therefore, are in danger of marginalization.

My Story

An interest in working with children and adults with HIV/AIDS was what initially brought me to South Africa in 2008. I became enthralled with the culture of South Africa and repeatedly travelled to and from the South African Airways customer service desk at Cape Town International Airport to exchange my return ticket back to the US for a later date. I was fascinated by the history of the nation and the resilience of the people I interacted with on a daily basis.

My extended stay in the country allowed me the opportunity to experience South Africa through a wider lens than that of a tourist. I realized that after about six weeks I had become accustomed to the electrical fencing, the armed guards, high concrete walls, and large posters with the names of various private security companies plastered on the walls of the tree lined area in which I was living.

Behaviors such as not walking alone at night, never going to a public restroom by myself, and never holding my cellphone while walking down the street became part of my routine. As a proud New Yorker, I didn't feel that these guidelines were too far from the standard safety precautions I took in my home city. It wasn't until I experienced my own encounter with crime that I came to understand the fear that South Africans live with each day.

No Way Out

There was screaming. Then a loud banging: the gate grinded against the door, metal on metal. I was kneeling, crouched into a tiny corner of a bathroom. I stared at the ceiling, cracked crème colored paint, like the jagged edge of torn wrapping paper waiting patiently to be peeled. The room was silent, marred only by the sounds of whispered

prayers. Cell phone in hand I dialed 911. I realized as my fingers hit the buttons that I was in South Africa, on the other side of the world. I didn't know the number to get immediate help. There would be no uniformed officers ready to serve and protect, no rescue plan: no way out.

News of home invasions in the area were a regular occurrence, I knew immediately what was happening. The girls who had run into the house screaming "They have guns!" breathlessly described a group of young Black men, late teens/early 20s, heavily armed, determined to get into the house. Immediately I recalled the procedures from the post-Colombine "lockdown" drills that were practiced during my years in high school. Instinctively I remembered the drill: Run. If you can't run find a room without windows, lock the door, don't make a sound. I barked these orders to the small group of women I was with and then we made a run for it. We locked the door and then sat together in the darkness. I felt hunted, like prey awaiting imminent attack.

My roommates and I were not physically harmed that night. The emotional toll was significant. Though, despite the terrifying experience, I refused to leave South Africa. I had committed to my responsibilities and even though I was scared, I wouldn't let my fear win.

The Dangers of the Single Story

In a 2009 TED talk gone viral, Chimanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian writer and feminist, denounced the Western tendency to tell the single story of Africa as "a single story of catastrophe." In this story, she explained, "there is no possibility of Africans being similar to Westerners, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals." She contended that the tradition of telling

African stories in the West is “a tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the poet Rudyard Kipling, are "half devil, half child."” Adichie (2009) warned her viewers of the dangers of the single story reinforcing the notion that “how [stories] are told, who tells them, when they're told, and how many stories are told, are dependent on power.”

The anecdote I detailed above could have been my single story of Africa. In this single story I was the terrified victim, powerless in an African city beset with violent crime and sexual assault. I could have retold that story time and again to all who, upon my return to the United States, inquired, “How was South Africa?” Instead, I disavowed the experience and shared it with only a select few people. I did not want to propagate the single story of catastrophe.

Instead, I retold stories of resilience, described South Africa as a beautiful land filled with resilient people. The anecdotes I retold featured the courageous caregivers I worked beside in various social services for children and adults with HIV/AIDS, the sewing class I taught at Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital, the children with disabilities at the Bonteheuvel Care Center who, despite their many challenges, smiled and sang each morning, and the boys and girls at the Lawrence House Refugee Orphanage, who climbed joyfully on a dilapidated swing set. My stories had a clear intention: the Rainbow Nation was, indeed, the miracle we envisioned when Nelson Mandela took office in 1994. I did not talk about the fear, the memories of the screaming, the banging, the bathroom, the young men with guns.

I returned to Africa over the course of the next six years to work in various community based organizations in Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana, and twice to Morocco.

Africa became the focus of my Masters and then Doctoral studies in Counseling. During each trip I appreciated the many cultures that I had the opportunity to live in and learn about but still, I craved South Africa. I grieved deeply for the country that I had come to love so dearly.

C.S. Lewis (1961) wrote, "I never knew that grief felt like fear." In those hushed moments hiding in the bathroom I was afraid, very afraid. My fear, however, was different than the fear I had experienced in other moments in my life. Fearing bodily harm, fearing rape, fearing death, I had sat in that bathroom also overcome by grief. I grieved the feeling of safety, for I knew that I had been forever changed that night. Still, I yearned to return to South Africa.

For years I avoided my desire to return and focused my attention on other people, other locations, and other projects. The statistics I read confirmed my fear and hesitation: South Africa was reported as being "one of the top ten most dangerous countries in the world" (Alfred, 2014). Perhaps the most terrifying statistic in the headline was: "A woman is raped every 36 seconds in South Africa" (Omari, 2013). I was afraid to return, afraid to confront my vulnerability.

My Return

In 2014, an email in my inbox caught my attention. George Washington University's Art Therapy program was offering a summer study abroad opportunity in South Africa. A short paragraph described Winterveldt and Bokamoso. I gave a cursory glance to the email and continued clearing my inbox. For weeks afterward, my thoughts wandered to that email and I began to think through the feasibility of attending the program. After much indecision, I decided to go.

I returned to South Africa in 2014 and faced my fears. I studied the theory and techniques of art therapy and facilitated a daily art therapy group with a small group of the youth. Every day I worked with empathic, creative, and caring young men and women. Their work was deeply expressive and they allowed themselves to be vulnerable in my art therapy group as well as other group activities. They loved and felt so deeply. Each moment I had with them felt like a gift.

As I worked with the youth and learned their stories, I realized that they could very well have been same gun-wielding young people who invaded the home I had been in six years prior. To this day, I can still remember the faces of the gunmen, they looked to be about 18 years old, angry and afraid. As Born Frees, these young people faced the same challenges, limitations, and systemic oppression as the youth in Winterveldt. However, Bokamoso provided the youth of Winterveldt with an alternative story, a place for them to talk about their experiences through poetry and plays, song and dance. They learned how to express both fear and courage, love and loneliness, hunger and hope, without the need for violence. The youth helped me to realize that to disavow the trauma of the home invasion was to deny the complexities of South Africa, that resilience and violence and terror and beauty can all be present simultaneously.

The program at Bokamoso encourages the youth to envision a positive future. There is no "single story" of South Africa. The poetry explored in this study provided multiple stories, some hauntingly beautiful, others sparse and steadfast. Upon my return I became deeply engaged in trying to understand the role of Bokamoso in the lives of the youth. The form and the function of the poetry became fascinating to me, and, ultimately, I chose to focus my dissertation on the exploration of how these youth make meaning of

their lives through the language of poetry.

By my nature and by my profession, I approach my work with a desire to listen to not only what I hear or what I see, but to stay empathically attuned to what is felt by both counselor and client, researcher and participant. The challenge throughout the research process was to remain conscious of my own reflections and thought processes throughout the study and to not let my own experiences obscure the participants' narratives.

I have often felt bewildered and infuriated by the insidious notion that the color of one's skin could determine their access to opportunity, education, economic resources, healthcare, etc. While journeying through this research process, I made a conscious effort to not project my bewilderment or my fury onto the participants' narratives. I also stayed continually aware of the fact that despite all of my good intentions and the well-worn blue pages of my passport, I am, born and raised, an American citizen. I approached this work with the knowledge that my Western, "first world" location meant that I am member of a privileged class of people who have, throughout history, oppressed Africa's inhabitants in ways far too vast to enumerate. In Africa, I am the outsider, the visitor, the "other," and I took this into account as I extrapolated meaning from the words of the participants.

On the topic of subjectivity, Glesne (1999) wrote,

> When you monitor your subjectivity, you increase your awareness of the ways it might distort, but you also increase your awareness of its virtuous capacity. You learn more about your own values, attitudes, beliefs, interests, and needs. You learn that your subjectivity is the basis for the story that you are able to tell. It is the strength on which you build. It makes you who you are as a person and as a

> researcher, equipping you with the perspectives and insights that shape all that you do as researcher, from the selection of the topic clear through to the emphasis you make in your writing. Seen as virtuous, subjectivity is something to capitalize on rather than to exorcise (p. 109).

I identified my own subjectivity as both a potential detriment (enabling bias) and potential benefit (enabling deeper insights and understanding). The following section will address the various techniques I employed to monitor the influence of my own biases and experiences throughout the study.

Trustworthiness

In their seminal book *Naturalistic Inquiry* Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that there are four ways that researchers can promote the trustworthiness of a study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These concepts are often understood as substitutes for internal validity, external validity/generalisability, reliability, and objectivity and have become widely adopted in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009); however, some researchers, myself included, reject the term and concept of "validity as it is too closely tied to positivist ideas of a singular, objectively knowable reality (Maxwell, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote that they introduced these terms "…to make clear the inappropriateness of the conventional terms when applied to naturalism and to provide alternatives that stand in a more logical and derivative relation to the naturalists axioms" (p. 301). In the following section I will detail the specific techniques employed to establish trustworthiness in the current study.

Credibility

Credibility can be understood as steps taken to increase the probability that

credible findings and interpretations will be produced. The following techniques were employed to increase the credibility of this study: prolonged exposure and persistent engagement, data triangulation, peer debriefing, and negative case analysis.

Prolonged exposure and persistent engagement. Prolonged exposure and persistent engagement were not a part of the data collection procedure for this study; however, this study was inspired by my exposure and engagement with the youth at the Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa. During this time I had the opportunity to not only live on the grounds of The Centre but I also spent time at the youths' homes and in their community. The considerable amount of time I spent in South Africa in 2008 and 2014 have provided me with an in-depth opportunity to experience, learn, and understand the history and multiple cultures within South Africa through speaking and interacting with a range of cultural insiders, and developing rapport and trust with the youth. Had I not had these experiences on the ground, working directly with both the Bokamoso youth and prior experiences working with youth in other regions of South Africa, I would not have been able to approach the poems with the same scope, depth, level of sensitivity and attunement that I have in the current study.

Data triangulation. Data triangulation is another way to promote the credibility of the research. According to Johnson (1997), data triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources using a single method. The particular method of triangulation used in this study was the multiple rounds of coding for the same data, followed by an examination and review of the coding by a non-affiliated interpretive community with no relationship to or associations with The Bokomaso Youth Centre. I first identified the themes that resonated in the poems, and these were submitted to the interpretive

community. The data were coded according to consensus reached or not reached between myself and the interpretive community. The interpretive community was comprised of a psychologist, a social worker, and a licensed professional counselor. None of these licensed mental health practitioners had any prior knowledge of or relationship to Bokamoso or any experience working in South Africa or with South Africans.

Peer de-briefing. Throughout the research process I have engaged in frequent 'peer de-briefing' sessions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote, "[Peer de-briefing] is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (p. 308). These conversations helped me to understand my own biases, assumptions, and interpretations that may be influenced by my relationship to the youth. These sessions also provided me with a space to discuss my emotions as I delved deeply into the powerful and, at times, very graphic violence of the history and legacy of apartheid.

Negative case analysis. Negative case analysis was employed to identify content or language used in the poetry that did not support or directly contradicted patterns or explanations that emerged from the data analysis (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Analysis of the language, form, and content of the poems and narratives enabled me to present findings that accurately reflected the breadth and depth of the poetry. For example, while nearly all of the authors expressed absolute reverence for Nelson Mandela, one author challenged Mandela's legacy by boldly questioning the progress that has been made in post-apartheid South Africa.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the reader is able to generalize the findings of a study to other contexts or settings.

Thick description. Detailed description is a significant provision for establishing transferability as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them (Shenton, 2004). By providing a detailed account of a phenomenon in sufficient detail one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The data in the current study was naturally filtered in that only the poems of those individuals who have written and submitted poems for publication were examined. Thus, there was a natural bias in that the study only examined the lived experiences of that particular subset of the Born Free youth who had their poems published in the Bokamoso collections. This does not mean that the analysis of the poems can only be used to better understand the youth of Bokamoso and not the broader Born Free generation. However, readers must be cautious with the findings and attentive to the fact that the poetry was written by this specific group of youth who live in one community, Winterveld, and have the shared experience of attending the arts-based supportive programs of the Bokamoso Life Cetnre.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, techniques were employed to report the processes within the study in detail so that future researchers, in the same context with the same methods and with the same participants, could potentially repeat the work (Cohn & Crabtree, 2006). Though the process may be repeated, future researchers may not necessarily

identify the same findings due to the subjective nature of the study.

Audit trail. External audits involve having a researcher not involved in the research process examine both the process and product of the research study. The purpose is to evaluate the accuracy and evaluate whether or not the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data. Throughout this research, I engaged in ongoing conversation and consultation with colleagues who are experienced and knowledgeable in research methods, with a specialized focus on qualitative research. I recorded an 'audit trail' which would allow any observer to trace the course of the research step by step via the decision made and procedures described (Clark & Cohen, 2006). This audit trail was reviewed by individuals with no relationship to the youth of Bokamoso or to South Africa. Being that I had such closeness to the youth and the poetry, I was intentional in the process of making analytical choices that could be clearly articulated and understood in retrospect by readers and other researchers.

Confirmability

Confirmability is based on the acknowledgement that research is never objective (Morrow, 2005). It is similar to dependability in that the detailed record of the researcher process is recorded in an audit trail and external audits are conducted to ensure that the findings and interpretations are grounded in the data, and that findings can be traced back to the raw data.

Reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity also promotes confirmability as researchers must take the necessary steps to understand how their own experiences and understanding of the world affect the research process (Morrow, 2005). I have provided a transparent description of my professional training, clinical and personal experiences and relationship

with the youth of Bokamoso. I have kept a detailed "reflective commentary" to monitor my thoughts, feelings and assess potential biases, and have employed what Guba and Lincoln (1989) termed "progressive subjectivity" by keeping an ongoing "analytical commentary" to record my initial impressions at each stage in the research process and to identify patterns and theories appearing to emerge in the data. Both my "reflective" and "analytical" commentaries were used to critically monitor my developing constructions, which, as Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggested, is essential in establishing trustworthiness.

Limitations and Delimitations

This research was bound by a range of limitations and delimitations. Limitations are defined as shortcomings, influences, or conditions that could not be controlled by the researcher. Delimitations were identified as choices that I consciously made in an effort to delineate the boundaries of the investigation and narrow the scope of the study.

Limitations

A significant limitation was the lack of demographic data on participants. This study was limited to youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Life Centre between the years of 2009-2014. The sample was further limited to youth who submitted poetry for an annually published poetry book. The poems could not be considered representative of youth who are not enrolled in the Bokamoso Life Centre, youth who were not residents of Winterveldt, urban youth, or youth living outside of South Africa. The poems selected for the annual poetry collections also may not be representative of all the youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Life Centre. The knowledge that the poems would be published may have acted as a deterrent for youth who did not feel comfortable with other people reading their poems. The publication of the poems may have also limited their content, as the

authors may have feared judgment from their peers, Bokamoso staff members, or other potential readers.

All of the poems were written in English, one of eleven official languages spoken in South Africa. English may be a second, third or fourth language for many of the youths who contributed poems. This may have limited the youths' ability to fully express themselves. Interpretations of word choice, tone, and language may be a result of the limitations of the authors' proficiency in writing and ability express and communicate in English.

The expression of individuals through their poetry may not be an accurate reflection of their true feelings; for example, a given poem may focus on a particular emotion or have been written during or after a particular event that may have had great significance for the author at the time but since then, has lost some of that significance. In other words, a poem is a snapshot in time. This limitation, though significant, was not critical, as all such assessments would usually be at a given time or place.

Delimitations

The poems used as data in this study spanned a period of five years, 2009 to 2014. The decision was made to narrow the scope of the study to the most recent poems. However, these five years do not represent the breadth of the post-apartheid years, from 1994 to the present day. It is important to also note that it could be argued that the post-apartheid era began upon Mandela's release from prison in 1990, thus expanding the broad range of youth and young adults that could be categorized as part of the Born Free generation. It was possible that as the Born Free generation is quite extensive, the reported experiences of one age group might be considerably different from another

within this generation. I consciously made no attempt to divide the study population into age groups within the existing category of Born Free in an effort to investigate collective identity and experience. As such, the poems, written by youth ages 16 to 24, are reflective of varying levels of maturity and development.

The poems also represented only the experiences of those youths who have attained sufficient maturity and skill to express themselves in poetry. The experiences of those who cannot or do not choose to write poetry were doubtless significant and meaningful but could not be examined in the context of this study.

The local nature of the study (specific to Winterveldt, South Africa) and the decision to use only this defined population (youth ages 16-24 who were enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre and submitted poetry for publication between the years of 2009 to 2014) were intended delimitations. I did not choose to employ other methods of data collection such as psychological assessments, surveys, interviews, or observations, but rather chose to study only the form, content and language of the poetry. I made no attempt to identify and find the authors of the poems for interviews or further questioning as my focus for the study was specifically based on how the youths use poetry to communicate their expression, experiences and emotions.

Several poems were submitted anonymously and therefore, the gender of the authors could not be considered. For the youth who chose to include their names I could have inferred the gender of the authors by making assumptions based on their first names. However, I consciously chose not to presume that participants' first names were reflective of their gender identity. The poems were analyzed without identifying information including the name of the authors or their genders; as a result, the form and

content of the language could not be compared and contrasted based on the authors' gender. My analysis included how males and females are depicted in the poetry, but these findings were based on the content of the poems, not on the gender of the authors.

I also had no knowledge or records of any history of mental illness experienced by participants. Only a few participants contributed poetry to more than one poetry collection and, therefore, with a very limited number of poems written by the same authors, I chose not to track the evolution of their writing over time. Lastly, I did not seek out information regarding how long the participants were enrolled in Bokamoso at the time that they wrote their poems and, as a result, the youth may have had a variety of different levels of familiarity with and exposure to poetry depending on how long they had been enrolled.

Ethical Considerations

The anonymity of the authors was maintained throughout the study in that the identities of the authors were not recorded. The authors' identities, though given for the most part in the collections themselves, were not part of the data or the coding, regardless of whether they have made multiple contributions to the collections or not; all authors were considered equally anonymous in the study.

It was presumed that because the authors submitted their poetry for publication, they intended it to be read by the public at large. However, it was not practical, given the multi-year time frame of publication, to obtain individual authors' consent to have their poems analyzed. The assumption must be made that said consent is implicit in the authors' decisions to submit their works for publication. To account for the possibility that a given author may not wish to have his or her poetry analyzed, strict author

anonymity was maintained, as described above. In general, the poems were treated and analyzed as those originating from a collective voice: the Born Free youth of Bokamoso.

Summary

This study examined the lived experiences, thoughts, feelings, and expressions of the Born Free generation of South Africa through the analysis of the poetry published in the three most recent poetry collections. The purpose of the study was to answer the research questions regarding historical and institutional narratives, personal and collective identities, agency and power.

The research method and analytic strategy of the study was based on critical narrative analysis, a hybrid approach consisting of narrative and critical discourse analysis. Narrative therapy theory provided the basis of the theoretical framework of the study, and cultural trauma theory and hope theory informed the conceptual framework. Two assumptions were made: that the youths' poetry was fundamentally narrative, and that cultural trauma theory was valid in this context in that the lived experiences of the authors and their feelings about those experiences are influenced to a significant degree by the cultural legacy of apartheid, which they (by definition, as Born Frees) have not directly experienced.

The study methodology was to extract dominant and emerging themes from the poems published in the three collections. Such extraction was done via careful reading and re-reading of the poems by the researcher. In such analysis, both explicitly and implicitly stated themes were recorded.

The poems were a rich source of self-expression for the Bokamoso youth, and the analysis thereof provided significant insights into their lived experiences and thereby

answered the primary research question and sub-questions. The chosen population has particular characteristics that differentiated them from the Born Frees as a whole. Nonetheless, it was anticipated that their poetical expressions were a significant source of material for analysis of this as-yet largely unrecognized demographic group.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In Chapter 4, I will present the results from the data analysis of the study. The purpose of the study was to address the significant lack of literature surrounding how Born Frees understand and experience the risks that surround them, as well as the lack of literature highlighting their resilience. The main research question of the current study was: How does the Born Free generation from a rural township in South Africa use poetry to interpret their past as a way of articulating their present and future needs? To address the purposes and research questions of the study, I conducted a qualitative critical narrative analysis of 74 poems written by the Born Free generation from the Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa. For organized coding, the computer software program NVivo10 (2012) by QSR was employed. The analysis of the poems was guided by the following sub-questions:

RQ1. How do historical and institutional narratives intersect with the Born Free generation's construction and reconstruction of their personal and collective identities?

RQ2. How does the Born Free generation envision and enact their agency within the form and content of their poetry?

RQ3. How do the Born Free generation's narratives maintain, question, or subvert distributions of power?

Presentation of Findings

The next section of the study includes the major findings that addressed the research questions of the study. The findings have been broken down into seven major themes: (1) identity; (2) environment; (3) emotional expression; (4) gender; (5) heroes;

(6) time; and (7) questioning. Analysis of full poems, stanzas, lines and words have been used to support and illustrate these findings.

Theme 1: Identity

The youth employed poetry as a means of exploring their personal and collective identities. The poetry revealed how the youth negotiated multiple identities and contrasting constructions of self. They described how they viewed themselves personally and collectively and how they believed they are perceived by others. While some poems were written from a singular point of view, the majority of the poems exhibited the frequent shifting of identity constructs, sometimes from one line to the next.

Personal identity. An analysis of the use of pronouns indicated that the youth primarily used their poetry as a means of expressing their individual identities more frequently than their collective identities. They referred to and explored their collective identities, but the majority of the poems described their individual experiences and feelings. Table 1 provides a detailed analysis of the frequency of the use of singular and plural pronouns in first, second and third person point of view. Percentages were based on a total count of 1544 pronouns used across all 74 poems. The possessive adjectives "my," "our," "your," "his," "her," "its," and "their" were also included in this analysis. Possessive adjectives, like pronouns, are used to infer possession which is relevant to how constructions of identity are communicated through language. In this analysis I will refer generally to the use of pronouns. It is to be assumed that possessive adjectives are included in this reference.

Table 1

Usage of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives in first, second and third person point of view

Point of view	Type of Pronoun						
	Subject pronouns	Object pronouns	Possessive adjectives	Possessive pronouns	Reflexive pronouns	Total counts	Percent of total pronouns
First person (singular)	I	me	my	mine	myself		
	333	83	177	0	7	600	38.86%
First person (plural)	we	us	our	ours	ourselves		
	86	48	71	0	1	206	13.34%
Second person	you	you	your	yours	yourself		
	216*	216	81	1	3	301	19.49%
Second person (plural)	you	you	your	yours	yourselves		
	216*	216*	81*	1	0	1	.01%
Third person (male)	he	him	his	his	himself		
	125	27	52*	52	4	239	15.48%
Third person (female)	she	her	her	hers	herself		
	18	19*	19	0	0	37	2.41%
Third person	it	it	its	(not used)	itself		
	71	71*	13	0	2	86	5.61%
Third person (plural)	they	them	their	theirs	themselves		
	39	9	26	0	0	74	4.81%
Total						1544	

***** Numbers with asterisks were not included in calculations of total counts of pronouns due to repetition

An analysis of the use of pronouns revealed that over half (52.02%) of the pronouns used across all 74 poems were from the first person point of view. The youth

employed first person pronouns, “I,” “we,” “us,” “our,” and “ours” significantly more than second person (“you,” “your,” and “yours”) or third person pronouns, “he,” “him,” “his,” “she,” “her,” “hers,” “it,” “its”, and “they,” “them,” “their,” and “theirs”. Figure 1 provides a comparison of the usage of pronouns in first, second, and third person point of view.

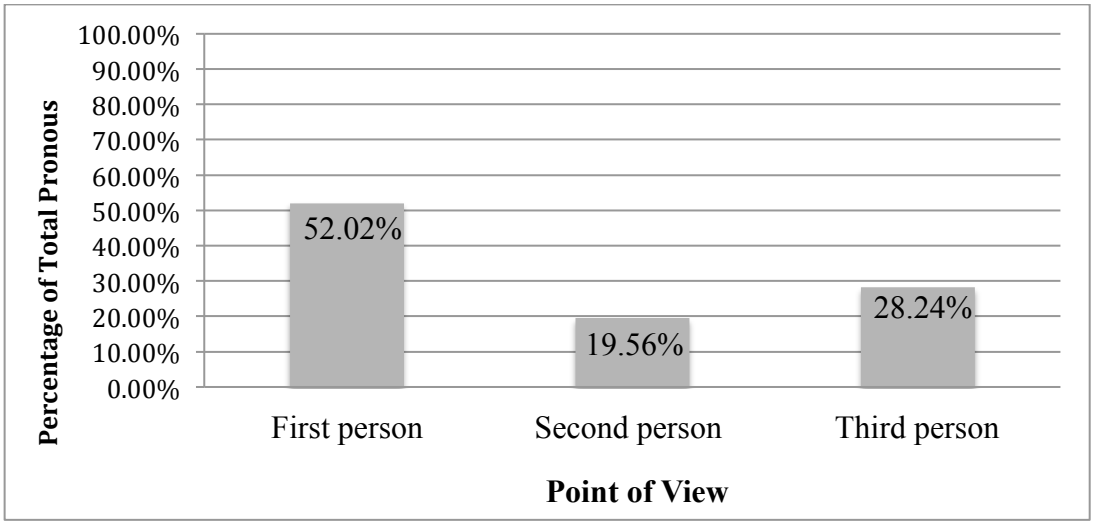

Figure 1. Comparison of usage of first, second and third person pronouns

First person pronouns (“I,” “we,” “our,” and “us”) were used most frequently. Singular (“I”) and plural (“we,” “our,” “us”) first person pronouns were not used to an equal degree. A total of 806 first person pronouns were used to calculate the percentages of use of singular and plural pronouns. The singular pronoun from the first person point of view (“I”) was used significantly more than first person plural pronouns (“we,” “our,” and “us”). Figure 2 provides a comparison of the usage of singular and plural pronouns in the first person point of view. Nearly three quarters (74.44%) of first person pronouns were used in the singular form.

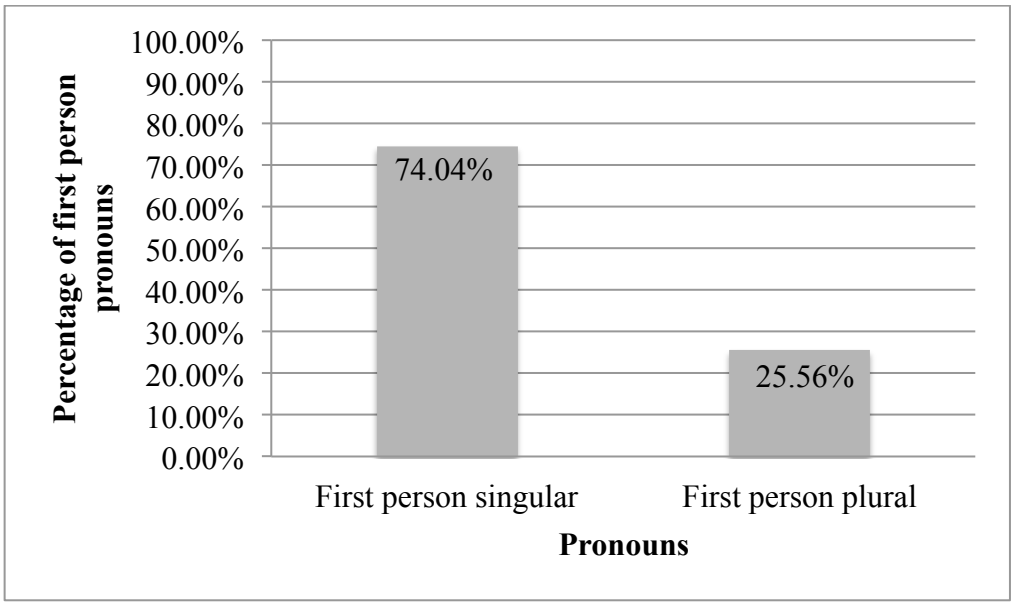

Figure 2. Comparison of usage of singular and plural first person pronouns

Using the singular first person pronoun "I," the youth described how they viewed themselves: "I am a leader.", "I may not be perfect, but I brought light to my family the day I was born.", "I, the traitor, am guilty for not conforming to the norm of my people.", "I'm not a chick that toddles after its hen. I'm like an eagle that spreads its own wings to fly." "I am successful.", "I am a dreamer.", "I am a visionary and a survivor and I have an electric taste in music.", "I am the definition of fun.", "I was born to be different", "I am proud.", and "I am a harmonious person." In the poem, "Baby Steps," the author asserted herself as a leader and as a Born Free.

> I am a leader
> born in the beginning of freedom
> and living in the cracks of apartheid
> where I come from
> they know I am a pearl, a queen, a woman.
> birth I give to kingdoms and nations.
> Success I show with the clap of my hand.

Multiple Identities. The youth also aligned themselves with racial (Black), tribal (Ndebele), local (residents of Winterveldt), and global (African) identities. One author wrote, "I'm Ndebele and color is my pride." The youth wrote of taking pride in the color of their skin: "I am Black and proud." In the poem titled "I am my Bronze Skin," a young woman explored her racial identity:

> I am my bronze skin.
> No makeup.
> No bleach.
> Just me and my bronze skin.
> Craftsmanship and skills,
> true beauty without no artificial enhancement.
> I may not be perfect,
> but I brought light to my family the day I was born.
> I represent the decomposing bones of Steve Biko,
> who once said, "Black is beautiful."
> I am of a belief that the one
> who created me was no fool.
> I am of a melanin rich race,
> a tribe whose traditional way of doing things
> was dismissed as being barbaric.
> But somehow the oppressors' raw fish eating practices were categorized as being classy.
> My skin was looked down as being inferior,
> not human enough.
> But I am not afraid to stand on top of the hill and shout:
> "I am my bronze skin."

Several authors stated that being a resident of the township of Winterveldt was part of their identities. Multiple poems included the line, "I am from Winterveldt." In contrast, one author refuted the idea that where she is from as part of her identity, "I might live in Winterveldt, but I am not from Winterveldt. Where I am from is deep inside my heart. In my heart there is peace."

Many youth referred to their collective identity as South Africans, but few claimed that identity with "I" statements. There is only one line where an author referred

to being South African using the singular first person pronoun, “I am born free and proudly South African.”

In contrast, the youth frequently claimed their African identity and they did so with pride: “I am African.”, “I stand as an African woman.”, and “I am proud to be African.”

Collective identity

The youth, as a collective, claimed multiple identities, frequently using the plural first person pronouns, “we,” “us,” and “our.” These pronouns, referred to as “in group” pronouns (Hasan, 2011), indicated that the authors were writing not just about themselves as individuals, but rather as members of a larger group. Hasan (2011) defined ‘in-groups’ as any group one belongs to and identifies with, and ‘out-groups’ as any alternative group that one does not belong to or identify with.

Specific ‘in-groups’ that the youth claimed collective membership to included Africans, South Africans, Black South Africans, Born Frees, and the youth of the Bokamoso Youth Centre. For example, one author referred to “our people” when writing of the time before Mandela’s release from prison and the fall of Apartheid. They wrote that they were “an enemy of brutal people” suffering under the “boots and whips” and “chains” of apartheid with “wounds” that needed healing.

The youth also provided descriptions of what it meant to be a member of the Born Free generation. They wrote: “broken souls, broken hearts, bronze skin, torn bones, and tearing eyes,” “Satisfaction is a stranger to us,” “We are just humble creatures, worried to think, so blinded by beauty, scared of being alone, scared of being unique, different in our style.” They described their cohort as “hopeless” and “abused.” They identified as “a

free generation," but also expressed concern as to what they were doing with their freedom. They specifically described their generation as "a dreamless generation," "a careless generation," and "A generation of procrastination, so lazy and in denial." They described themselves as "voiceless" and "fatherless," "manipulated by those in authority."

When refering to and claiming their identity as Africans (not as South Africans), the tone of the poetry is noticeably more positive. Several authors wrote of feelings of pride that derived their African identity and heritage. In contrast, there were no statements of pride related to their identity as members of the Born Free generation. In the poem, "Africa, my Continent" the author commanded fellow Africans to "arise and shine":

> Arise and shine, Africa.
> Arise and shine for God has put spirit in you.
> Arise Africa that my country belongs to.
> Shine Africa, the land of many countries.
> Arise and shine, Africa.
> The proud land of our forefathers.
> The beautiful land of Africa.
> For God has blessed you with many resources.
> Arise and shine Africa,
> the sweet home of our forefathers,
> the land that God's love was manifested,
> the sweet land of many talents.
> Arise and shine, Africa.
> Live in peace,
> For your blessing will shine out in the world

The youth also collectively identified themselves as "the youth of Bokamoso," a distinction, which the poetry suggested, set them apart from other youth of their generation. The language used to describe Bokamoso is in stark contrast to the bleak

description of the Born Free generation. In the poem, “Bokamoso, the Future,” the author described the transformative power of the center:

> It’s a place where our dreams become a reality.
> A place where young people become young stars,
> And young stars become leaders of tomorrow.
> Where advice, guidance and motivation is compulsory.
> It makes people heroes when they are zeros.
> Yes, it does take you from nothing to something,
> And from no-one to someone.
> My love will never end.
> This place is called Bokamoso, the future.
> Yes, it does take you from nothing to something,
> And from no one to someone.
> My love will never end.
> This place is called Bokamoso, the future.

Theme 2: Environment

The youth used language to paint an intricate portrait of their everyday realities. For many, the poems indicated that their reality was full of many obstacles including experiences of poverty, crime, violence, and substance abuse.

Poverty. Several authors referred to hunger: “We are overcome by how empty is our stomach.”, “I may have went to bed with an empty stomach, but I have lived to see today, for tomorrow I will eat success.”, and “He knew the nothing to eat at home.” The poem “Dreamless Generation” included the line, “Poverty has taken its trophy.” One author titled a poem with the command, “Poverty Must Die.” The author wrote:

> I'm walking impatiently, towards my home.
> A little four roomed house, where I was born.
> I see my mama standing, with a little pot
> And then I smile gently, thinking there is food
> And then reality strikes, when I realize,
> It's just a pot, a very clean pot
> My silence is screaming.
> Poverty must die.

In the poem, “A Woman,” the author detailed a scene of a young woman,

"begging for just a penny," shamed by her community for her poverty:

> Skin so dry in winter,
> Freezing in that corner- a woman,
> Carrying a child with only one tattered tiny blanket,
> Covering her and the little baby.
> People passing by so warm with expensive clothes,
> High with their long shoes, colorful with blushes, mascara, and eye shadows.
> So hidden with sunglasses and so loud with their blackberries.
> Different sounds coming from different people with different accents.
> That woman in the corner, begging for just a penny.
> Sniffing heavy like a truck, disgusted faces spitting on her.
> The baby on her back crying, crying very loud, crying like a siren.
> Pointing fingers from the other children playing, throwing stones at her mother.
> Trying to chase them she fell down, and nobody cared.
> So embarrassed, she rose up and walked very slow,
> limping, trying so hard not to cry.
> But her baby kept on crying, and crying, and crying but nobody cared.
> Everybody was looking at her but she kept on walking,
> And that corner from that day on was left empty.

Crime. In the poem titled, "Afraid of the Night," the author described a personal experience of having witnessed crime in his community:

> Walking at night, walking in darkness.
> Every bad story I have heard happened
> in the darkness.
> I looked in the sky.
> I saw stars lighting like candles.
> I stand outside, I feel peace with the wind blowing
> from North to South. Dogs start barking.
> They end like they see a monster.
> Suddenly I saw two men trying to steam my father's car
> I screamed like a baby crying for her mama.
> Then they ran away.
> But I was afraid and still afraid of the night.

In the poem, "Where I am From," the author described Winterveldt:

> A neighborhood where everyman is for himself
> that's where I come from
> where *Ubuntu* means nothing to their ears
> where wrong things ain't seen with naked eyes
> boys live under the trees until sunset

well I was born to be different
I am unique and willing to make a difference
people think I have pride, but no,
I am proud.
help, care, and love, not practiced.
drugs and alcohol their daily bread
crime their everyday job
jail their lifetime home
that's where I come from

Violence. When the youth detailed violence, they rarely used "I" statements and, instead, used 'in-group' or third person pronouns. Poems that mentioned violence employed the first person plural pronouns ("we," "us," and "our"), or third person singular pronouns ("he," "she"). In the poem, "Is This the Meaning of Love?" the author used third person pronouns to narrate a story of intimate partner violence:

He came home drunk and said,
where is my food
He knew the nothing to eat at home.
Then he kept shouting
"Where is my food?"
when he thinks someone will answer
no answer was taking place in that moment
he became angry and started beating his wife
he kicked and kicked more than a soccer player willing to score a goal
His wife bleeds and her eyes were full of tears,
like clouds formed to rain,
Deep in her eyes, full of sadness and fear.
She sits lonely in her bedroom thinking about the day they met.
Thinking about the promise he used to say
"The love I have for you will never end"
She thinks about the gentle touch he used to touch.
But now she is lonely, crying like the rain with lightning,
And thunderstorm. Is that the meaning of love?
Her husband is not ashamed about what he did.
Now he is in a shabin, drink and drink like never before
Because he's not worried about everything that happened in his home.
Is that the meaning of love?
You better find the definition.

Theme 3: Emotional Expression

The youth wrote of the intensity of their emotions. They revealed their vulnerability and depth of feeling in a variety of ways. Many of the poems demonstrated an opportunity to emotionally process the deaths of former South African President Nelson Mandela, Solomon Mahlangu, a Bokamoso staff member who died unexpectedly, and other personal losses. The youth put words to what they felt and how deeply they felt these emotions.

Grief and loss. In December of 2013, at the age of 95, Nelson Mandela died. During his prolonged illness and after his death the youth wrote about their grief and the significance of the loss of South Africa's first Black president. In April of 2014, Solomon Mahlangu, a staff member of Bokomoso known as Bra Solly, died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 39. Both of these losses were described in the poetry as profoundly significant in the lives of the youth.

Absence. The youth struggled to make meaning of loss and explored the function of grief and mourning in their lives, both individually and collectively. They wrote of their awareness that their heroes, Mandela and Bra Solly, were no longer alive. The poetry related to Bra Solly reflected an intensity of feeling on an individual level that is less present in the poetry about Mandela, which expressed collective mourning. In reference to Bra Solly, two authors wrote of their wishes to see him one last time: "Oh! How we wish to hear and mimic your mumbling voice in your presence for one last time.", "If I had one wish, I would wish to see you again." The youth wrote of Bra Solly's absence in their everyday lives. They wrote of "an aching void" and feeling "broken hearted."

Concealing emotion or "pretending" as a means of hiding or minimizing emotional pain is mentioned more than once in the poems. One author wrote of how the youth pretended to be okay, "We pretend not to miss you by playing volleyball, but you can tell by our faces how much we long to play with you when we jump high for the ball." Another author wrote, "I just shake it off and pretend I don't care. Pretend it don't hurt." One young man wrote of the moment he found out about Solly's passing, "When I heard you were gone my world stopped. Tears dropped, and questions popped. Should I thank God or blame God? Should I thank God that you were part of our lives? Or should I blame God for taking you away from our lives?"

Presence. The youth wrote about profound absence; however, they also wrote about the presence of loved ones despite their physical absence. One author wrote of Mandela's spirit, "Every time I see a butterfly I am reminded of the beauty of your spirit, and in my heart I place a bunch of roses before you." In the poem, "My Best Friend," the author described the loss of his best friend, and emphasized their enduring friendship:

> I remember the good days we used to share.
> You and I were like a finger and the nail.
> We used to watch the sunshine everyday.
> I remember when you told me
> that we will be friends until the oceans became dry.
> Whenever I look at the oceans I know that
> we are still friends because the oceans are overflowing.
> We used to watch the moon and the stars together.
> Every time I look at them I see you inside the moonlight
> and I know that you are still my best friend.
> Nothing can separate us,
> not even death because you are no longer alive.
> But you are still my best friend.

The youth frequently wrote of Mandela and Solly in an after-life, mingling with fellow heroes. One author envisioned Mandela joining Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi,

and Martin Luther King Jr., and with Shaka Zulu "waiting by the banks." Another youth wrote of her belief that Solly "is at peace, taking a walk up there, getting to understand the place he is at, while meeting other leaders who have left this earth."

In the poem, "A Giant has Fallen," the author wrote of his vision of Bra Solly smiling down on the youth of Bokamoso:

> Angels dancing non-stop, praising him
> for the change he made in Winterveldt.
> All I see is his smile, admiring his hard work in heaven,
> singing and dancing with angels of love
> for the role he played on Earth.
> Now he is sitting next to our creator,
> watching every move we make,
> protecting us and busy planning for our future.

Frequency of loss. In addition to the specific losses of Mandela and Bra Solly, the youth also wrote of the frequency of loss in their community as a result of violence and crime:

> We come from a land whereby we bury one another.
> A land where we share no peace,
> but sorrow and darkness.
> Yes I come from a land whereby members of our families
> are killed in our presence.
> Whereby parents bury their own children.

Another poem, "Where I am From," also discussed the frequency of death in their community:

> I am from Winterveldt.
> Where I am from people kill people and babies kill babies
> we live in hell.

Love and Loneliness. The youth wrote of feeling loved and feeling lonely. In several poems, they admitted to feelings of loneliness: "I was alone on my bed with tears.", "I felt alone and lonely.", and "I'm feeling alone and cold." However, they also

wrote of their experience of feeling loved: “I see the color of love.” ,“You are like the spirit of unity. I call it love.”, “I truly love you”, “dancing with angels of love,” “God’s love was manifested.”, “My love will never end.”, “Being in love with you made me braver.”, “You’ve been there to love and protect me.”, “a ritual drum of love,” and “my heart full of love.” They wrote of Bra Solly as a comforter and caregiver who provided, “a blanket of love to warm the cold.”

In “The Perfect Mother,” the author wrote affectionately about a mother’s love. This poem stood out as only one of 74 poems that referred to the positive influence of an adult other than Mandela or Bra Solly:

> Since I entered this world,
> you have cared for me like no other.
> This is only one word to describe you,
> who is every way a perfect mother.
> In the years you have watched me grow,
> so many memories we can now replay.
> You’ve been there to love and protect me,
> from my birth to this very day.
> When there’s clouds covering my path,
> or a problem I am about to face,
> you’ll be the one to wipe away my tears,
> and put everything back in its place.
> Your warm touch is one of a kind,
> so gentle to send me to sleep.
> Your voice is one of angels,
> a beauty only you deserve to keep.
> The way you always make me smile,
> and the way you play with me.
> When I need to talk, you’ll put me first,
> so I know how much you care.
> The sun is your heart.
> It will continue to shine in the future in all that you do.
> The most special person in my life,
> I’m happy to say is you.

Fear. Fear was a prominent theme throughout the poetry. Statements explicitly related to fear included: “scared of being alone”, “afraid to question”, “I was afraid and

still afraid of the night.", "I tremble in fear.", "deep in her eyes, feeling sadness and fear." Despite the presence of fear, the youth also wrote of a determination to refuse to allow fear and loss and the many challenges that they face paralyze them. One author wrote of the need to keep going:

> I keep going.
> Never afraid of getting lost.
> Armed with all the guidance from my elders because I've listened carefully.
> It's not easy and a long road awaits me.
> At time there's no transport but to walk.
> My legs get swollen and my shoes torn apart.
> But I keep going.
> I shut my ears from useless critics and empty talks.
> I open my eyes wide to see the finish line,
> the only thing that matters to me.
> I keep going, no time to waste.

Emotional release. The youth described emotions without specifically explicitly putting a name to these emotions. The words "sad" or "sadness" were not used once in all 74 poems; however, several authors wrote of the act of crying and described their tears. Perhaps by describing their tears they are articulating the complexity of the many emotions they feel. In the following lines, the youth write of their tears and in doing so express a vast breadth of emotion including sadness, pain, grief, loneliness, regret, hurt, humiliation, and shame. Above all, they write of their tears as an outlet for emotional release: "We have cried so much, I nearly fell from my dreams.", "My eyes are filled with tears flowing through the cheeks of my face like the Atlantic Ocean.", "If the rain can wipe my tears then let it rain. Maybe it will ease the pain, because I am in deep pain.", "When I heard you were gone my world stopped. Tears dropped.", "His wife bleeds and her eyes were full of tears.", "I was alone on my bed with tears running down

my face.", "The baby on her back crying, crying very loud, crying like a siren…So embarrassed, she rose up and walked very slow, limping, trying so hard not to cry."

One author wrote metaphorically of a weeping South Africa:

Like walls broken.
Ashes scattered.
Broken glasses, and torn apart papers.
That's a picture of South Africa.
Eyes so wet like a river flowing.
Not gentle, but creating sounds.
This time is not full with songs of liberation, but sounds of strife.

Depression and suicide. Several poems mentioned sadness, few put a name to it. The following poem, "Depression," indicated the willingness of the author to defy the stigma and silence surrounding mental illness. However, the author did not explicitly reveal that the poem was written from personal experience, but rather the poem was written in the second person point of view, using the singular pronouns "you" and "your." The reader is left to consider whether the second person point of view was used to distance the author from the content, consciously or subconsciously, or if the author had not experienced depression but rather had witnessed other people experience these emotions:

Sometimes it gets very lonely where you are.
The walls in the house stare at you in thick silence.
The bed you sleep on gets uncomfortable.
The mirror keeps on replaying images of you sad.
There is nothing but pure emptiness in your heart.
A smile seems to be worlds apart,
an unreachable distance, between you and your happiness.
All you hear is nothing,
except the smell of depression holding your mind hostage.
You have questions you need to ask but there is nobody to provide you with the answers you seek.
Your life feels as though you are locked up in the one big dim cage, illusions and
Hope is rare in your life
Every expression and impression you make is accompanied by pain and

brokenness.
It's like watching your joy erode from within you,
and there's no damn thing you can do about it.
Every try you make is a drag.
Depression is a syndrome.
Don't wait until it finishes you off.
Seek help.

Only one poem described suicidality or self-harming behaviors. In the poem "The Worst Day," the author recounted a suicide attempt. The poem ends with the author's decision to live:

I was alone on my bed with tears running down my face.
I felt alone and lonely.
With a glass of water shaking in my right, sleeping pills in my left.
I had one imagination: how I would look in my coffin.
I tried the water first, bitter but how?
Because I wanted to overdose
I took over and over of doses with water.
Again and again, it felt good in that moment.
When I woke up I was in a hospital bed,
And the doctor looked at me nodding, and nodding and nodding,
And I was mad at myself.
Mad for forever trying to take my life away.
Suicide is not my friend, but my enemy.
She wanted to take my life, while I decided to live and do my best to continue.

Though their emotions are, at times, very painful, the youth displayed a resolve to learn from their challenges. The line, "Tears make me stronger." from the poem, "Love Complication," epitomized how the youth made meaning of their pain: They live, they write, and they learn, all the while growing wiser, more resolute, resilient and empathic as a result of, not just in spite of, their struggles.

Theme 4: Gender

How the youth described and referred to men and women both reinforced and challenged patriarchal gender norms. Though a full analysis of gender differences in the Born Free generation is beyond the scope of this study, an analysis of the youths'

constructions of gender provided a better understanding of how the Born Free generation interpret the role and significance of their own gender identity and the gender identities of other individuals in their lives, their communities, and the broader social milieu. Figure 5 provides a comparison of the usage of male and female pronouns. Percentages were calculated out of a combined total of 276 female and male pronouns used across the 74 poems. Pronouns referring to transgender or gender non-conforming individuals were not included in any of the poems, and, therefore, were not counted in the analysis of pronouns.

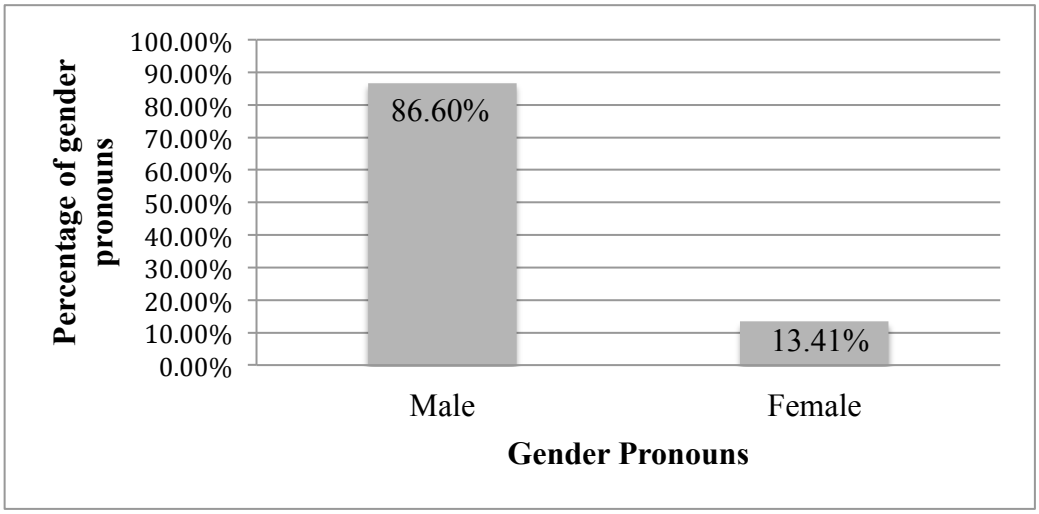

Figure 3. Comparison of usage of gender pronouns

Overall, across all 74 poems, female pronouns are used significantly less than male pronouns. Of a total of 276 gender pronouns, only 13.14% of the pronouns used were female. The majority, 86.60%, of the gender pronouns used referred to men. As such, with such a significant disparity of use, the intention and patterns of use and frequency of gender pronouns were deemed worthy of further exploration.

Women. The youth wrote about girls, mothers and wives. Some of the lines and poems referred to the author's own gender, while other poems referred to the women in

the authors' lives, or non-identified female characters. One author wrote, "People say I speak like a teenage girl…They look at me and see just a teenage girl." Another wrote of the changing roles of young women, "Gone are the days when girls cook like their mothers, now they drink like their fathers." In one instance, in the poem, "The Worst Day," the author referred to suicide using a female pronoun, "Suicide is not my friend, but my enemy. She wanted to take my life, while I decided to live and do my best to continue."

The poems reveal that the youths' relationships with their mothers are varied. The poem, "A Poem for my Mother" revealed how the author's mother failed to acknowledge the value of her poetry and, in doing so, made the author feel invalidated and small. This poem stands out as being on of a few poems in which an author uses a poem to directly speak to or address someone in their lives:

> "That isn't everything," you said
> on the afternoon I brought a poem to you
> hunched over the washtub.
> With your hand,
> the shriveled
> burnt granadillo
> skin of your hands
> covered by foam.
> And my words
> slid like a ball
> of hard blue soap
> into the tub
> to be grabbed and used by you
> to rub the clothes.
> "A poem isn't all there is to life," you said
> with your blue-ringed gaze
> scanning the page
> once looking over my shoulder.
> And my words
> being clenched,
> smaller and
> smaller.

In contrast, the poem, "My Perfect Mother," described a loving mother. The author wrote, "Since I entered the world, you have cared for me like no other…You have been there to love and protect me from birth to this very day." The author's mother is said to have provided the support that was needed when challenges arose, "When there's clouds covering my path, or a problem I am about to face, you'll be the one to wipe away my tears, and put everything back in its place." In this poem the author articulated the need for nurturing and care and this mother's capacity to provide it.

In the poem, "A Woman," the author detailed a scene of a mother failing to provide for her child's needs. The story is told in the third person, with an unidentified mother, "that woman in the corner begging for a penny" as the main character. The poem "Poverty Must Die" detailed the image of a mother who failed to provide food. The author arrived home hungry and saw "mama standing with a little pot." The author realized in that moment that the pot was clean. The mother had no food to quell her child's hunger.

One author employed the third person when he described a husband abusing his wife. In "Is this the Meaning of Love?" the author wrote:

> He became angry and started beating his wife.
> He kicked and kicked more than a soccer player willing to score a goal
> His wife bleeds and her eyes were full of tears,
> like clouds formed to rain.

In the poem, "What Kind of Woman?," the author wrote of a disempowered woman. She first asked the readers to question what kind of woman they are and then answered her own question by identifying herself as "a woman in Power." She wrote:

> What kind of a woman
> who sleeps her way to the top?

What kind of a woman
who straps a man with a baby to save
her relationship?
What kind of a woman
with fake boobs, fake nails, fake hair
but wants a real man?
What kind of woman who forgives her husband's infidelity?
What kind of woman are you?
Are you the kind of a woman who looks down on other women?
I am a woman in Power.
Give me a pulpit
so that I can preach.

In relation to their peers, the youth described how some women succumb to the desire for material things such as, "Expensive clothes, expensive jewelry, expensive shoes (especially stilettos, red ones)." In the poem, "Success," an author wrote of a young woman who believed that education was a "waste of time," that hard work was "not in her vocabulary", and "All that she needed was quick bucks." The author then wrote of her own need to intervene, to remind her peer that "her failure was my failure, her success would be my goal." Together, the young women collaborate: "we sit, we talk, we solve." Finally, the author revealed that today her peer is "a qualified nurse in England, thriving through success and hard work." Another author wrote of "survival and sisterhood."

Men. Men are referred to in the roles of fathers, sons, and husbands. In nearly all of the poems about Mandela, he was referred to as a father or Tata, the Xhosa word for father, or as Tata Madiba, a title of respect that refers to Mandela's membership in the Thembu clan. Mandela was described as "the father of the nation," "Our father, the unbreakable," and "a father to the fatherless." Bra Solly is also described as a father figure who provided unconditional love and support. Notably, across the poems Mandela

is predominantly referred to as the "Father of South Africa" whereas Bra Solly is referred to as the "Son of Africa."

Mandela and Bra Solly are described as strong, loving fathers; however, the other unnamed fathers are not described with such reverence. One poem detailed a father as a powerless victim of theft when two men stole his car. The youth wrote of the need to help their fathers, "We sing songs of remedy that might heal our fathers." They craved fathers who "who will not run away from their children." In one poem, a man was described as having "lost all hope and given up on life." In the poem, "Cursed be the Day I Was Born," the author wrote of her father's intention (and failure) to kill her in her mother's womb. She wrote: "May he hear wailing in the morning. A battle cry at noon. For he did not kill me in the womb with my mother as my grave, her womb enlarged forever."

Theme 5: Heroes

Many youth used their poetry to process the deaths of Nelson Mandela and Bra Solly; however, they also used their poems to describe how these men lived and the legacies that they left behind.

Mandela. Several poems articulated the vast influence of Nelson Mandela's life on the nation of South Africa, the continent of Africa, and the world at large. The youth wrote both of his individual influence and of his collective influence. They wrote, "He made our country a better place for me…and you.", "he cured the injustices of this world," "a giant of people who healed broken souls." The youth described "our people" before Mandela's release from prison as "hopeless people," "oppressed," "destroyed," and "a nation of orphans." In contrast, Mandela was described as a "powerful leader," a

"patriarch," "a king," and "a lion" who came to the rescue of a "powerless" and "voiceless" people.

The poem "27 Years" described how one author envisioned the suffering Mandela endured in the fight against apartheid:

> 27 years of pain in isolation.
> Your hands and feet bound together by the chains of racism and segregation.
> Causing you to suffer insults and stumble under the boots and whips of apartheid.
> For all the years that you were caged behind bars of melancholy, you pointed your eyes to the undying stars and meditated on the vision of changing the lives of the oppressed.
> On an island that was supposed to break your spirit, you held on to the dreams of an equal and free generation…
> In the dense dark tunnels of human corruption
> you lifted your fist up,
> And believed that the walls of brutality will one day fall and be replaced by the streams of justice for all.

Other authors wrote similarly of the violence Mandela survived: "For you took the lashes for us all. Fighting against every kind of domination.", "He saved us from tyranny, rescued us from bondage, gave us freedom, and prevented a racial holocaust." The poem "#ProudlySouth African" also addressed Mandela's plight:

> They tortured him and called him nasty names.
> They laughed at his Black skin of which he was proud of.
> They did all bad things to him,
> thinking that they were breaking his spirit.
> But to him it was a different story.
> He knew his rights, all he wanted was his people to be free.
> Free from the white man's arms,
> free from apartheid,
> free from all of it…
> Free!
> He fought for it because it belonged to him.

Mandela's legacy loomed large in the minds of the youth. They wrote about his enduring presence, "Like blowing trumpets, the echoes of your voice continue to chant songs of peace in our hearts and minds.", "Wherever Nelson Mandela is, in my mind's

eye he is a shooting star.", "What he said is still in people's minds. What he did still makes people smile. What he promised will still make people believe.", "At night he is like the moon surrounded by stars… His kindness is a gentle breeze that flows amongst us."

The youth wrote of Mandela as a facilitator of nationalism and racial pride: "I am able to speak my language and feel proud all because of your hard work. I am now in a place where I can call South Africa home all because of you.", "The man, the legend, fought for my freedom…He made me proud to be of my own skin." The poem "Father" expressed the author's deference to and gratitude for Mandela:

> I have a voice today because of you, Tata.
> I have a life today because of you, Tata.
> I am Black and proud because of you, Tata.
> I am an African.
> And all thanks to you:
> Tata Nelson Mandela

Only one author challenged the legacy of Mandela. This author acknowledged Mandela's intention to heal the ailing state, but the focus of the poem was on where Mandela fell short. In the poem titled "Peace" the author challenged the 'Mandela as savior' narrative. He wrote:

> I know you are an ailing statesman, who was trying to heal my ailing state, man.
> But I have folks who believed every one of your statements.
> Hey, can they call you fake, man?
> I know I sound bitter, but that's because I am bitter.

This poem revealed disappointment and anger that Mandela did not fully deliver the "Rainbow Nation" that he promised. In the poem, "South Africa, the Rainbow Nation" this same author questioned the 'rainbow nation' narrative:

> Rainbow nation…
> what a metaphor.

Maybe I'm color blind,
but there's no black or white in the rainbow is there?
A rainbow fades either way.

The author described a reality that is full of hardship and struggle. The author is determined to succeed but wrote of being keenly aware of the challenges that plague the community. He questioned if Mandela could hear them: "Uya ndiva Tata?" translated as "Do you hear me father?" Notably, this line is the only line across all of the poems in which English is not used, but rather the author chose to communicate in a language of South Africa.

Bra Solly. The youth also used poetry as a means of processing the loss and honoring the life of Solomon Mahlangu, known as Bra Solly, a staff member of Bokamoso Youth Centre who died suddenly and unexpectedly in the Spring of 2014. Bra Solly was revered by the youth for both his strength and his tenderness. In contrast to their poems about Mandela, when referring to Solly, the youth used more singular, first person ("I") statements. They wrote of his impact on their individual lives, and shared how he personally changed their lives for the better. They also wrote of his influence on the collective youth of Bokamoso:

To Bokamoso he was a heavenly hamper,
a blanket of love to warm the cold,
a source of hope to the hopeless,
a shield to the defenseless.
A man. A HERO.

One author wrote that no words could describe Solly's great work, "But we are all fed and growing from it." They wrote about how dedicated he was to sharing knowledge and teaching the youth about their roots: "He saw the best in us and he helped us believe in ourselves.", "He dedicated his life for the benefit of Winterveldt." Solly was described

as not only believing in the youth of Bokamoso, but also passionately believing in the resilience of their entire community:

> He believed in a community that would raise heroes.
> Mothers who will stand unshaken by poverty.
> Fathers who will not run away from their children.
> Citizens who will raise their voices to be heard.
> Breaking the chains created by the apartheid system,
> Healing wounds created by unmerciful creatures.

They referred to him as "a father," "a friend," "a mentor," "a son," "a brother," "a counselor," "a legend," "a guardian angel," "a hero," "a leader," a wise "Buddha" with a contagious laugh, "a community builder," and "a speaker for the voiceless." The youth wrote, "Your wisdom, telling tales that made us laugh non-stop for days, still echoes at the back of our minds.", "Your love for jokes still brightens our faces with uncontrollable smiles to this day. We will never untie you from our hearts." One author wrote:

> Let me not disturb your sleep,
> but know that you planted a seed of education
> inside my dense life sprout,
> a sprout that will blossom
> as if it was never kept under a dark hole.
> When the world treated us like trash,
> you treated us like treasure.
> When the world saw the worst in us,
> you saw the best in us.

Theme 6: Time

Several poems included references to the past, the present, and the future. The youth referred to the present more frequently than to the past or the future, indicating, perhaps, that their poetry may serve as less of a vehicle for articulating the past or envisioning the future, but more significantly as a means of articulating, reflecting on, and describing their present. In place of using the words "past," "present," and "future," the youth frequently used the words "today," "tomorrow," and "yesterday."

There were only two reference to the past made with the use of the word "yesterday." Some notable lines included: "yesterday is but a dream", "I may have cried yesterday." There were 12 references to the future with the use of the word "tomorrow": "Tomorrow is only a vision.", "Tomorrow will be a vision of hope.", "My children, my brothers, my friends: you are the worlds and the future of tomorrow.", "In a timeless second I went back into the past to reshape what lies ahead and come back in time to ready myself for tomorrow's harvest.", "Every tomorrow will be a vision of hope.", "I may have went to bed with an empty stomach, but I have lived to see today for tomorrow I will eat success.", and "Tomorrow I will rejoice."

There were 19 uses of the word "today." Notable lines included: "Today we live in a world that is democratic.", "Today we believe that the battle for freedom will be conquered.", "Today we live in a world that is free from all forms of discrimination.", "Today we lift up our right hand and cry out, Mandela!!", "Today, through his power, our Bokamoso is known overseas.", "Today as I walk down the streets of Africa I saw young mothers and fathers perplexed and in trauma of their own ignoramus actions.", "I have a voice today because of you, Tata. I have a life today because of you, Tata.", "Today we embrace our differences.", "Today we are a free generation", "Today we stand to say, enough is enough to pains!", "Today she is a qualified nurse in England. Thriving through success and hard work.", and "Who would I be if I was not where I am today?"

Theme 7: Questioning

In nearly 1500 lines of poetry in 74 poems, the youth asked 32 questions. These questions spanned a range of themes. Table 3 lists each of the 32 questions categorized into themes.

Table 2

Thematic categorization of questions

Theme	Question
Effect of the past on the present	What would I be if I was not where I am today?
	Not forgetting his fellows: Steve Biko, Walter Sisulu, Hector Peterson, and the list goes on and on.
	Had it not been for them,
	Where would we be now?
	Where would I really be?
Faith/God	
	What is it that our soul is seeking for? (4x)
	Lord, can you hear me speak?
	Oh my Lord, what shall I do when my heart is burning down?
Born Free generation	
	Do we see Mandela's legacy within our brothers and sisters?
	What happened to dreams?
	How much time do we all need?
	What happened to reach the sky?
	Who will wake you up? Who will prepare the journey for you?
	Who will stand on your behalf?
Gender	
	What kind of a woman who sleeps her way to the top?
	What kind of a woman who straps a man with a baby to save her relationship?
	What kind of a woman with fake boobs, fake nails, fake hair but wants a real man? What kind of woman who forgives her husband's infidelity? What kind of woman are you?
	Are you the kind of a woman who looks down on other women?
	What kind of woman are you?
Success	
	Who said that I can't be president? Who said that I can't be a millionaire?
Hunger	
	Where is my food?
Mandela	
	Hey, can they call you fake, man?...
	Uya ndiva Tata? (translation: Do you hear me father?)
	Did his mother know she conceived a king?
	Did she know that she was bearing a leader?
	Did she know she gave life to a nation builder?
South Africa: "The Rainbow Nation"	
	Maybe I'm color blind, but there's no black or white in the rainbow is there?
Love	
	Is that the meaning of love?
Changing the world	
	This world is waiting, waiting for you to change it.
	Will you?

Summary

In this chapter I have identified seven themes that addressed the research questions of the study: (1) identity; (2) environment; (3) emotional expression; (4) gender; (5) heroes; (6) time; and (7) questioning. I have illustrated and supported these themes with full poems, stanzas, lines, and words. I have also presented an analysis of the use singular and plural pronouns from the first, second and third person points of view. The next chapter will include: a note on subjectivity, interpretations of the findings, recommendations for future study, recommendations for practitioners and clinicians, limitations observed in the current study, and a concluding statement.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter 5, I will present my interpretations of the findings from the previous chapter. The purpose of the study was to address the significant lack of literature surrounding how Born Frees understand and experience the risks that surround them, and to address the lack of narratives coming from the perspective of the Born Frees themselves. It is my intention that study will provide a stark contrast to the abundance of literature on South African youth that relies on the language of deficit and, thus, preserves colonizing attitudes, systemic inequalities, and problem-saturated dominant narratives. Another purpose of the current study was to critically examine how youth enrolled in the Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa use poetry to reinterpret their individual and collective experiences as a way of articulating their present and future needs. Three research questions guided the study:

RQ1. How do historical and institutional narratives intersect with the Born Free generation's construction and reconstruction of their personal and collective identities?

RQ2. How does the Born Free generation envision and enact their agency within the form and content of their poetry?

RQ3. How do the Born Free generation's narratives maintain, question, or subvert distributions of power?

The chapter will include the following sections: a note on subjectivity, interpretations of the findings, recommendations for future study, recommendations for practitioners and clinicians, limitations observed in the current study, and a concluding statement.

A Note on Subjectivity

Discursive practices realize and reproduce social formations at a systemic and institutional level (van Dijk, 1989). The language we use constructs and affects our perceptions of other people and of ourselves (Wareing, 2004). As I analyzed the poems, I tried to frequently remind myself of Fairclough's (2006) caution:

> Language can represent as well as misrepresent realities can, it weave visions and imaginaries which can be implemented to change realities and in some cases improve human well-being, but it can also rhetorically obfuscate realities, and construe them ideologically to serve unjust power relations. (p.1)

As such, my interpretations are based on my subjective reading of individual poems and analysis of the poems as a collective expression of the Born Free generation. In my clinical work as a therapist, I attune to clients, actively and empathically listen to their stories, and help them to identify patterns of language and behavior. I view my role not as an expert but, as a witness and companion. As a researcher, I will discuss my findings in much the same way, offering a summary of narratives that resonate in the poetry, and investigating the form and content of the language. I will discuss my interpretations of the findings from a stance of curiosity as opposed to a stance of knowing. These interpretations are not assumptions to be read as truths. As explained in my subjectivity statement in Chapter Three, my interpretations are informed by my experiences, my personality, my multiple identities, my relationship to the staff and youth of Bokamoso, and my own relationship to and understanding of agency and power. Within the text of this chapter I have interwoven reflections on my own experiences and observations at Bokamoso to provide a deeper contextual understanding of the findings of

the study. In the next section, I will present the research questions and discuss interpretations of the findings as related to each question.

Interpretations

Research Question 1: How do historical and institutional narratives intersect with the Born Free generation's construction and reconstruction of their personal and collective identities?

To explore the first research question, I first identified the historical and institutional narratives recycled within the poems. I then examined how the youth expressed their the individual and collective identities and how these identities challenged or affirmed dominant narratives.

Voice. Writers use voice to construct a self out of sometimes conflicting identities and roles (Perrow, 2000). Concepts of voice contain potential for navigating and interpreting "paradoxes of identity" (Perrow, 2000, p.30). Within the poetry, the youth expressed a multiplicity of roles and identities in sometimes as little as one utterance. After thoroughly analyzing the thematic content of the poems, I then became deeply engaged with how the youth used language to claim and articulate their identities. I started asking questions as to not only what they were writing about but why they were writing these poems and how they were writing them. As I read and re-read the poems, I found myself drawn to how the youth referred to themselves as individuals, as members of groups, and how they referenced individuals and institutions outside of their collective identities. It was at this point that I noticed that a majority of the poems were written from the author's (i.e. first person) point of view, and were based on personal experiences and beliefs. Some poems referred to collective identities and group membership, but few

poems were from the point of view of other people or other groups. I realized then that their usage of pronouns in the poetry may help to illuminate how the youth perceive themselves and the world around them.

Intrigued by this observation, I decided to conduct an analysis of the frequency of use of pronouns in all 74 poems. The most prominent finding was that the youth primarily used the singular first person pronoun ("I") in the majority of their writing. I understood this linguistic pattern as a possible indication that the youth may use their poetry to project and express their own personal views and experiences, as opposed to using the poetry to express their views as representatives of a larger group. "I" statements articulated the authors' positions in relation to the content of the poems. As Perrow (2000) suggested, social entities are created with first person pronouns. I also observed in the writing that first person framing indicated the youths' personal involvement and commitment in both their personal lives and as members of the collective.

Collectivism. South African culture is known to be collectivist; however, the poetry reflected a dedication to personal exploration, growth and individual development. Despite the frequent use of a singular first person point of view (i.e., "I" statements), I believe that the poetry serves a collective function and embodies the spirit of *ubuntu*, an ancient African worldview that highlights the essential unity of humanity. Roughly translated in isiXhosa, one of South Africa's eleven official languages, *ubuntu* means "I am because we are." Noble Laureate and renowned anti-apartheid activist, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (1999), explained how he conceptualizes *ubuntu*, "My humanity is caught up, inextricably bound up in yours: for we can only be human together" (para. 1).

Writing from the first person perspective emphasized individual introspection and expression; however, the act of sharing the poetry with their peers, their community, and broader audiences in the United States can be interpreted as an effort to promote collectivism, to unite audiences despite racial, social, or geographic differences. When the youth used the pronouns "we," "us," and "our" they specifically chose pronouns of unity, and, in so doing, encouraged solidarity and shared humanity. These pronouns, referred to as "in group" pronouns (Hasan, 2011), may indicate that, at times, the authors were writing not just about themselves as individuals, but also as members of a larger collective. Hasan (2011) defined 'in-groups' as any group one belongs to and identifies with, and 'out-groups' as any alternative group that one does not belong to or identify with.

The legacy of liberation. When analyzing the poems, it became apparent that the youth used their poetry as a means of remembering, grieving and honoring their heroes, Nelson Mandela and Solomon Mahlangu. I paid close attention to when the youth referred to themselves as individuals and when they referred to themselves as members of a broader group when referring to these losses. The use of pronouns in the poems about Nelson Mandela and Solomon Mahlangu revealed the complexity of the intersection between institutional narratives and individual and collective identities. Analysis of the poems revealed the following dominant narrative related specifically to Mandela's legacy: Mandela liberated the people of South Africa and, as a result, the Born Free generation will forever be indebted to him. The youth also presented the following counter narrative: Black South Africans were and continue to be their own liberators.

Mandela, our savior. The narrative of Mandela as a savior and liberator was present in a majority of the poems. The authors hailed Mandela as the beloved father of their nation. They identified the former president as the penultimate hero who saved them from tyranny and gave them freedom. Mandela was repeatedly described as a fierce fighter who single-handedly conquered apartheid. The youth intricately narrated how Mandela endured imprisonment, brutal violence, and humiliation to ensure their freedom. The youth also articulated feeling forever indebted to Mandela because he fought for their lives. Several of the youth expressed gratitude to Mandela for giving them the opportunity to live a free life, a life in which they are allowed to grow and prosper and have a voice. His death was collectively expressed by the youth as a monumental loss, both collectively and personally. They articulate repeatedly in their poetry that no man shall ever be able to eclipse Mandela's legacy.

Through their poetry, the youth made meaning of the life and loss of Mandela. They repeatedly recycled a narrative of Mandela as the leader of a people in desperate need of saving. Implicit in this narrative is the suggestion that the people of South Africa could not save themselves. The content of the poems reinforced the dominant narrative that Mandela liberated oppressed Black South Africans and that the nation and the Born Frees are forever indebted to him.

Inherent in this dominant narrative is the notion that the fall of apartheid was due to *one* man, as opposed to generations of freedom fighters, community leaders, students, activists, teachers, clergy and ordinary men and women who defiantly opposed the oppressive regime for decades before Mandela's imprisonment and eventual release. The narrative also reinforces the misconception that apartheid was a distinct period of time,

beginning in 1948, and ending at the start of Mandela's presidency. However, as Foster (2012) wrote, "…apartheid wasn't a system spring full blown from the segregationist theories of National Party leaders in 1948; rather, apartheid was a cultural and political expression deeply rooted in patterns of racial oppression developed systematically during centuries of colonial rule (p.16). In the process of exalting their national hero, the recycling and repetition of the 'Mandela as savior' narrative disavows the history of the citizens who fought for and, at times, died for their own freedom and the freedom of future generations.

Bra Solly, a hero among us. In the third poetry collection, the language of grief, deference to a hero, and the loss of a father were strikingly similar to the poetry about Mandela. However, these poems were about Solomon Mahlangu, known as Bra Solly, a staff member of Bokamoso Youth Centre who died suddenly and unexpectedly in the Spring of 2014. The youth used poetry as a means of processing this loss and honoring his life.

In contrast to the poems about Mandela, in the poems about Bra Solly the youth explored their connections to a man they personally knew and loved. They acknowledged how Bra Solly's greatest gift to them was his willingness to see their potential. Solly offered the youth an alternative narrative, counter to the dominant narrative of Born Frees as powerless and destined for failure. The youth wrote about how Solly believed that their community, Winterveldt, could raise heroes: mothers unshaken by poverty, present fathers, citizens unafraid to raise their voices, and a collective dedicated to healing the wounds of apartheid.

Solly did not, however, claim to be a miraculous healer and the youth did not write of him as their savior. Instead, they wrote of how he reinforced the message that the youth are not bound by their nation's past, but rather, they are South Africa's future. They also acknowledged that to honor Bra Solly's life, they must live out the lives he envisioned for them, lives in which they are not victims of their history or their current circumstances. The youth wrote not just of honoring the life of Bra Solly through words, but rather, they wrote that they must honor him through dedication to continuing their education, hard work, service to each other and their community, and by taking responsibility for their actions.

The poems also described how the youth experienced the complexity and openness of Bra Solly. In contrast to the poems about Mandela, the youth understood that Solly's strength came from a willingness to show emotion, to be vulnerable, to be imperfect but still worthy. They described him as strong and courageous, but willing to be weak, to cry, and be vulnerable.

By example, Solly modeled what, he believed, the youth were capable of. He was a local leader, a beloved community member, a father figure who empowered countless youth. When I was at Bokamoso, I remember being told of the various times that Solly would be called in to de-escalate violence in the township. When they danced together the youth joyously demonstrated Solly's unforgettable high kicks. They spoke time and time again of his laughter, and his love for volleyball. He was a hero, but he was also a fallable human, a man born and raised in Winterveldt. His life provided them with hope that they, too, can affect change in their own lives and in their community.

Learning to lead. During my time in South Africa in 2008, I frequently heard hushed predictions of what would occur after Mandela's death. White, Black and Colored South Africans warned me to leave the country if Mandela were to die. They predicted an eruption of violence and unrest, a dismantling of all of the progress that had been made since the fall of apartheid. Looking back, I can identify the same dominant narrative that is present in the poetry: we are nothing without Mandela.

When he died in 2013, the predictions of immediate collapse did not come to fruition. However, the challenges that South Africans face are dire, and honoring the legacy of Nelson Mandela is not, and cannot be, the only impetus for progress. Though they honor Mandela and Solly as admirable leaders, the youth also identify individually and collectively as leaders. They seek change for themselves and their loved ones. They honor and mourn their heroes but have used their poetry to reconstruct dominant narratives by constructing new narratives in which they are leaders capable of continuing the journey from oppression to liberation for all South Africans.

Research Question 2: How does the Born Free generation envision and enact their agency within the form and content of their poetry?

To answer the second research question, I explored how the youth articulated their capacity, as individuals and as a generation, to determine their own future. The poetry facilitated a means for the youth to make meaning of the challenges and barriers to opportunity that they have faced. The struggle to survive and thrive, was a theme that ran throughout nearly all of the 74 poems. The youth recycled the dominant narrative of their generation as a high risk population, bound by their circumstances; however, they also

countered this narrative by exhibiting a steadfast determination to create opportunties, to lead, succeed and to thrive.

Analysis of the poems revealed the following dominant narrative related to the legacy of apartheid: The Born Free generation are disillusioned, disappointed and rendered powerless in the aftermath of the codified injustice and oppression of apartheid. The youth also put forward a counter narrative: Free from the formal constraints of apartheid, the Born Free generation are aware of and possess insight into the many barriers to opportunity left in the wake of apartheid. This awareness and insight has informed their determination to thrive.

Born free?. Through the language of poetry, the youth detailed the environments and experiences that troubled them. They wrestled with the notion that although they were born into freedom, their circumstances are as oppressive and as unequal as in generations prior and, as a result, they feel, at times, powerless. Their poems addressed topics such as violence, crime, substance abuse, poverty, loss, hunger, intimate partner violence, depression, and suicide.

Several poems described Born Frees as dreamless, lazy and careless, a generation of procrastinators. They characterized their generations as being susceptible to manipulation by those in authority. Repeated references to feeling voiceless indicated a lack of agency and collective feelings of disempowerment. They wrote about crying and poetically described their tears. They explored feeling alone and afraid. One author wrote of trembling in fear, afraid of the night. However, their poems also revealed their insistence that the challenges they face do not define or limit their dedication to a better future for all. Though they condemned their generation for its failure to thrive, they also

articulated the notion that feelings and emotions do not define their identities, but rather are but one layer in a complexity of narratives.

Taking Action. Snyder (1994) solidified a theoretical conceptualization to explain hope as a dynamic cognitive motivational system. His two-pronged system extended beyond the common definition of hope as an emotion (Snyder, 1994). Hope Theory (Snyder, 1994) suggested that in order for people to attain an objective and purpose, they must view themselves as agents able to develop and implement the actions required for their specific goal pursuits (Snyder et al., 2002b). In their poetry, the youth articulated their belief in their capacity for collective and personal achievement. They not only identified their goals, but they also wrote of how they can pursue these goals.

To counter the dominant narrative of the Born Frees as disillusioned and disempowered, the youth used their poetry to articulate their vision for their future, to defy the limitations created by their environment and circumstances. They regarded their generation as the leaders and liberators. They proclaimed that how you think determines who you are.

The youth acknowledged their struggles, but also articulated their resolve to persevere. They wrote that despite going to bed hungry, they arose each morning ready to seize another day of possibility. They envisioned a tomorrow in which they do not have to cry, a future filled with harvest and success. In one particularly powerful poem about a suicide attempt, the author boldly declared in the last line of the poem that she decided to live. This line is significant in underlining a prominent theme throughout the three collections of poetry: These youth have chosen to not only survive, but to live and thrive. Their poetry revealed a profound sense of accountability, and their words serve as a call

to arms to the Born Free generation to be their own liberators. Their message of ownership, of daring authenticity and tenacity for life serves as a call to arms for all readers, not only for the Born Free of South Africa. Their words transcend nationality, culture, or race. Through their poetry they reveal themselves both as students and teachers, weary and wise.

The poems revealed that these young people are hungry for nourishment, literally and figuratively. Several authors wrote of actual hunger for food, but they also, implicitly, communicated a hunger for love and affection. They identified Bokamoso as a place where they can explore what they need and identify how they can get it. They described the center as a place where they become leaders of tomorrow, where motivation is compulsory, and where dreams become a reality. The poems described the Bokamso Youth Centre as providing an environment that empowers them with the belief that they can be catalysts of change, and to help them implement the necessary actions to achieve their goals. It is evident in the poetry that Bokamoso provides support and caring not only from the staff but, perhaps more importantly, the youth develop a profound love and dedication to each other.

Showing up. The fact that the youth show up to the center everyday despite their many challenges, illustrates their desire and dedication to achieve their goals. They identified 'showing up' as the first and, perhaps, the most important step. They then identify the importance to keep going, despite the challenges they may face. In one poem, the author referred to the long road and his torn shoes. To a reader who may not have familiarity with Bokamoso, one might infer this line as a metaphor. In fact, this line has both literal and figurative meaning. I can recall clearly the tattered and torn shoes of

many of the youth who have to leave their homes one to two hours early every morning to walk or take various forms of public transportation to the center each day. Despite the obstacles, they showed up, they kept going.

Writing. As I engaged with the poetry, it became clear to me that beyond the content of the poems, the very act of writing the poetry is, in fact, evidence of the youths' capacity to envision the future they want and exert the power needed to achieve it. There is much value in exploring the content and language of the poetry, but what may be even more valuable is the understanding that the fact that they wrote these poems at all, and had the courage to share them, is the true illustration of their agency.

In their poetry, the youth bared their souls, revealed their darkest moments and their deepest desires, and they explored painful emotions. They take risks in their writing and in their lives. While some of the youth may write poems for fun, it is apparent that for many of the youth the need to express themselves is as powerful as their need for oxygen. For them, poetry is life-sustaining. They don't write because they can, they write because they have to. Writing is how they enact their individual and collective agency to invoke change. They take action by courageously sharing their stories with the world and declaring that their words matter.

I can recall the small bits of newspaper, the backs of labels, and the torn notebook paper with poems scribbled on the back from which the youth would read their poetry. When I led my art therapy group with the youth I noticed that pens, markers, and crayons would go missing. The next morning, over their shoulders, I would see their poems handwritten in bold colors. They read their poems out loud as they clutched the pens, markers and crayons that had, temporarily, gone missing.

How the youth described themselves is not the same image of the Born Free generation presented by the media. A full analysis of how the Born Frees are presented in the media is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but the following quote provides a fairly representative depiction. In a New York Times article titled, "Twenty years after Apartheid," Joao Silva (2014), a photojournalist known for his photographs of the violence in the days before and immediately following the fall of apartheid, wrote, "The Born Free generation, which came after apartheid, is also born poor. Violence appears to be its only tool, much as it was two decades ago against those removed from power" (para. 31). The youth challenge this limiting portrayal. They may lack economic resources, but for these young people, violence is not their only tool of resistance, words are.

Research Question 3: How do the Born Free generation's narratives maintain, question, or subvert distributions of power?

Language has power. We can employ language to represent and construct society by reproducing unequal power relations, or we can use language to question and dismantle the narratives that engender inequality and oppression. In the poems, the youth used language to frame themselves as objects of societal positioning**,** but also as subjects capable of deciding their own future and enacting change on both a personal and institutional level. The poetry illustrated how they youth employed "linguistic manifestations of power" (Roubidoux, 2012, p.1) by making discursive choices in the construction of their identities.

The frequent use of "I" statements reflected their portrayal of themselves as protagonists of their own stories. As protagonists, they identified discourses that

categorized the world in ways that "legitimate, maintain and perpetuate social inequality patterns and unequal relations of power" (Tileaga, 2006, p. 484). They problematized and challenged these dominant narratives, and, ultimately, wrote of their commitment to enact change, declaring that the fate of prior generations does not have to be their own fate. In several poems the youth specifically rejected and refuted recycled institutional narratives that diminish their capacity to succeed and to lead. The use of the singular first person pronoun "I" demonstrated agency and a willingness to question the narratives that minimize their potential.

Questioning.

The content of the poetry indicated that the youth were comfortable exploring their vulnerabilities and uncertainties; however, not all of the youth displayed a willingness to challenge some of the underlying dominant narratives that promote disempowerment. In the article "Structures of Discourse and Structures of Power" Van Djik (1989) wrote,

> Power must be analyzed in relation to various forms of counter power or resistance by dominated groups (or by action groups that represent such groups), which also is a condition for the analysis of the social and historical challenge and change. (p. 21)

The poetry functions as a form of "counter power or resistance" (Van Djik, 1989, p.21). Some poems indicated the youths' socialization into accepting what they were told as opposed to questioning, problematizing, challenging, and enacting change. As presented in Chapter 4, in over 1,500 lines of poetry in 74 poems, the youth asked only

32 questions. The infrequent use of questions could potentially suggest that questioning or challenging the status quo is not an accepted or valued aspect of their culture.

Respect for elders. In South Africa deference to and respect for elders is of the utmost importance. Youth are taught not to make eye contact with people who are older than them. Staring at someone older than you is considered a challenge to authority. The relatively limited amount of explicit questions in the poetry may be related more directly to cultural norms than to the youths' ability or inability to question distributions of power. However, for some youth, their poetry provided an opportunity to ask questions that they, perhaps, would not feel allowed to ask or may feel ashamed to ask in conversation.

Questioning Mandela's saint-like persona is not a common occurrence due to the nation's reverence for his leadership, and also out of cultural respect of elders. Dedicated reverence for Mandela was present in nearly all of the poems in which he is referenced; however, one author boldly challenged the legacy of Mandela. Challenging social convention, one author acknowledged Mandela's intention to heal the ailing state, but the focus of the poem was on where Mandela fell short. The author wrote that the people of South Africa believed in Mandela's vision of a new South Africa, a nation where opportunity, equality and justice would be accessible to all people; then, outright, the author called Mandela a fake. This poem revealed disappointment and anger that Mandela did not fully deliver the "Rainbow Nation" that he promised. The poem was also self-reflective in that the author commented on the tone of the poem, declaring to the reader that that he/she (the author) sounds bitter because he/she is bitter. The poem directly questioned whether or not the Born Frees are truly free.

Faith. Another example of how the youth questioned power can be illustrated in their questions related to God. Questions of faith are generally unwelcome in the predominantly Christian culture that emphasizes God's power. Church and prayer are a prominent part of the lives of the youth and their community. Some poems suggested the youths' curiosity as to whether their prayers were being heard. In the wake of the loss of Bras Solly, they wrote of the struggle to understand how a higher power would fail to intervene in a situation that caused them so much pain. In one poem the author asks for permission to blame God. In their poetry, the youth questioned their relationship with God and, in doing so, they explored faith in their own way, not in the prescribed way they may be socialized to accept.

Gender and Power. Gender is constructed in and through discourse, it is discursively created and sustained (Xue, 2008. p. 55). An examination of how and when the youth referred to gender (their own and the gender others) revealed power differences between men and women that were both explicitly stated and implicitly communicated. To understand how the poetry provided insight into the power relations among Born Frees, it is important to understand the context of gender in South Africa.

Gender in South Africa. South Africa's 1996 constitution "enshrined equality for women" (Jewekes, 2013) and made discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation against the law. In the years since, the position of women has improved as compared to the apartheid era, when rural class adult women were recognized by the government as legal minors (Jewekes, 2013). Currently, middle and upper-class women in urban areas have greater access to education and are active in politics in business; however, women living in poverty, especially in rural areas like Winterveldt have not had

access to these opportunities. Despite the removal of codified discrimination based on gender in the constitution, women in South Africa remain especially vulnerable to violence and sexual assault as compared to their male counterparts. In fact, there is no evidence that gender based violence is any less common than it was during apartheid (Jewekes, 2013).

Vetten (2015) provided a summary of the current statistics:

> Various media outlets have, in the past, reported that Interpol has crowned South Africa the rape capital of the world at least twice. The BBC alleges that South African women are more likely to be raped than learn to read. Another British newspaper asserts that up to 40% of women suffer this fate in their lifetimes. The "Blow the Whistle" campaign from a non-government organization claims that one in three South African women will experience rape. And neither of these sets of numbers capture the rapes that are never brought to the police's attention. (Official Statistics Don't Tell the Full Story Section, para. 2 and 3)

Power inequity, the high prevalence of rape, and intimate partner violence also increase the risk of HIV infection in young South African women (Jewkes et al., 2010). Additionally, not only are women at a high risk for sexual assault, they are also at risk of domestic violence and murder by a partner. On average, one South African woman is murdered by her partner every eight hours (T.W., 2015, para. 1), and the murder rate for women in South Africa is more than three times the worldwide average, and the rate of murder-by-partner more than four times (para. 3).

I am cautious of interpreting statistics as truth as these numbers are also discursive in nature and their veracity must not be accepted without question. However,

the poems provided subjective context to support the general notion that women in South Africa are frequently subjugated and victimized. The poems both affirmed and challenged this grim portrait.

Gender pronouns. To begin to understand how the youth construct and reconstruct gender, I first identified all of the poems and lines of poetry that directly referred to gender. I then analyzed the use of gender pronouns. I found that female pronouns were rarely used in the poems. Of a total of 276 gender pronouns, only 15.10% of the pronouns used were female. The majority, 84.90%, of the gender pronouns used referred to men.

References to Women. Women are referred to in the poems as girls, and in the roles of mothers and wives. Some of the lines and poems referred to the author's gender, while other poems referred to women in the authors' lives, or non-identified female characters. In one poem the author referred to suicide using a female pronoun. Overwhelmingly, being female is portrayed as a negative trait.

One author wrote of being seen as "just" a teenage girl. The use of the word "just" may imply the author's belief that she is deemed inferior due to her gender and age. Another author wrote of the changing roles of women, citing alcoholism as a trait that used to be a man's failing but women have now lowered themselves to drinking. Several poems suggested a tone of judgment and, perhaps, victim-blaming of women, by women. (Though the genders of the authors were unknown, I am referring to poems in which the authors specifically identified themselves as female).

In the poetry, wives and mothers, in relation to their husbands, are described as submissive and vulnerable to a man's capacity for harm. These depictions provided

context to the statistics of intimate partner violence and by-partner homicide. One author explored the meaning of love by detailing a scene in which a husband comes home drunk. Angry that his wife does not have food ready for him, the man becomes enraged and viciously beats his wife. The poem, written in third person, does not employ first person pronouns. The reader is left to wonder if the author has experienced a scene of this nature in the role of the abusive husband, the beaten wife, or as an unmentioned child who may have witnessed the scene play out at home, or perhaps it is how the author envisions the nature of his or her future relationships.

When referring to their mothers, the youths' descriptions were varied. One author revealed how his/her mother failed to acknowledge the significance of his/her poetry and, in doing so, made the author feel invalidated and small. In contrast, one poem described a loving, caring mother who is capable of protecting and supporting the author. The author acknowledged the need for nurturing and care and this mother's capacity to provide it.

Another poem detailed a scene of a mother failing to provide for her child's needs. The story is told in the third person, with an unidentified mother as the main character. The author may have written from this point of view to distance themselves from the difficult emotions revealed in the poem. The author may, perhaps, have written about his or her own mother or may identify as the shamed mother or the crying child. Neither of these roles may be from the author's own experience, but rather, the author may identify as part of the judgmental, harsh community, failing to provide support and shaming mothers in need.

One poem included the first person representation of a mother who failed to provide food for her child. The author arrived home hungry and then saw his mother

standing with an empty pot. Despite the author's hunger, his mother had nothing to offer. Another author, self-identified as female, wrote of her view of disempowered women. The tone of the poem is notably harsher and more judgmental than the tone of the majority of other poems. The author wrote of women who sleep their way to the top and who bear children to save their relationships. The author asked the reader, "What kind of woman are you?" She then answered her own question with the declaration: "I am a woman in Power."

In relation to their peers, the youth described how some of their female peers succumbed to the desire for material things such as expensive clothes, jewelry, and shoes (specifically citing the desire for red stilettos). In another poem, the author wrote of a young woman who believed that education was a waste of time and hard work was of no value. Within that same poem, the author then wrote of her own need to intervene. Together, the young women collaborate by sitting, talking, and solving. Finally, the author revealed that today her peer is a qualified nurse in England, thriving through success and hard work.

References to the authors' own identities as female reflected empowerment and a claiming of female identity. They wrote of once being girls with dreams and now as women in power. I can recall watching these bold young women say these lines with force and ownership. How they depicted women within their poetry, however, did not exhibit this same sense of empowerment.

The women mentioned in the poems are described as: an abused, bleeding, crying wife; a dismissive mother; a shamed mother, begging for pennies, unable to quell the cries of her baby; a mother who failed to provide food for her child; and young women

who yearned for material items, don't value hard work, and who rely on sex as the only means for advancement. Two female characters are portrayed in a positive light, a caring and supportive mother and a young woman who helped another woman reach her dream of becoming a nurse.

In the context of these depictions, I wonder if the youths' declarations of female empowerment reflect how they experience (or feel they are allowed to experience) their gender outside the walls of Bokamoso. Perhaps they use these statements in their poems to experiment with empowerment, to see how it feels to claim their power in a large room filled with several men. They may possibly be using their poetry to begin a dialogue with their male counterparts and with each other about how to stop the cycle of gender based violence and discrimination. These possibilities provide important fodder for future study.

References to men. One potentially obvious explanation for the large number of male pronouns may be attributed to the many poems that are about Mandela and Bra Solly, men whose deaths had a profound impact at the times in which the youth wrote the submitted poems. These references are meaningful as they highlight the veneration of two male figures, one a national leader, one a local leader, both exalted as heroes, saviors, kings, and liberators. The poems may be reflective of a culture that values the contributions of men over the contributions of women. It should also be noted that while at Bokamoso it was my observation that a larger percentage of the Bokamoso youth were male. However, without demographic data, this claim cannot be made. If men authored more poems than women, the male dominated content and language may be reflective of the demography of the group.

The narratives of male heroes are repeated throughout the poems, with references to Steve Biko, Walter Sisulu (both Freedom Fighters during apartheid), Hector Pieterson (a 13 year old boy shot and murdered by police the 1976 Soweto Uprising), Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Ghandi and Shaka Zulu (the Zulu king and conqueror). Men are overwhelmingly portrayed as role models, cultural icons, defenders of freedom, and beacons of hope. Women are rarely referred to, and when they are, it is certainly not with such deference. (To be fair, Mother Theresa was mentioned in one line in one poem.)

Men are referred to in the poetry in their roles as fathers, sons, and husbands. In nearly all of the poems about Mandela, he is referred to as a father or Tata, the Xhosa word for father, or as Tata Madiba. Madiba is a title of respect that refers to his membership in the Thembu clan. Mandela is described as the father of the nation. Bra Solly is also described as a father figure who provided unconditional love and support. Notably, across the poems Mandela is predominantly referred to as the Father of South Africa, whereas Bra Solly is referred to as the Son of Africa.

Mandela and Bra Solly are described as strong, loving fathers and sons; however, the authors' fathers and the unnamed father characters that are referred to in the poetry do not meet these high standards. One poem detailed an author's experience of watching his father as a powerless victim of theft when two men stole his car. The youth wrote of the need to help their fathers. They craved fathers who are present in their lives. In one poem, a man was described as having lost all hope and given up on life. In another poem, the author wrote of her father's intention (and failure) to kill her in her mother's womb.

In summary, men are depicted in the poetry as courageous, noble leaders. They are also described as powerless, drunk, in need of healing, abandoning their children, hopeless, and as a husband abusing his wife in an attempt to kill her unborn child.

A deeper examination of gender is beyond the scope of the current study; however, I have detailed how the youth portray gender and it is clear that these depictions require further study. It can be surmised that both women and men feel disempowered and stuck in cycles of gender-based violence. The poetry suggests that the Born Free generation struggles in their ability to counter patriarchal customs and values that maintain unequal power distributions between the genders.

Identity in context. To fully understand the youth of Winterveldt, context must be provided. Winterveldt is one of the largest and oldest squatter settlements in the country (Mahamba, 2013). It was established in the early 1960's after the forced removals by National Party regime. The history of the township of Winterveldt includes some of the most horrific abuses that occurred during apartheid. In 1986 police opened fire during a community meeting in a soccer field (Makhetha, 2015). The community meeting was called to address the recent arrests of Black school children and police brutality. The death toll of what is known as the Winterveldt Massacre was recorded as 11. The official report stated that 70 people severely injured and 1,000 people (including children) were arrested (Makhetha, 2015). Witnesses of the massacre report that over 20 people were killed and many young people went missing and never returned (Makhetha, 2015). While researching the Winterveldt Massacre, a point that I repeatedly noted was how the recorded death toll was not reflective of the actual number of people said to be

killed. These lives, unacknowledged in the official report, were, therefore, rendered invisible.

That same year, 1986, security agents from South Africa's apartheid regime abducted 10 Black youth activists from Mamelodi township, 40 miles from Johannesburg, injected them with a coma-inducing drug, and left them to burn to death in a staged vehicle explosion (Calvert, 2005). Their bodies were dumped in a field in Winterveldt. Nearly twenty years later, in 2005, the charred remains of the "Mamelodi 10" were exhumed in a mass grave in Winterveldt, and later identified using DNA analysis (Calvert, 2005).

I was struck by this particular event not just because it took place in Winterveldt, but because it involved the intentional and premeditated torture and murder of South African youth. Youth, during apartheid, were seen as instigators of protest and unrest, and the regime wanted them silenced at all costs. The remnants of the bones of youth that were exhumed in Winterveldt stand as physical markers and evidence of the atrocities that occurred under apartheid.

In a similar vein, the poems of the Bokamoso youth also stand as markers of the past. The youths' writing illustrates that the emotional wounds of apartheid are felt deeply by the Born Free generation. Abject terror, screams for mercy, constant and consuming fear have saturated the rust red earth of Winterveldt and those who inhabit it. Through writing, the youth attempt to heal their own wounds and the wounds of generations past.

The cultural trauma of apartheid. The poetry contained narratives that support the notion that despite having been born after the formal end of apartheid, the Born Frees

are grappling with the emotional, political, economic, and social aftermath of the cultural trauma of apartheid. For the Born Frees, apartheid is not just a chapter in the history of South Africa: apartheid is part of their own story. As they detailed the traumas of the past, they also detailed their affective responses in the present including sadness, fear, loneliness, depression, and, for one author, thoughts of suicide. They narrated apartheid as a collective memory of trauma deeply embedded in their consciousness. These collective memories of cultural trauma informed their collective identity. As Born Frees, their collective identity is inextricably bound with apartheid.

Alexander et al. (2004) posited that it is not the events themselves, but rather the meaning of the events which leaves a community or group with unhealed wounds. The meanings have to be mediated and constructed, thus, traumas are culturally conceived. Being that narrative is formative, working through trauma is not merely a matter of recycling trauma or resurrecting "buried memories" but creating new ones (Alexander et al., 2004). The youth use poetry to facilitate this narrative construction and meaning making process. They have constructed counter narratives that can "unsettle the cumulative history of subjugation and help them to extricate themselves from the trap of victimization" (as cited by Hwangbo, 2004, p. 12). Using their poetry as an outlet, the youth are releasing their own emotions and the emotions of generations past. In doing so, I contend that they are constructing and creating a more positive future for all South Africans.

Within this context, it is imperative to understand that when the youth claim their racial, ethnic, local, and global identities they are not only honoring their heroes, they are honoring the generations that came before them, the lives that were deemed less worthy,

less human because of the color of their skin. The youth are declaring that they are not invisible. Their stories and their existence will no longer be buried beneath the soil of Winterveldt.

The unsayable. In the book "The Unsayable," Lacanian psychoanalyst Annie Rogers (2006) referred to "the unsayable" as traumatic content that cannot be directly articulated. Rogers wrote:

> Listening for the unsayable directly required another shift in my thinking. I was used to thinking of silences as long pauses or refusals to speak about something particular. However, to hear the unsayable I had to consider words as revealing both a conscious narrative about experience and an unconscious one. Every sentence we speak is continually surrounded by what is not said and may in fact be unsayable. Ironically you can only hear the unsayable through what is *said.* I then began to underline negations, evasions, erasures, and omissions in transcripts, making notes in the margins, listening for another melody within the spoken story. (p. 61)

Rogers' (2006) work compelled me to attend to not only what was said in the poetry, but to also pay close attention what was left unsaid. The youth described many of the challenges that they struggle with. Poverty, crime, violence, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, and depression are all vividly described in detail in the poetry. The youth not only described these challenges but they were also able to articulate their emotional responses with stunning clarity and insight. The language, form and content of the poems reflected a willingness among the youth to be vulnerable. However, they were not willing to be vulnerable in all areas. Rape, HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ related issues, and

xenophobia are not referred to or discussed in any of 74 poems despite the fact that these problems are acutely prevalent in South Africa. As such, I interpreted the absence of these topics as equally worthy of investigation as the topics that are explicitly explored in the poems. (It is important to note that some poems were generated and/or inspired by specific prompts or topics being explored in the Bokamoso curriculum. As such, I hesitate to assume that the frequency, or lack of frequency, of a topic is in direct correlation to its significance in the lives of the youth. That being said, an exploration of topics not addressed in the poems remains, in my opinion, a valuable area of exploration.)

HIV/AIDS. As discussed in earlier sections, South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV in the world (6.8 million) (UNAIDS, 2014). The Born Free generation has been particularly affected. In 2014, 1.4 million youth of the Born Free age (0-24) were living with HIV, and only 25% receiving proper treatment (Kane-Berman, 2015). Additionally, many Born Frees have lost either one or both parents to AIDS. Almost 18% of all youth under the age of 18 are classified in official statistics as orphans (Kane Berman, 2014). Despite the high prevalence and significant impact of HIV/AIDS in the lives of South African youth, this topic is not mentioned in the poetry.

Sexual assault. One in three women in South Africa are said to have experienced rape, and statistics indicate that a woman is raped every 36 seconds in South Africa (Omari, 2013). Women are uniquely vulnerable, especially young women. Yet, sexual assault is left unmentioned.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. In 1996, South Africa was the first country in the world to provide constitutional protection to LGBT South Africans, and the first nation in Africa to recognize same sex marriage (Cannon, 2014). However,

despite these formal acknowledgements of equality, people who identify as LGBT face discrimination, brutal verbal and physical attacks, rape (including "corrective rape" of lesbians), and murder (Brydum, 2014).

Topics related to sexual orientation and gender non-conformity are not mentioned in any of the poems, despite the fact that in my experience at Bokamoso some youth were open about exploring their sexuality and gender fluidity. I can recall several lengthy conversations with the youth about gender and sexuality. Many of the youth were eager to learn about my work with LGBTQ populations in the US. These conversations exhibited an engaged openness and a curiosity of gender identity and sexual orientation that was not reflected in the poetry.

Sexual assault, sexually transmitted disease and sexual orientation are all, in varying ways, related to gender, sexuality and sexual behaviors. (Though, it is important to note that rape is experienced by survivors as an act of violence, not an act of sex). The omissions of these topics reinforces the notion that sex is still a taboo topic in South Africa, especially in rural areas (Ndinda et al., 2010). The silence surrounding these topics may be due to stigma, traditional and religious values in their community, and, as a result, fear of judgment, discrimination or violence.

Bokamoso has worked to increase dialogue around these issues. The youth serve as educators in HIV prevention and engage in multiple programs to increase their knowledge and ability to protect themselves. Still, to articulate their thoughts around sex and sexuality in writing may have felt unsafe, unwelcome or uncomfortable. The knowledge that staff would read the poems and that they would be shared amongst the

youth, their community and cultural outsiders also may have deterred them from writing about these topics.

Xenophobia. Xenophobia is an increasing problem in South Africa. In recent years there have been eruptions of violence against immigrants, most frequently against people from Zimbabwe and Somalia. Stores owned by foreigners have been looted, and people have been beaten and murdered. In the Spring of 2015, seven people were killed in one month, and thousands were forced to flee due to xenophobic attacks targeted at foreigners in South Africa (Haffejee, 2015).

During my time in South Africa in 2008, I arrived just weeks after nearly 60 people were killed in anti-immigrant violence. Despite the increasing prevalence of xenophobic violence, the topic is not mentioned in the poetry. This may be because Winterveldt has not experienced the rise in this type of violence and discrimination as compared to other regions of South Africa. It may also be a result of the intensity of the violence. Social media and traditional media outlets show graphic images and videos of murders of immigrants by stoning and burning. A recent 'viral' video showed the murder of two young men by necklacing, an apartheid era mob justice punishment in which car tires are forced over victims' shoulders and set alight (Fihlani, 2011). The youths' may have difficulty articulating their responses to such horrific violence and, as a result, they may not yet be able to explore the topic in their writing. Condemning the anti-immigrant violence may also be viewed as being anti-nationalistic and not socially acceptable to express.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher has several recommendations that can be employed for more in-depth research to be produced by future scholars:

1. Researchers could consider employing face-to-face interviews with the members of the Born Free generation to articulate the content of their poems and narratives. The utilization of interviews as another data source would allow for a more detailed analysis of the perceptions and experiences of the Born Free generation to emerge. In turn, upon analysis of their interviews, the content of the poems could then be validated with data collected from the interviews. The additional resources would strengthen the themes formed from the poems and narrative, and the interviews may also extract meaningful ideas that could help in addressing the purpose and research questions of the study.
2. Researchers could consider triangulating the themes that emerged from the poems and narratives against the recommended interviews. With the triangulation of findings, the results would provide a deeper understanding of the content of the poems. Additionally, the perspective of Born Frees from other regions could be included as individuals of the same age group and generation.
3. A more in-depth analysis of how gender is constructed by the Born Frees could help to illuminate the causes of gender based violence and help to establish interventions that could potentially dismantle the cycle of violence.

4. Future research could address how the form and content of the youths' poetry reveals the developmental stage of the writers and how their writing and perspectives change over time.
5. All poems were written in English which may not be the first language of a majority of the youth. Future research that includes poems written in the youths' first languages may enable the youth to more fully and more easily articulate and communicate their emotions and experiences, thus, the poems may reveal different findings.
6. The Born Frees of South Africa are part of a collectivist culture; however, this research suggests that they use poetry primarily as a means for individual exploration and expression of their emotions and narratives. Further research that compares and contrasts the use of poetry in collectivistic versus individualistic cultures could expand our understanding of poetry as a tool both for individual and group healing.
7. I encourage future researchers to engage in Participatory Action Research (PAR) with the youth of Bokamoso. In PAR, "the reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in social relationships" (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006, p.1). In PAR, the researched cease to be objects and become partners in the whole research process: including selecting the research topic, data collection, and analysis and deciding what action should happen as a result of the research findings (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006, p.1). Work of this nature would be of great value and could produce findings, interpretations,

and, ultimately, interventions that are more culturally competent as compared to research conducted entirely by Western researchers using secondary data without the participation of the youth. Specifically in regards to cultural trauma, PAR can serve as a tool of engagement, creating an opportunities for new narratives of empowerment and ownership.

Recommendations for Practitioners and Clinicians

The following recommendations may be employed by practitioners and clinicians who wish to engage in culturally competent therapeutic work:

1. Ultimately, my intention for this dissertation was to focus on listening to the youth in a deeply engaged way. I listened with no assumption of knowing, and no intention of producing a clinical intervention that could "fix" a problem or address a certain pathology. My hope for this work is to encourage clinicians working within the United States and abroad, to allow themselves to empathically attune to a client and, in doing so, approach their work from 'not-knowing', curious stance, with a willingness to focus on questions, not answers.
2. When working in cultures far different from our own, clinicians must be willing to engage with a community in the cultural ways that are specific to the unique population and environment in which they are working. The youth use poetry and the performance of their poetry as an outlet for individual and collective expression and meaning-making. I learned through the course of this research that the narrative form of the poetry enabled the youth to express themselves in ways that the Western "50-minute hour" could not tap into. As

practitioners, we must work to understand a culture from within it, not from the outside looking in.

3. Clinicians must be willing to allow themselves to be changed by their work. Visiting Bokamoso, engaging with the youth and their community provided me with the opportunity to be deeply affected both personally and professionally. I chose to explore this experience not only for academic and clinical understanding, but to also explore my history and relationship to South Africa and to the Bokamoso youth. It is my belief that this work was enriched by embracing my identity as an emotional and sensitive being, as well as a dedicated researcher and clinician. Therapeutic work is enriched by clinicians' willingness to bring their full self into the room.
4. Words matter. Taking note of how clients refer to themselves and others can shed light on how they view themselves and how they view others in the context of multiple and, sometimes, intersecting identities.

Limitations

Although I took measures to ensure that the research study could be founded with reliability and trustworthiness, there were still several inadequacies observed that future researchers could seek to avoid. The range of poems analyzed spanned the years 2009-2014. Analysis of poems written before 2009 could result in a deeper understanding of the development of Born Free generation over a wider range of time. Another significant limitation of the study was the lack of demographic or background information about the youth. Without this information, the analysis could not specifically examine how demographic factors inform the content, language, and form of the poetry.

An additional limitation was the lack of resources to validate the themes established from the narrative analysis of the poems. As reported, the subject researched and investigated has a very limited literature scope. With this, I experienced an inadequacy of resources to confirm or validate the findings of Chapter 4. However, I made every attempt to maximize the literature available, and the findings of the current study shall hopefully contribute and aid future researchers planning on studying the same subject. Lastly, the poems were submitted by the youth with full knowledge that they would be read by Bokamoso staff, other youth, and individuals outside of their community. This may have affected the content of the poems and may have produced skewed findings.

Conclusions

From the critical narrative analysis of the poems, I was able to address all three research questions of the study. The major findings of the study revealed seven prominent themes in the poetry: (1) identity; (2) environment; (3) emotional expression; (4) gender; (5) heroes; (6) time; and (7) questioning. These findings indicated that the youth used their poetry as a means of expressing their multiple identities. They wrote primarily from the first person singular point of view, but also employed 'in-group' pronouns ("we," "our," and "us") to refer to their collectivity identity. They struggled with obstacles such as poverty, violence, domestic violence and crime but these experiences did not define their identities or limit their ability to thrive. They allowed themselves to be vulnerable in their poetry and revealed a wide breadth of emotion. The implicit and explicit content of the poetry suggested that the Born Free generation struggles in their ability to counter patriarchal customs and values that maintain unequal power distributions between the

genders. They also use their poetry to process grief over the loss of their local and national heroes. When referring to time, the youth primarily articulated experiences and emotions related to their present, rarely referenced their past, and occasionally referenced their future. They questioned dominant narratives that maintain the status quo, and identified themselves as leaders with the capacity to achieve their goals.

Poetry for Healing

It is my belief that poetry can be an effective intervention to address the cultural trauma of apartheid and, thus, to reduce the violence and crime that plagues South Africa. The poems allow the youth to explore their relationships, describe their feelings, and examine their multiple identities. In the book, *Saved by a Poem*, Poet Kim Rosen (2009) wrote:

> Poetry is the language of our time. It is a verbal excavation, digging us into and under that which is inarticulate, that which cannot be said but can be felt, that which cannot be stated but can be conjured. Poetry is a form of revolution. It rearranges our thinking, our perception, our dialogue. It takes us out of the literal so that we can see what is real. (p. xiv)

The Born Frees of the Bokamoso Youth Centre are sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, students and teachers, poets and leaders. At times they feel powerful and afraid, hopeful and lost, sad and full of joy. They are revolutionaries, ready and willing to build a brighter future for themselves and for their nation.

To conclude this dissertation, I have chosen to end with a poem written by a member of the Bokamoso Youth Centre. This poem, "Letter," served as inspiration throughout the writing of this work. The author directly engages and challenges the

reader to move beyond the role of passive observer or curious witness, and into the role of an engaged participant. The poem embodies the spirit of the youth that drew me in so quickly and so deeply upon first engaging with them. They helped me to believe in myself, to assert power in my life and in my work. They helped me to know that with hope, anything is possible.

> Dear Reader, a message to you, oh my reader,
> A short paragraph that I hope will change your mentality.
> Believe in yourself, ‘cuz how you think determines who you are.
> It’s better to live a short life like a king, than living long like a slave.
> This world is waiting, waiting for you to change it.
> Will you?

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