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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

Akulanga lashona lingendaba.
("No sun sets without its histories"; Zulu saying)

The South African novel has been stigmatized by its past. Innumerable works by well-known authors, among them Zakes Mda and Niq Mhlongo, have dealt with the legacy of the apartheid regime, which is composed of a whole nation that has been deeply traumatized by the atrocities they were forced to witness during this period. These narratives have helped record the nation's stories and shed light on the lives of individuals. And while some kinds of trauma befall one single person, various other events in the history of the world have affected a whole nation. After World War I, Frankl tried to re-appropriate the German language by reporting on the horrors of Ausschwitz in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*. Others like Celan also aimed to utilize posttraumatic writing in order to give voice to a nation that was dispossessed of their language. South Africa's literary field has proven to pursue the same objective.

In the face that Altnöder pleads that the term post-apartheid does not imply a clear-cut break with the past but evokes a reprocessing of the history of the country that influences the present, emphasis is put on the reconstruction that requires dedication. After all, "life doesn't end when apartheid does" (Gordimer 2002: 136). Margaret Atwood believes that every country or culture has one unifying and informing symbol at its core by which it is held together and identified by other nations. In 1996, Brink suggested "The Struggle" (1996: 151) as signifier for South Africa. Although this notion might have proven accurate in the pre-millennial literary field of South Africa, recent novels rather allow insight into new beginnings and evolving friendships in the country that had to experience such a brutal past.

Mhlope's short story *Fly, Hat, Fly* narrates the story of the months after the democratic elections. The prisoners of Robben Island, who had to go through humiliation and degradation, meet again to celebrate the occasion. An old man throws his hat away into

the sea as he had to take it off in front of employers and officials and endure insults and abuse during the regime. In doing so, he casts away apartheid and is no longer trapped and overshadowed by the oppression he was once exposed to. By recording this story, Mhlope subtly indicates that every South African is in need of one's own symbol of the apartheid era, which is taken off and thrown away, freeing the individual from the past and carving one's way into the future.

2. TRAUMA AND MEMORY

It has shown me that everything is illuminated in the light of the past.
It is always along the side of us on the inside, looking out.
(Everything Is Illuminated)

South Africa's past is by no means an indicator of good fortunes. The atrocities that were committed during the apartheid regime have left their marks on people's bodies and souls; as a result, trauma literature flourished and hence recorded events through the eyes of the people who experienced trauma. Novels that were written after the fall of apartheid aim to re-process the past and dispute the existent aftermath of that time.

2.1 Trauma Theory

Cathy Caruth (1996) believes that trauma is best described as an *unclaimed experience*. The person undergoing trauma is apparently unscathed and only later discovers that he/she is haunted by past events. The constant repetition functions as a pathological form of remembering as trauma is said to bear witness to the atrocities that were committed in the past, however, were never really experienced in the actual moment of occurrence. It, therefore, focuses on an experience that is not yet fully owned. The traumatic experience therefore lies outside history, in Freud's words it is *zeitlos* ('timeless'). This delayed iteration, Woods claims, illustrates the obsessive retrospect of traumatized people. He (2007: 33) believes that "[t]raumatic experiences are all located somewhere outside memory yet within the psyche." Woods adds that

> [t]rauma is not simply an instance of the modernist rhetoric of discontinuity and fragmentation. Rather trauma is *Nachträglichkeit* (deferred action or after-effect) – both a return of the repressed and a reordering of the past. (2007: 92)

LaCapra (2001), however, claims that there is a way of coming to terms with the past. In order to overcome trauma, various ways to give shape to the experience, e.g. sculpting, music-making or else, are possible. As trauma often results in loss of words, an explicit appellation of events is essential to the process of realizing trauma in its full

existence. This way of narrating the traumatic experience, verbally as well as non-verbally, has a therapeutic effect that aims at coming to terms with the past. In order to overcome trauma, one has to put the experienced events into a narrative and hence gives voice to the story that was at first unexpressed. As long as the experience is not acted out, there is no approach to healing, the situation remains unchanged and the experience exists suppressed in the memory. The traumatized person, therefore, will be haunted by past events as the traumatic experience is not re-membered. The wound, although it is latent on the surface, is delayed in its appearance and leads to a crisis of life. The experience has to be integrated into a narrative, otherwise the process of coming to terms with the past will not be concluded. In realizing the urge to narrate the story, one is able to overcome trauma. LaCapra (2001: 41) believes that

> [t]rauma brings about a dissociation of affect and representation: one disorientingly feels what one cannot present; one numbingly represents what one cannot feel. Working through trauma involves the effort to articulate or rearticulate affect and representation in a manner that may never transcend, but may to some viable extent counteract, a reenactment, or acting out, of that disabling dissociation.

2.2 Memory and Narrative

In this regard, memory is closely linked to trauma theory due to the past's vitalization in the present. As one collects and integrates every event and experience, many theories claim that traumatizing events are often suppressed by the survivor; trauma is, therefore, bound to haunt the victim. A narrative needs to be constructed, which is then presented to an empathic listener in order to come to terms with the past as the unspeakable is formulated. Susan Mann (Mengel et al. 2010: 58) comments on the importance of memory:

> I think that mourning would require a bridge between remembering and forgetting, and then re-remembering. If you even look at the word 'remember', it splits into 're' and 'member' – which suggests making sense of and filling things in yourself in a way that creates integrity instead of fragmentation.

By narrating the unspeakable, the individual gives shape to one's own story. If trauma, however, is not articulated in any way, it re-appears in various forms and haunts the victim. As soon as the traumatized person, however, retells the story and the past is thus

faced, one positions the self in the context of the present and by creation of the narrative, the traumatic memory is transformed into narrative memory. This process of memorizing the past restores the control that has been lost during the traumatic experience, one finds meaning in the present and becomes aware of the identity of the self, which gives meaning to life and re-establishes the order that was shattered before. Only then, Brison (2002: 98f) notes, recovery is possible.

> It is only by remembering and narrating the past – telling our stories and listening to others – that we can participate in an ongoing, active construction of a narrative of liberation, not one that confines us to a limiting past, but one that forms a background from which a freely-imagined – and desired – future can emerge.

Etherington (2003: 20) adds that "[b]y writing our stories we become agents in our own lives." Authors, therefore, claim a voice that may have been silenced before and hence restore the control that has been lost[1]. Brison (2002: 57) identifies with this notion, saying that "just as one can be reduced to an object through torture, one can become a human subject again through telling one's narrative to caring others who are able to listen."

In the South African context, Boehmer views writing as means to come to terms with South Africa's traumatic history. Upon reaching this state, memoirs are frozen in the pictures of the past. Nevertheless, the past is always somehow related to the present. Other topics will, however, dominate South African's daily routine. Boehmer, nevertheless, claims that South Africa is rather 'dialectic-without-outcome', stressing the idea of a never-ending struggle to overcome the past. Boehmer believes that the past suffering has found its way and integrated itself into the present and the literary scene today is still an "empire of trauma." Maxine Case (Mengel et al. 2010: 67) argues that one needs to talk about the past and apartheid history:

> To forget about the past is the worst thing any nation can do. We can learn from our mistakes, so we just can't afford to bury things under the title 'the past' and move on, especially not now.

[1] The same holds true for the most read diary in the world, written by Anne Frank who recorded the daily obstacles during her sanctuary in Amsterdam in order to avoid losing self control and control of the situation she was forced to experience at such a young age.

In her view, an ongoing process of the interrogation of the past must be ensured. In this light, the idea that the country still struggles with the memory of its traumatic past is manifested. Lucius-Hoene additionally claims that recovery from a traumatic experience is not always guaranteed. She believes that the process of recovery is highly dependent on the context in which the narrative is set and emphasizes the importance of „Dezentralisierung aus der Perspektive der eigenen Leidversunkenheit in eine sozial akzeptierbare Gestalt“ (2009: 140). In order to approach recovery, the thematic sustainability of the narrative situation has to be ensured and the aesthetic character of the form serves as a “Gewinnung kreativer Distanz” (2009: 147).

Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela (2007: 3) state that individual pasts have to be re-written by the victims in order to integrate these traumatic and uncontrolled re-appearing events into one’s memory.

> The creation of a narrative from the date of our lives does not mean that we can ever completely comprehend the meaning of our lives. We are still in the midst of our stories, striving towards a desired end. We do not know what will happen to us; much darkness envelops us. Even at the end of our lives, a full understanding will elude us. So, narrating our lives does not mean to come to a full understanding of life, but rather to strive towards a meaningful existence and to live the best of possible lives.

Similar to their view, Brink (1996: 142) believes that, as the experience is turned into language, the teller of the story reviews and transforms the event and hence makes a story of his own experience, which is the only way to interpret the world ourselves. Upon this knowledge that one has to *re-member*, one restores the story that has been shattered. Alternatively, the lacking awareness leads to the repetition of trauma. In van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela’s words: “The story of the past continues to be unfinished as long as it is not spoken about” (2007: 35). The term “re-enactment” is applied to describe these recurring patterns. In order to re-construct one’s life story that has been shattered in the course of the traumatic event, it is vital to narrate one’s past and hence re-discover a structure and coherence in life. They stress the importance of the narrative by pointing to *le sens de la vie*, which has to be retrieved.

2.2.1 Memory in the TRC

According to Boehmer, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission brought forward these unspeakable events of the past and recorded the process of remembering, which is, in her view, reason enough to hold the commission accountable for the development of a new South Africa that is still overshadowed by the experiences of the past. The TRC should, however, function as an instrument that enables personal growth and leads to a coming to terms with the past in order to facilitate a start into new South Africa.

Van der Vlies (cf. 2008: 949) focuses on the multiple versions of truths and the vast number of viewpoints of the narrative. He views the archive of memory as open to the future that is constantly augmented. The various narratives hence claim no final authority but rather aim to accumulate the different truths. Brink (1996: 246) remarks that

> learning to inhabit the continent of our invention may well be one of the most rewarding challenges facing South Africa – readers and writers alike – in this time of change, knowing that neither its history nor its moral boundaries are fixed and final, but remain constantly to be reinvented and, in the process, revalorised.

The TRC's top priority, however, is to tell the various stories, to give voice to these unspeakable events and to talk about the past as means to overcome it[2]. Van der Vlies claims that "[…] the Commission had in effect initiated a process of storytelling rather than produced a final version of the past, endorsed narrative and narration." (Van der Vlies 2008: 951) Woods (2007: 210) adds that

> [t]he TRC's function was to replace, restore and reinstate a memory rent apart and splintered by apartheid: to prevent the present and future being weighed down by the nightmare of dead generations on the minds of the living. The TRC acknowledged that memory was important, almost as a form of ultimate justice: it captured the gradations of responsibility for the past.

Langer (1991: Preface xv), who recorded hundreds of stories of Holocaust survivors, views testimonies as a form of remembering and adds that there is no

[2] Turner's novel *Southern Cross* criticizes the proceedings of the TRC by claiming that "[t]he truth was no acid pellet of knowledge delivered to the Commission for sanitising and sealing and disposing of the dustbin of history. It was a dull mirror, which showed the dirt that clung to everyone, instead of cleansing and absolving all" (Turner 2004: 300).

need to revive a past that has never died; he claims that "the mental eyes have never slept."

2.3 Psychoanalysis and Posttraumatic Growth

2.3.1 Psychoanalysis and Memory

The term psychoanalysis has to be pronounced in the same breath as one of its most eminent representatives Sigmund Freud[3]. Psychoanalysis is supposed to give an indication of the inner self of a person, a way to seize the entity of the self. There is, however, no ultimate truth but rather success or failure in what regards therapeutical outcomes. According to Freud, life not only starts at birth but also at the point when the living human being survived danger, in which lies the object of psychoanalysis that bears the name of "the unconscious"[4]. Freud aimed to revive his patients' past events from childhood and substitute these with any kinds of reactions that were then acted out and faced, which helped to reach a state of physical maturity. This bears resemblance to the concept of posttraumatic growth.

Those who experienced apartheid and stared death in the face might experience the departure from life from a different perspective than others and hence also deal with the meaning of life and death in another way. A personal growth can also be experienced as the person might not be afraid of death, or at least the future, anymore; the deadly fear is gone and one lives without the constant fear of death. History and the past are also stressed by Condrau as the experiences of the past have shaped a person's self. Existence, according to Heidegger, is historical, in so far as that we are shaped by our past. (Condrau 1992: 323) In this sense, the life story plays an important role, as does one's origin. In the attempt to untangle one's life story, the past is envisioned and a rediscovery of self is achieved. Heidegger claims the following: "Sie können nicht einen

[3] Christopher Hampton's play *The Talking Cure* depicts these first steps of Freud's talking cure and Jung's attempts to test it.

[4] Psychoanalysis, therefore, is the core *a priori* question; it focuses on whether or not a human being is born. If one withholds from falling back as early as birth, the life story of a person can be of major significance.

Menschen heilen, auch nicht durch Psychotherapie, wenn Sie nicht zuvor sein Verhältnis zum Sein wieder herstellen.“ (Condrau 1992: 324)

Hartmann believes in expressiveness as unburdening of the heart. By applying Freud’s theories, he notes that a traumatic event penetrates the ‘shield’ of the psyche. He compares trauma to a ‘foreign body’ in the psyche that stems from an overwhelming experience and is un-integrated. In his view, trauma studies engage in the relation between the wound and words. He (2003: 257) claims that

> [i]f there is a failure of language, resulting in silence or mutism, then no working through, no catharsis, is possible. Literary verbalization, however, still remains a basis for making the wound perceivable and the silence audible.

This expressiveness, Hartmann stresses, is not only a repetition without relieve. To a greater degree, it enables recovery.

> Should it further a mental flexibility that tolerates dialogue, irony, indeterminacy, ambivalence – all such complexities of communication – if it also augments, in short, a pausal and self-reflective capability, a linkage appears between literary expression and psychic health. (2003: 260)

He draws a comparison between the “unsteady autonomy of individuals or even social groups” and the “self-regenerative capacity of ‘Nature’” (2003: 270). The capacity to feel, he claims, is dependent on our relation to the universe.

Harmann further mentions *Lichtzwang*, the need to unveil – in the South African context – the atrocities and individual stories. This force, he argues, has brought forward *Sprachzwang*, the compulsion to talk about past events; which functions as a verbal catharsis. Psychoanalysis in a literary sense can, therefore, be seen as writing through trauma.

Langer (1991: 204), who claims that the “Holocaust is a communal wound that cannot heal”, at the same time offers the following view: “Memory cannot be silenced; it might as well be heard, in an attempt to understand why it must express itself with such disjointed dismay.”

Delbo, an Auschwitz survivor[5], describes how she was segregated from her present self and, through this doubling, gained a renewal of her worn-out skin after her release. Her second self, which emerged after Auschwitz, needed to reorganize and relearn the most essential things in life. *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*'s ending suggests the same; here, not the physical wounding of the body is addressed but rather the soul that is renewed in the course of recovery. The protagonist of *Quarter Tones*, Ana Luisa, has created a second space, "her other world", in which she reaches self-fulfillment. Althusser (1996: 22f) claims that

> [p]sychoanalysis, in its sole survivors, is concerned with a different struggle, in the sole war without memoirs or memorials, which humanity pretends never to have fought, the one it thinks it has always won in advance, quite simply because its very existence is a function of having survived it, of living and giving birth to itself as culture within human culture.

According to Woods, psychoanalysis functions as a hermeneutics of memory and as a way to deal with the past and as path-finder towards the future. By creating a body of one's own past, while simultaneously being accompanied by an empathic listener, the narrative memory "assimilates our past and integrates it into the present" (Woods 2007: 23). One does not necessarily have to feel like a victim of the past but has to make meaning out of past events. The narrative memory therefore integrates the past by assimilating it into the present. Woods concludes that "[f]reedom, therefore can be brought about only by acknowledging the scars of one's history, not in escaping from them" (Woods 2008: 23f).

2.3.2 Posttraumatic Growth

In their work on *Posttraumatic Growth*, Tedeschi et al. focus on the survival of trauma patients and believe that not only can one go back to the origin, the simple survival, but develop one's personality and human social behavior even more than before the traumatic event. Etherington labels the process of recovery "transformation", as for her, trauma is transformed as soon as one is willing to challenge the basic believes and

[5] Here, the comparison to the Holocaust is drawn as writers such as Delbo and Frankl have recorded their situations in the camp such as South African novels have depicted the living conditions and atrocities of the past.

accept the fact that the world can never be fully comprehended. The difference between recovery and thriving is noted: recovery is recorded as an act of regaining homeostasis and returning to the previous level of functioning while thriving goes beyond the original level of psychological functioning.

They (Tedeschi et al. 1998: 3) claim that

> [t]his term makes clear that persons experiencing this phenomenon [of a posttraumatic growth] have developed beyond their previous level of adaptation, psychological functioning, or life awareness, that is, they have grown.

Various types of growth outcomes can be found among traumatized people, among those, the change in perception of self. A strong feeling of self reliance is often the case as the feeling of being stronger than before emerges and the appreciation of life accompanied by the awareness of mortality sets in. Also, interpersonal relationships were found to change after such a growth and victims felt the need to help others but also to share the gift of knowledge, as can be seen in *Fanie Fourie's Lobola*. Fanie's mother experiences a growth and breaks down the barrier to her children. As a lot of traumatized people view their survival as a second chance, their priorities change and appreciation of life and smaller things develops. This is often accompanied by a spiritual development and wisdom. People who have experienced a PTG understand that life is unpredictable and tend to live in the present. Ana Maria, the protagonist in Susan Mann's *Quarter Tones*, experiences such a growth and decides to take life into her own hands, she finally gathers the strength to make her own decisions.

Tedeschi et al. (1998: 234) believe that "[m]anaging the chaos into which one is thrown in the aftermath of trauma produces a recognition that in the uncertainties of life, one is able to be strong." This self awareness of personal strength and the sense of achievement – the mere survival – leads to an epiphany of self.

Calhoun and Tedeschi stress the idea that, paradoxically, positive effects on the lives of traumatized people are visible as their personal struggle has challenged their own self

and the awareness of one's strength manifests itself in the psyche. The individual's active construction of a life narrative is of special importance:

> Life narrative and identity seem to be closely related because the sense of who we are is shaped by the context of our lives. Telling the story of the traumatic event in the context of what happened earlier in life can make the meaning of the event clearer. (Calhoun and Tedeschi 1998: 232)

The awareness of self also produces the knowledge of strength that might not have been noticed earlier in life as it had not been tested before the traumatic experience occurred. Bloom (1998: 179) claims that people are fundamentally programmed for attachment with other people as they are longing for the safety of human companionship and the various rites of healing. They, therefore, establish a group identity, which, at the same time, supports the healing process. In her view, there are many ways in which trauma can be transformed into something that goes beyond the individual and also leads to changes within a society, that is, if the political climate tolerates such a discourse.

Bloom emphasizes the reenactment as vital to the healing process and puts emphasis on the positive impact of the performative arts. "Art is fundamentally transformative in its very essence. Out of simple materials, meaning is born" (Bloom 1998: 204). As there are innumerable accounts of trauma, the arts prove to be a sufficient field of trauma processing as there are so many forms for a variety of people, verbal as well nonverbal forms are used. Such non-discursive forms of expression can be found in Susan Mann's *Quarter Tones*. The novel focuses on two forms of processing, namely the crafting of the mermaid out of a cement mixture and the playing of the flute. Mann's novel serves as a paragon of PTG as the protagonist Ana Luisa van der Veer is, at first, dependent on her father, who is already dead at the beginning of the novel but she keeps recalling shared memories. While playing on the flute, the instrument that her father, a luthier, crafted, she undergoes the process of self-realization and while improvising on the flute, plays her own melody for the first time. Upon getting accepted at the Sorbonne, something that her husband wanted her to do, she tosses the acceptance letter into the Seine. In the end, the drought is over, "[t]hen the skies broke and all the great tears of heaven fell" (Mann 184f). Ana Luisa, after her cycle's absence, menstruates, which indicates ongoing life and hope, and she is depicted as an autonomous and round character in the end. She decides against a life in France and living with her husband

and chooses to live a self-determined life in South Africa, the country she grew up in. Not only do the protagonists of the novels experience a growth in personality and new perception of self, but the authors themselves gain new insights while writing through their trauma.

Frankl (Batthyany et al. 2005: 117) may have the closing words:

> Und wenn es in seinem Leben einen Tag gab – den Tag der Freiheit –, an dem ihm alles wie ein schöner Traum erschien, dann kommt einmal der Tag, an dem ihm alles, was er im Lager erlebt, nur mehr wie ein böser Traum vorkommt. Gekrönt wird aber all dieses Erleben des heimfindenden Menschen von dem köstlichen Gefühl, *nach all dem Erlittenen nicht mehr auf der Welt fürchten zu müssen* – außer seinen Gott. [emphasis added]

2.4 Postmillennial Literary Field

In trying to make a new start, South African writers have started to write about topics other than trauma. This transition is, however, not noted by Boehmer. Nearly two decades after the fall of apartheid, South Africa's past still shapes people's lives today; Elleke Boehmer even claims that it still *dominates* South African literature. In her essay "When Crisis Defines a Nation's Writing", she postulates post-apartheid writing to be "a space of persistent trauma and anguish" that displays the continuous suffering of the country. Although Boehmer believes that there is hope for the future, she views post-apartheid writing to be a 'stuttering repetition' of physical and psychic pain. She draws on earlier books such as J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* to demonstrate that post-apartheid lives still reveal injuries inflicted on the victims. However, endings such as Susan Mann's *Quarter Tones* or Patricia Schornstein's *A Quilt of Dreams* clearly feature a progress towards the future that suggests some kind of growth within the traumatized characters.

It seems that the new millennium has brought this change in the South African literary scene. Novels that were published in the post-millennium focus on the re-establishment of meaning in life and on the future and tend to shelve South Africa's past. Recent developments have shown that people tell their stories and hence overcome the trauma they have experienced in the past. Is it, however, possible to ignore the trauma that is

creeping in through the back door and to mark a new start by simply ignoring the traces that can be found by closer inspection? Are those authors justified to write novels in the present that ignore trauma and is it, after all, possible not to be influenced by the past and to write non-traumatic novels in South Africa? There have been ongoing discussions if one is justified to write novels in the present that ignore trauma, some theories such as Boehmer even suggest that one cannot write a non-traumatic novel in the context of South Africa. The focus should, however, be put on the way authors process the past in their novels, they either consciously reflect on the apartheid era and the traumatic memories of the past or rather turn their back on trauma, given that this is possible.

Attwell and Harlow (2000: 3) pose the question: "If apartheid was the main theme of South African literature, what was it going to do when apartheid was gone?" They note that during the apartheid regime, writers felt the need to address current socio-economic and political issues of that time, whereas they later believed in the chance for creativity and individual writing in the post-apartheid period. The first dependable obstacles functioned as a creative source for the literary field. Post-apartheid, however, seems to have evoked a *Sinnkrise* ("crisis of meaning") on its own as writers of South African fiction have cast doubt on the whole literary field.

> If these misgivings imply that South African writers were likely to fall silent before the uncertainties of the time, that prediction has not been fulfilled. Writers may have been challenged, but they have not fallen silent. (Attwell and Harlow 2000: 3)

Shaun Irlam, Associate Professor for Comparative Literature at the University of Buffalo sheds a negative light on the post-apartheid era. He observes a fragility of the future as the unemployment rate, AIDS crisis and a disproportionate distribution of wealth still point to a rather disillusioning situation. In his eyes, little has changed in the conditions defining South African society in the last two decades. He feels obliged to ask the question where this new, post-apartheid South Africa is and notes that the first enthusiasm about the new era has already dwindled. South African literature, he claims, has witnessed the emergence of a perspective that is mainly introspective and neglects unification.

> What the New South Africa has brought us is a refraction of that light into a rainbow nation not necessarily united around common objectives and goals, but rather refracted into separate communities grown more insular and often focused on quite divergent interests. (Irlam 2004: 698)

However, he also observes that new literature of a different development is emerging, which indicates that the whole scope of the country is recorded through literature. Irlam cites books such as Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying*, which was written in the year 1995, and takes these as an example for post-apartheid writing. As Mda's novel was written shortly after the fall of apartheid and still focuses on the occurrences of past times, Mda is, naturally, absorbed in thoughts about past events. Irlam (2004: 714) then continues to say that "[a]ttention has turned away from the grand, overbearing history of oppression and state violence that once preoccupied writers from all groups and communities." In his eyes, the nation needs to be viewed as a "work in progress" (2004: 715), he, however, offers some optimism for South Africa's future by stating that "[t]he time of the new literature, the literature of the unheard, may at last be dawning in the Rainbow nation" (2004: 715).

Boehmer assumes that all there is to South Africa is its apartheid past and that the past suffering has found its way into the present. She hence opposes the theory of Posttraumatic Growth and she seems to be of the opinion that the writers are somehow bound to the past as they have not yet found a way to cope with the atrocities that were committed during the regime. The heuristic and emotional benefits of the conditioned vocabularies of mourning and recovery, so Boehmer claims, are still not to be neglected as people tend to feel comfortable with those and benefit from such formative experiences. Furthermore, South African writers fear that they might lack topics to write about such as trauma which cardinally shaped the South African art scene for the last decades and hence fixate on the crisis of the past. In attempting to detect reasons for South African's obsession with the past, LaCapra's notion (2001: 22f), which he shares with Hartmann, seems most comprehensible and is worth quoting at length:

> Those traumatized by extreme events, as well as those empathizing with them, may resist working through because of what might almost be termed a fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it. Part of this feeling may be the melancholic sentiment that, in working through the past in a manner that enables survival or reengagement in life, one is betraying those who were overwhelmed and consumed by the traumatic past. One's bond with the dead,

> especially with dead intimates, may invest trauma with value and make its reliving a painful but necessary commemoration or memorial to which one remains dedicated or at least bound. This situation may create a more or less unconscious desire to remain within trauma.

People keep looking back at the past as they feel they need to connect with the dead whom they lost in a traumatizing event, they seem to establish a bond with the dead while mourning over past events. Langer (1991: Preface xi) perceives this "longing for connection", which in his eyes "continues to echo in our needful tears."

Crisis within a person is often shown in a fade-out and identity is disaggregated such as in Kirsten Miller's *All Is Fish*. Sarah, one of the main protagonists of the novel, is depicted as an unstable lunatic as she witnessed her father's death in her childhood. Although there is no direct link to apartheid in the novel itself, Boehmer claims that breakdowns such as this and dealing with death in the novels, in general, are included in the battle of a part of the past. In her view, death has become embedded in the wider society and has been internalized in the national psyche and, in that view, crisis has become somehow mandatory within the South African context. She even goes so far as to claim that crisis narratives are approaching a somehow *cliché status*, which raises critique as one cannot possibly label events such as those witnessed during apartheid as clichés.

Although it might have been valid to state that a considerable number of South African writers still clung to the past shortly after the fall of apartheid, traces of Boehmer's claims cannot be found in most of the literature that was written post-millennial. Current literature by South African writers indicates a way into a new South Africa. André Brink (1996: 179) notes the following:

> For me as a writer there is freedom in the acknowledgment that *I do not need apartheid in order to write*. If it has informed everything I have ever written, it is because it has determined every aspect of my life as a South African: to write about flowers, or love, and pretend apartheid wasn't there, would have been a denial and a lie: and literature can only take root in one's attempt to face the truth – about one's own world, about oneself.

In an article in *The New York Times* written by Donadio in 2006, Niq Mhlongo opposes this notion, claiming that, today, his scope of topics reaches far beyond apartheid as

South Africa is in transition. He lists issues such as the AIDS pandemic, poverty, crime, xenophobia and unemployment. As can be seen in books such as Diane Awerbuck's *Gardening At Night,* other subjects such as the difficulties of growing up in South Africa and everyday life situations are foregrounded. In the same newspaper article, Zakes Mda says: "We're no longer writing for the struggle; we're writing for ourselves" (Donadio 2006: 5). Writers are under pressure and feel responsible for the literary scene, they believe they are expected to write "the next chapter of South African history."

2.5 Beyond Trauma

Contrary to Boehmer's view, there is existence beyond trauma, which, admittedly, does not automatically indicate that a healing has occurred but that a step into the right direction has been made. The term 'beyond' indicates a flexible process rather than a fixed situation or condition. Whereas André Brink agrees with Boehmer – they both claim that South African writers cannot get away from the past as too much of South African reality is mirrored in the novels – Chris von der Merwe presents a theory that points in a different direction. He claims that there is a path towards healing although he believes that closure can never really be achieved, only approached. This view is also implicated in the van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela quote cited earlier, which states that healing can never be fully possible but striving for healing is desired. In trying to define this healing process, only some kind of tentative approach seems to be possible. Then again, Sindiwe Magona, author of *Mother to Mother*, strongly believes that

> [h]ealing is possible. It is the only way. What needs to be done first is to go back and re-examine what happened really, and what it meant for people, and what it has done to them. It is only when that is thoroughly understood and acknowledged that other issues can be addressed. (Mengel 2010: 44)

In acknowledging and implementing what Magona seeks to convey in this statement, *healing is possible*. After all, how could South African writers still find the motivation to go on and talk about their suffering if they did not have at least a little optimism and an outlook towards the future? It seems that there is no option for pessimism. Although

South Africa is still in need of processing its traumatic history, accounts of living from day to day lead towards the future.

After all, Brink (1996: 202) suggests to steadily oppose the present with a reclaimed past in order to open the potentialities for the future. Woods (2007: 239) adds:

> In writing counter-memories to the silences imposed by apartheid, these writers have taken up one of the country's most pressing challenges: the task of redefining South Africanness for the twenty first-century.

Behind this notion lies not only one of their biggest fear but also one of the greatest challenges in the history of literature in South Africa.

"My grief pours from me, making the first marks on my fresh soul, and outside it begins to rain" (Zadok 2005: 324). Endings such as the last sentence in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* do, in fact, suggest that there is *something* – if one dares to call it a 'life' – after apartheid and provide an outlook towards a new beginning. Etherington (2003: 189), who has collected various stories of traumatized people, offers individual's ways of discovering and holding onto their sense of safety through creating narratives of their lives. Voice needs to be given to these stories that have been marginalized before allow South Africans to form their version of the past before moving on. As the world undergoes traumatic experiences of any kind on a daily basis – 9/11, the Holocaust and Fukushima, only to name a few – we have no other choice but to go on and make the best out of it. Without even a glimpse of hope, we would not exist today. Ana Luisa, Susan Mann's protagonist in *Quarter Tones*, may have the closing words: "But enough about dying. Isn't living the thing?" (Mann 2007: 156)

3. THE BIRTH OF DEMOCRACY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIQ MHLONGO'S NOVELS DOG *EAT DOG* AND *AFTER TEARS*

In this proud land we grew up strong
We were wanted all along
I was taught to fight, taught to win
I never thought I could fail […]

Don't give up now
We're proud of who you are
Don't give up
'Cause I believe there's a place
A place where we belong.
(Gabriel 1986: 1-4, 57-63)

1994, a memorable year for South Africa. Among the crowd of hopeful South Africans, Mhlongo's main protagonist of *Dog Eat Dog*, Dingamanzi Njomane, short Dingz. He is caught in-between worlds and struggles for recognition in both his hometown and at varsity. Mhlongo's later novel *After Tears* (2007), set in the context of the black governed South Africa around the turn of the millennium, explores Bafana Kuzwayo's status as a quasi-alumnus, who returns to his hometown Johannesburg. As he pretends to have finished his studies, he has to keep up appearances and fulfil his mother's dream of a successful son who is going to financially support his family.

3.1 South Africa's First Democratic Election

> The opportunity to vote had attracted many people; I saw a crowd of men and women the like of which I had never seen before. It was a queue of limitless hope. Many of us there thought this election would reshape our lives in the southern part of this unruly 'Dark Continent'. (2004: 58)

Set in the background of the first democratic elections in South Africa, Mhlongo captures the excitement and hope of the people. Dingz, the main protagonist in *Dog Eat Dog*, is among the glowing crowd, celebrating the birth of democracy. He is one of many South Africans who look forward to the first democratic elections in hope for a

better future. The people of South Africa all have different reasons to vote, the common denominator being a better life for all of them.

> Of course we all came for different reasons. Our Big Brothers had promised beautiful things to those who lived a life of poverty, and I guess that the two homeless gentlemen ahead of me came to vote because of the promise of proper housing and employment. [...] I was standing in that queue because we had been promised access to a better education. I wanted to vote for whoever claimed to have fought tooth and nail to overthrow the apartheid government so that I now found myself admitted to a formerly whites-only institution. I felt morally obliged to return the favour to my Big Brothers. (2004: 61)

Dingz feels that the elections are of particular importance to him as a student. He wants to participate in the decision-making process, however, he does not care for the various parties and shows no interest in their beliefs. In his eyes, in order to improve his lifestyle, a black party has to gain power.

> Different political parties had mumbled their big lies to rally people to vote for them. I had not made up my mind as to which party to vote for, but I definitely wanted to see a black government. I didn't care that my Big Brothers were said to be still wet behind their ears when it came to running a country as big as South Africa. […] To me, just as long as he was black it was fine, as stupid as that. (2004: 61)

The first democratic elections give South Africa the reason to forget all its sorrows from the past, even if just for a little while, and to celebrate a new beginning. The people coming out of the polling stations are described as having broad smiles on their faces after taking part in the first free elections in South Africa (cf. 2004: 61)[6]. In Mhlophe's short story *The Crocodile Spirit*, the remembering of dead ancestors is stressed during the voting process: "His wife MaZulu, old Mkhulu Ngwenya and many others were there with him in the moment too – united in spirit, and carried on a huge wave of triumph" (2002: 61). Instead of using his aunt's money for rent and electricity, Dingz uses it to celebrate the elections instead (cf. 2004: 94f).

> It was growing dark outside. The music was getting louder and there were the sounds of revving cars and shouting in the street. It was easy to tell that the party had already started. […] As we walked down the street I saw many drunken people

[6] Ndebele accounts the following: "When the voting moment came, it was fast and disarmingly simple, but profoundly intense. […] Other faces were blur as I looked for the one face that embodied all my hopes and, easing my trembling hand, I drew my X with the greatest care in the world. And it was done" (2007: 51).

> of all different ages in a pick-me-up-mood. There were cars parked on the pavement all along the street. A couple of drivers had barricaded each end of the street so that it was completely impassable to traffic. The police would have to forget about driving their vans along the street to monitor the jollified crowd. (2004: 98)

For many black South Africans, the election is a turning point of the country's history that is about to change their lives once and for all. Most of them hope for a better education and want to ensure a better future for their children, mainly because they need someone to support them financially. The new generation is expected to provide the family with money and food and the election is hence reason enough to celebrate this historic event.

> We partied until the wee hours. Around four in the morning we retired, having spent nearly all our money on alcohol, but we were satisfied that we had done our best to celebrate the birth of democracy. (2004: 103)

Democracy, in the eyes of Dingz' professor at the varsity, is a logical response to paranoia; "a diplomatic and ideological phantasm invented by the bourgeoisie, or the property-owning class, to safeguard their property interests; or, if you're a Marxist, their relation with production, when feeling threatened by the masses" (2004: 143). Dingz does not listen to him as he is a white professor and, in his view, a racist.

In *After Tears*, the elections and the initial hopes of the country are long gone[7]. Bafana's relatives raise complaints about the ANC government that now takes all their money away from them. Envy and greed has spread among the black community; when Bafana needs a certificate to prove his finished education, Yomi sells him fake certificates and participates in the profits (cf. 2007: 166). Bafana's uncle claims that their wages have not increased while the cost of living has. "Read my lips, Advo, the cost of living has seriously become higher after these tears of apartheid. We teachers are still paid peanuts by our black ANC government" (2007: 15). On the ANC's centenary in January 2012, the German quality paper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* views the situation in retrospect:

[7] In an interview conducted by Hermoine Lee, a professor at the University of Oxford, Nadine Gordimer said that after the euphoria of the elections, reality sets in: "Then comes the morning after. Then comes the hangover. Realities, which during any kind of political struggle you don't really have time to think about" (2003: 5).

> Der Partei wird vorgeworfen, immer noch nicht die arme Minderheit der Bevölkerung von den Fesseln der von Weißen dominierten Wirtschaft befreit zu haben. Die Arbeitslosenquote liegt bei etwa 36 Prozent und bei den jungen Menschen sogar bei 70 Prozent. Die Hälfte der Bevölkerung lebt nach Angaben von Gewerkschaften von acht Prozent des nationalen Einkommens. (2012: 1f)

The anniversary celebrations are hence overshadowed by corruption scandals. Involved in these accusations are some politicians who made sacrifices during the apartheid and now feel they are entitled to wealth and various luxuries.

3.2 The University System in South Africa

The majority of South African universities were shaped and developed under apartheid and a lot of these were created in order to whitewash the segregation policy[8]. Although various voices, by both blacks and whites, were raised to resist these inequalities, acts of terrorism caused an increasing isolation from academics overseas. The South African government tried to react against the acts of the Anti-Apartheid Movement within the country, nevertheless, it remained one of the strongest political influences. Although many South African academics found themselves excluded from events abroad, they were still able to uphold friendships and contacts despite the sanctions by the government. White liberal academics increasingly left for posts in Europe or North America due to the unacceptability of the climate in the country. Many blacks did not have these possibilities and settled for a profession outside politics as they did not strive for career advancement but rather aimed to contribute to the struggle against the apartheid regime. After the election, the educational system was to display one of the most important aspects to reform.

> It would have been impossible for South Africa's universities and technikons to continue on the separate paths mapped out for them by apartheid, not least because isolation had taken its toll on the academic profession. The loss of many liberal academics to posts in Europe and North America and the effect of a black intelligentsia committed to the liberation struggle, either at home or in exile, left a yawning gap in the universities. (Jobbins 2002: 56)

[8] In *Dog Eat Dog*, the reader learns that Dingz' friend studied Social Sciences at Fort Hare University until he was dismissed because of politics in the late 80s (cf. 2004: 128).

Major changes first occurred in the year of 1996, when the *National Commission for Higher Education* published a paper on reforms that were long overdue, one of those being the aspect of unification after the divisions during apartheid. Various areas such as the non-payment status of black universities proved to be difficult when tuition fees were to be introduced. Additionally, a system was established that split research from undergraduate teaching, which led to a white dominated research, basically falling back into old structures. Alex Duval Smith claims:

> The tragic truth is that most South African whites have been so profoundly indoctrinated that, on one level or another, they do believe that blacks are inferior. And it is a view they will hold as long as their economic power, their big houses and fast cars seem to prove them right. (Jobbins 2002: 58)

Jobbins believes that this is also reflected in the university system. Education is still not accessible, and affordable, for the majority of black South Africans. Although historically disadvantaged universities (HDUs) were expected to undergo a rise in the number of students in the post-1994 era, students who were free to choose where they wanted to study decided to join formerly white universities instead of one of the HDUs near their former homelands.

> South Africa's historically white universities have their roots firmly in the academic traditions of the developed world; the universities and their staff have some tough lesson to learn if they are to adapt successfully to the real life demands of a developing country undergoing a rapid and sensitive transformation process. (Jobbins 2002: 62)

However, the proportion of black students has increased as of 2002, while the white student population is falling (cf. Jobbins 2002: 64f). Jobbins concludes that South African's universities have mastered the reforms with notable success. The years to come have to be marked by sustainability in order to keep up with the pace of the country and to compete with other universities on a world level.

Dog Eat Dog depicts exactly these points made by Jobbins. Dingz' friend Dworkin notes that

> [t]he student intake in this varsity and elsewhere must reflect the demographic of this country. But that is not the case. Just because this white institution has opened

> its doors to attract more blacks does not necessarily mean that they are interested in improving our lives. The question is, how many black students are studying for professional degrees that will land them a good job at the end of the day? (2002: 219)

Dingz' friend Theks, who also studies at Wits University, is the first one of her family who is admitted to tertiary education. Dingz, who is denied bursary at first, stumbles from one precarious situation to another: he, at first, revolts at the Financial Aid Office, later on wants to re-sit an exam because he was badly prepared and, after feigning a blackout which does not serve as a valid reason for leaving the exam, claims that a relative has died, which proves to be a lie. In the end, he gets expelled from his dorm when he illegitimately takes a girl into his room. Although he knows about the boundaries that are not to be crossed, he simply neglects those and, in the end, has to count the cost. Additionally, his life at the YMCA serves as antithesis to his township where twelve of his family members live in a four-roomed house. His scholarship application was, paradoxically, turned down because his family is not poor enough. "It's my wish that this office grant me a bursary so that I can study, graduate, get a better job and assist my poverty-stricken family" (2004: 20): he wants to go to school in order to aim for a better life but fails to live according to the rules.

3.2.1 Tertiary Education in Mhlongo's Novels

Bafana returns from varsity after studying Law at the University of Cape Town for four years. In order not to disappoint his mother, he proudly tells her that he graduated although he has failed in nearly all his classes and, as a consequence, dropped out of school. He mainly feels regret, "[r]egret over all the lies that I had told Vee and my family, and guilt over how I had missed my opportunity to be the first in my family to have a university degree" (2007: 59). People from his hometown are already used to calling him "Advo", short for advocate, instead of addressing him by his real name. They hope to benefit from their son's and nephew's educational background in the future, while at the same time, accusing students of having "big money from their bursaries and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme" (2007: 13)[9]. Upon returning home, Bafana receives a letter from the Financial Aid Scheme; while he never had to

[9] However, Dingz (*Dog Eat Dog*) is initially denied bursary.

worry about money issues during his studies, he now has to figure out how to return the money to the institution.

> Two of the letters were addressed to me and I immediately opened the one with the UCT stamp on it. Inside the envelope were my official results, which were confirmation of my provisional results. I had failed. The other letter was from the National Students Financial Aid Scheme, and it reminded me that I owed the government R56 000. They had been sponsoring my university studies for four years and now they wanted me to start repaying them. (2007: 55)

His tertiary education could have affected his life positively if he had passed his exams but at the same time it had cost him a lot of money. Although he neither has the money to pay his debts nor a proper education, his uncle believes that he profits from Bafana's status as an advocate and claims that since Advo came back from Cape Town, his uncle has been a lucky person. "Your dreams are real because you're very educated" (2007: 42). In hope of a better life, his uncle has already made plans for their future and is convinced that he will be able to aspire everything he wishes for, now that his nephew has graduated from varsity.

> I tell you, we'll be rich, my Advo. Our days as part of the poor walking class of Mzansi will soon be over. We're about to join the driving class, with stomachs made larger by the Black Economic Empowerment. Yeah, we'll be fucking rich. Stinking rich, Advo," he repeated over and over again, as if the topic had somehow become trapped in his brain. (2007: 14)

His family is proud of him as he has seemingly come back an advocate and is about to earn a living and serve as a breadwinner for his family. Although his uncle's friend envies the newly-gained power by graduating from university, he also names the problem of being overeducated: "education makes one forget tradition" (2007: 95). The same is noted by Dingz' friend Dworkin in *Dog Eat Dog*:

> Studying in this liberal institution has turned you into a typical example of the product of our historic abortion, [...]. I blame the power of liberal education, which has poisoned your mind and made you use the language of the exploiters and call our king such a derogatory name. (2004: 214)

3.3 *Is is because I'm black?* Racism in Dog Eat Dog

Dingz' story already starts off on the wrong foot: being declined his application for bursary, he accuses the Bursary Committee of being racist. "'We regret to inform you that you are black, stupid and poor; therefore we can not [sic.] waste our money on your thick Bantu skull'" (2004: 8). Although he feels that he does not belong with the poor blacks in his home town, Dingz also feels misplaced at the university among the majority of white students and professors, he is seemingly stuck in-between worlds. By playing the race card and claiming others to be racists, he gains advantages such as his special treatment at the bursary office after revolting and insulting the employees. "*They must think I'm the son of their employer* [according to his behaviour], *although their employer is probably white*, I convinced myself" (2004: 14). He senses that playing the racis card is the easiest way to get what he wants although, or rather because, his blunt behaviour makes people around him feel uncomfortable. When a black old lady has difficulties dealing with the ATM and a blonde woman asks Dingz to help her, he automatically assumes that she asked him because he is black and thus implies that she is a racist.

> Yes, it is true that I was implying that she was a racist. It was the season of change when everyone was trying hard to disown apartheid, but to me the colour white was synonymous with the word and I didn't regret what I had said to the blonde.
>
> Anyway, I had been told that playing the race card is a good strategy for silencing those whites who still think they are more intelligent than black people. Even in parliament it was often used. When the white political parties questioned the black parties they would be reminded of their past atrocities even if their questions were legitimate. Then the white political parties would have to divert from their original questions and apologize for their past deeds. (2004: 35)

Dingz further recalls a friend telling him that a subtle form of racism can be found among the white lectures as they do not know the name of their black students, which is why they often only say 'yes' when they want them to respond to their questions. White students, however, are always addressed by their full names (cf. 2004: 142). When a white female student from the lecture accidentally spills her coffee over Dingz and Dworkin – "That racist white lady spilled her coffee on us" – his friend immediately assumes that the white population wants to reclaim the political power they lost to the blacks, turning the whole situation into a ridicule (cf. 2004: 145f).

In *After Tears*, there are no direct indications of racism as Bafana's story starts out with his return back home where he is surrounded by blacks. Varsity, as a white institution where blacks still hold a minority, is depicted as the 'center of racism'. In an article in the *The New York Times* in 2006, Mhlongo comments on racism in the country:

> We as South African people – blacks, whites, Indians and coloreds – have internalized it over years. Racism therefore is not something that can be expected to change overnight in South Africa, although my generation is trying hard to forge a new identity. (Donadio 2006: 7)

In this way, he shows understanding in the system that is only slowly changing and focuses on South Africa as a country that is united in its diversity.

3.4 *There's No Such Thing as a God*: Religion and After Tears

> *How does Zulu sound to God?* I asked myself. *Is it aggressive or romantic? I can hear every preacher saying that there is only one God we must direct our prayers to. But does he have good interpreters like the woman in the train interpreted the preacher's Sesotho? Does The Man understand tsotsitaal, or are we just wasting our time praying to Him in that language?* (2004: 182)

Dingz believes that he is not a believer, nonetheless, he contemplates on the means of communication with God as it seems to him that God does not understand Zulu. Although he does not want to admit that religion plays a role in his life, he humorously tells his way of noticing when he gets back home drunk every night. His only point of reference and orientation is the picture of Jesus, who watches over him. This depiction does not make the reader believe in his incredulity.

> […] I think the world of that handsomely bearded hunk called Jesus. My mother loves him very much. Other pictures on our dining-room wall can be swapped and changed at any time, but my mother and my aunt would never allow us to remove that of the heavenly hunk. Every evening when my aunt says grace she directs her thanksgiving towards that picture. Every time I come back home with an excess of alcohol in my bloodstream, but still manage to open the door, the first thing I look at is that picture, just to confirm that I'm home. Without it I'm convinced that I'd be lost. (2004: 67)

While Jesus serves as orientation for Dingz, Bafana's uncle in *After Tears* is convinced that there is no such thing as a God. "'[...] I tell you that there's no such thing as God,'

he whispered. 'I believe in Satan because I see his work here in the township every day, but to me God is this'" (2007: 61f).

> It's not a question of believing in God or Jesus, my laaitie. It's whether They believe what is important to me. I might not be educated like you, but I'm not an idiot. How can I believe in a man who was convinced that His own mother, Mary, was a virgin? Just look at it, Advo! She carried Him for nine full pregnant and painful months, but Jesus still denied that Mary was His own mother. (2007: 28)

His reluctance functions as self protection as his prayers have not reached fertile ground. His injured pride is present in all of his messages to his nephew: "I have my pride. If He's willing to help, He knows where to find me. I'm not hiding like he is" (2004: 118).

After his uncle's death, a funeral feast – the after tears[10] – is to be held in honor of the dead. Zero, his uncle's friend, encapsulates the reason for people to attend after tears: "[...] food and ladies galore, mthakathi" (2007: 197). In the religious sense, however, it is a ritual of purification (*catharsis*).

> Placed in the gateless driveway of our home were two big steel baths full of dirty water. Everyone who came from the cemetery was required to wash their hands and erase all thoughts of death and human decay as they did so. (2004: 200)

Dingz may have the closing words:

> I was convinced that God was white, and either English or Afrikaans, simply because it had taken Him so many years to get an interpreter to translate exactly what the blacks and the poor wanted in their endless prayers. It took God almost a century to bring about the end of apartheid and its package of injustice and to usher in the long-awaited freedom. It also seemed to me that English and Afrikaans are God's languages. Mastering those two languages in our country had since become the only way to avoid the poverty of twilight zones like Soweto. (2004: 182)

[10] In Mda's novel *Black Diamond* after tears is described as „the joyful event where the living crack jokes about the dead, and get sloshed and dance to loud music at those marathon parties […]" (2009: 1) that is opposed to the sad and mournful affairs that pass for funerals in the white communities.

3.5 Money talks: Of Corruption and Fake Results

Warnes names Mhlongo's books "novels of deception" for a reason:

> They have as their central themes the deceptions perpetrated by their narrators; they have themselves deceived their critics into celebrating rather than cynical critique; and they engage on a macro level with the deception that is now part and parcel of the post-apartheid story. (2011: 549f)

At the bursary office, Dingz at first claims the secretary to be racist to attract attention and he afterwards tries to convince the Registrar Winterburn that he needs the bursary that he was declined before.

> I was not ashamed that I lied. Living in this South Africa of ours you have to master the art of lying in order to survive. As she looked at me I hid my gold-plated Pulsar watch, which I had bought the previous year at American Swiss. (2004: 21)

In the further course of the novel, he tries to resit an exam by claiming that one of his uncles died, which turns out to be a lie. He simply produces a wrong death certificate to resit the exam at a later date. In the supermarket, where a friend of his works, he pays less for the goods he buys. He also tries to bribe two police officers, who want to arrest him due to public drinking. On the streets, people sell fake goods. Theks thinks about buying a pair of shoes as she is convinced of its authenticity. Dingz discovers the fraud:

> It was different from other Nike shoes I knew. The logo on this particular show pointed in the opposite direction. Suspiciously I looked again: the logo started with a letter M instead of the usual N. Because of our over-familiarity with the Nike logo, we had nearly bought a fake product. We were about to buy a Mike shoe. (2004: 70)

When Dingz has the chance to welcome a girl in his dorm, he bribes his friend who is in control of the visitors at the YMCA. He is, consequently, dismissed from the dormitory. His uncle reveals the vital secret for surviving in South Africa's political as well as social climate: In South Africa, money talks. Mhlongo also refers to this maxim in the *New York Times* article on South Africa's literary scene: according to him, one can aspire anything with a little bit of petty cash available (Donadio 2006: 1).

> I tell you that if it was not for bra PP, who bribed the police officials with two straights of KWV brandy, we would still be in jail now. Money can really talk in this country, Advo. I've seen it. (2004: 44)

After Tears depicts an even corrupter society. Bafana produces fake certificates and claims to have graduated from Law School while actually he dropped out and lies to his family and the people in his hometown. He decides to buy fake results in order not to disappoint his family and friends.

> I realised that I had set myself a trap. There I was, in that taxi, stuck with the cash that I was supposed to pay for my nonexistent results. What was I going to do with it now? I asked myself. (2007: 133)

In order to be able to work as a lawyer, he bribes everyone at court and hence wins numerous cases. The motto for every lawyer at court: "If you have enough money you can always win your case here in South Africa through what lawyers like Advo here call creative diplomacy" (2004: 103). With enough money at hand, Bafana's technique finally shows success at court.

> Everything at the Protea Magistrate's Court had become routine. I always started by giving Sergeant Nkuna his R100 commission for getting me a client, then I went and talked to the magistrate that was handling the case in his office, then I went to the prosecutor and the arresting officer before appearing in the court to plead guilty or not guilty on behalf of my client. Thereafter my clients would be let out, either on bail or after paying a fine. (2007: 211)

Besides the fake stories he tries to uphold in his professional life, he, in union with his mother, decides behind his uncles' backs to sell the house in order to get money for his non-existent grades at school and pay for the fake results. In the course of selling the house, it becomes apparent that the house is not even in their possession. As the Land Tenure Act prohibited blacks to own estate during the years of apartheid, one of his relatives had deviously seized the property.

When Vee, an old friend who is originally from Zimbabwe and about to be deported, asks him to marry her in order to receive a work permit, he agrees as soon as she tells him that she is willing to pay R15 000 for this fraud. His mother, however, learns about their marriage plans and the fake university results and interrupts the ceremony at the

last minute. Nonetheless, both novels draw "the reader into sympathy with narrators who lie, steal, and cheat their ways through the novels" (Warnes 2011: 549).

3.6 After Tears Dog Eats Dog

Dog Eat Dog, set in the year of 1994, pictures the first steps into a post-apartheid era. The novel depicts the first post-apartheid generation that struggles to stay afloat at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Dingz has no other possibility but to lie as he does not meet the criteria for financial aid. In *After Tears*, Bafana, the street-smart kid from the townships, struggles to open his own business after having dropped out of school without telling his family about his failure. His mother encourages him to look for a position as she does not know about his negative results at school. Mhlongo, who studied African Literature and Political Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, did not do well and dropped out himself after finishing his BA. In his second novel, he depicts the challenge of his protagonist to become the breadwinner of the family and lead his relatives into a better life.

Mhlongo displays these expectations of black South African families who send their kids to varsity in order to be able to afford a better life. The kids, being the first in the family to attend college, worry about disappointing their families, let alone the country, as they are not meeting their expectations. Yet, they are not afraid to play the system, as can be seen by various incidents such as Dingz' fake death certificate that he produces. After all South Africa has been through, blacks start to attack blacks, the ANC government has become greedy and raised the costs of living and people in the townships wait for their kids to come home in order to live from their money. Warnes (2011: 549) notes that the

> [...] path to *bildung* – to the burgeois – is impeded and finally thwarted in the course of the two novels, leaving us, at the end of After Tears, with only a sinister alternative outlet for class aspiration: deception and fraud.

The two novels clearly show the disappointment in the post-apartheid government and the protagonists' constant struggle to escape the townships but who are, simultaneously, drawn back to their roots. Nevertheless, the elections have given hope to the country

and Mhlongo captures this excitement of the new awakening for writers who have a lot more to write about than their traumatic past:

> This is a great time to be a black writer in South Africa. Most black writers who wrote before democracy focused on politics, but now there are a lot of things to write about – the AIDS pandemic, poverty, crime, xenophobia, unemployment. My scope is not limited to apartheid because there are so many things happening in South Africa today. (Donadio 2006: 2)

4. Growing Up in South Africa: the Emergence of a New Black Middle Class

In the face of Freud calling trauma an "inedible imprint" or Caruth claiming that a wound is "not healable" it would be naïve to assume that children born in a country like South Africa after 1994 do not suffer from any kind of trauma and have mastered their ancestors' past unscathed. In fact, Schwab, who grew up in Germany after WWII, aims to prove the opposite. She claims that "[…] [l]egacies of violence not only haunt the victim but also are passed on through the generations" (2010: 2). In that Freud claims that trauma as a foreign body is still at work long after its entry, Schwab insists on the fact that those legacies of violence are inevitably transmitted from one generation to the next. She believes that

> [c]hildren have a way of listening to the unspoken. Children also have a way of incorporating their parents' unresolved conflicts, contradictions, and shameful secrets. This is why children may fall from the edge of a violent world into a no-man's land of inner uprootedness that leaves them with a feeling they never belong. (2010: 100)

Novels such as Hlapa's *A Daughter's Legacy* depict this passing on of trauma. Bobby van der Merwe (2006: 162) remarks that

> Kedibone, the central character of this novel, is a truthful, unassuming narrator who speaks of violence, abuse, cultural taboos, childhood and responsibility, in a country where countless women and girl-children are rendered mute by virtue of their gender. They inherit pain and futility from their mothers, see this helplessness reflected in the lives of their sisters and friends and inevitably pass this on to their own daughters.

Kedibone, however, breaks free from the legacies of her ancestors. Her mother, being treated badly by her husband and his family, names her child Kedibone, which means "I have seen enough things" in their culture and, as a result, inflicts her trauma on to her daughter. In a letter to Kedibone, who is at that point already a grown-up woman, she openly talks about what she had to go through. Hlapa, who faced her own life story *in A Daugther's Legacy* and is intimately connected to the main character, remarks that by giving her daughter this name, she has made her "carry the burden of [her mother's] silence and [her] inability to act when [she] was ill-treated by [Kedibone's] father and

his family" (Hlapa 2004: 113) as *leina lebe ke seromo* (a bad name is a curse, 2004: 113). She suggests different names for her mother's past that she could have given her daughter, such as Kefentse ("I won") or Montshepetsaboshigo ("The one who walked with me through the night"). Hlapa as well as the protagonist of her first novel decide to cast away their name and hence free themselves from the past. Hlapa takes on her middle name, Pamphilia, which has Greek roots and means "all-loving" and embraces her life that is about to start at this point. Having made this decision, she refuses to be silent any longer:

> I wrote to you about my name in order to understand if this is the legacy that was perhaps passed on to you by the women before you. If that was the case, I refuse to pass it on to the women after me. […] I am refusing to carry the burden any further. (2004: 114)

In her novel, she manages to convey Kedibone's suffering that stems from her mother's legacy and the traumatic experiences she had to go through. Kedibone witnesses numerous traumatic events on her path to womanhood herself, although, at first, she is too young to realize the gravity of the situation. She is raped by a stranger at the age of six, which "destroyed [her] spark and the excitement in [her] eyes for good" (2006: 7). As she knows nothing about sexuality, she does not dare to tell her mother about the incident, as certain things are not addressed in her culture. "I came from a culture of silence, a culture of a lack of knowledge and a culture of 'It is not just you, everyone else has the same problems, so get over it[!]'" (2006: 80). When she is abused by their gardener Bra Joe, her mother convinces her that it was just a bad dream. Years later, she discovers that her mother knew what happened but decided to keep quiet about it. Later, a few boys from her school, including her brother Sipho, watch their colleague Masilu drag her away. She manages to escape and later says:

> Games like this happened often and the girls always ended up feeling embarrassed. It did not mean anything to the boys. To the girls, however, it was very embarrassing to undergo such humiliation while others cheered. But we knew it was an issue never to be discussed at home or in front of elders. (2006: 12)

When one of her friends is raped, Kedibone tells her mother about it. She, in turn, contacts the girl's parents, who decide to keep this incident a family secret. Kedibone, who has never experienced any loving gestures, wonders how relationship between men

and women are supposed to be. ”I had experienced and seen enough to suggest that forced encounters were the norm” (2006: 30). Bobby van der Merwe notes: “Girls were expected to carry the burden of blame, whether it involved rape, unwanted pregnancy, or abortion, and boys – by virtue of their gender – were deemed blameless” (2006: 164).

When Kedibone’s doctor prescribes her pills for abdominal pain, she later finds out that these are contraceptives her mother asked him to prescribe her without Kedibone knowing about it. When she falls in love with Titus, he soon wants to be intimate and, as she is not ready, she pushes him away. Although she is stronger and escapes, she still gets pregnant and decides to abort the child. Kedibone, at first, refuses to have the procedure done when she sets eyes on the instruments they are about to use for this backstreet abortion[11]. After her mother confronts her with the problems she will have to endure if she gives birth to the child and reminds her that she will not be able to study, she returns to the ‘clinic’ in order to live and, paradoxically, almost dies:

> I lay there in agony and screamed as they performed the procedure on me. I knew I had to go through with it and tried not to think of those other girls who had died. I wanted to save my life. (2006: 55)

When the aborted child is ‘born’ she is shocked by what she sees and mistakes the umbilical cord for a tail, which she is afraid of because this “thing” might bite her. She later says that she “was traumatized and alone. Nothing at all about [her] ordeal was mentioned at home” (2006: 58). A few weeks later, she leaves for the University of the Western Cape, where nobody knows what she has been through. She has many relationships, in which she aims to hurt the men the same way they hurt her, it is payback time. Although she has turned her back on the townships she suffers from bed-wetting and epilepsy and realizes that the trauma of her past follows her. Schwab claims that

> [t]o the extent that we are successful in banning thoughts and memories, we become a body in pain, leading a somatic existence severed from consciously or affectively lived history. (2010: 2)

[11] Abortions were still illegal at that time as the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act was only passed in 1997 in South Africa. In Gordimer’s novel *Get a Life*, it says: “Although abortion was illegal in those Calvinist regime days in her country, sister women always knew who would perform the simple procedure, and it was timely done” (2005: 79).

The same holds true for Kedibone. For her, this condition is caused by her past sins and she is convinced that she is punished for having killed her unborn child. All these sufferings, in her view, are an indication that she was supposed to have died during the abortion but survived: "I took the news of my condition as a punishment for my having had an abortion and for all the things I had done wrong in my life" (2006: 75). When she finds out about her boyfriend of two years, Alan, cheating on her, she attacks him in an attempt to kill him. "As I was trying to stab him, the only thought in my mind was that no man would ever hurt me again and get away with it" (2006: 78). She is sent to a psychiatrist and realizes that her history has followed her to the city:

> When I had left home to come to university in Cape Town, I had felt relieved and thought that I would start life afresh, unaware that there are certain things in your life that cannot be forgotten. I was haunted by my memories of my life back home. (2006: 79)

When she was younger her mother had often talked about divorce but she did not know what that word meant and thought that the fact her parents were not excited around each other was due to them being adults. She had never had a real relationship to her father who had worked in Johannesburg. Only when her father dies, she realizes that she is constantly in search for a male role model and tries to replace him but cannot succeed.

> Over the years I had managed to kill my father so that I did not have to wait for him any more. Now he had died in reality and I did not know how to express my feelings appropriately. I eventually allowed my tears to flow when Bontle hugged me – the first and only time I cried openly about my father. (2006: 89)

Numerous times, she thinks about the unborn son that she killed and how old he would be. Her psychiatrist advises her to giver her son a name instead of addressing him as "thing" and to write a letter to her dead child. In doing so, she is freed from the sins she has lain upon herself.

> *Although I was crying because of the pain, something inside me died with you. The horror of having to wait while you were fighting your life inside me after the abortion took a part of me along with your soul. The memories and the images of your body have haunted me for a long time* […]. (2006: 99)

Due to the treatment for her endometriosis, her doctor suggests thinking about having a baby as it could be possible that she might not be able to conceive at a later stage of

therapy. Kedibone sees this opportunity as a chance to be forgiven her sins and to start afresh but when she tells Timothy about the sudden pregnancy, tension starts to build up. In the relationship with Tim, his mood swings affect their life together negatively and she does not fight back as she has never been treated differently before. "If you grew up without a father, it would be difficult for you to understand what it meant to be loved by a man and how you should be treated" (2006: 111). He treats her badly and, in the later course, sends her a letter, officially asking her to move out. It is only when she bears the child that she finds the path to self-discovery.

> It was when I gave birth to my son that my world changed and I became a child again. […] The birth of my son was a second chance I was given to claim my happiness and see life differently. […] Before Tumi's birth, life had been all about fighting to protect myself, my secrets, pain, anger and hurt. I hid away and pretended I had never been through such horrors. (2006: 135)

Kedibone realizes that she will not be able to raise her son with these inner conflicts that she has not yet faced. In an attempt to sort out her life, she confronts her anxieties. She is confronted with her past, faces the conflicts about why her father left, why she became a single mother and why she was raped twice. It becomes clear that she has to go back to her childhood memories in order to support her son and build up a loving relationship with him, which she was never given the chance to have. On the birth of her son, Bobby van der Merwe (2006: 164) remarks on healing that

> [w]hen her son is born, she realises that she cannot, must not, pass her insecurities onto him. She will not brand him with a name that reflects the burden of past injustices or that grounds him uncertainty. She names him Tumi, which is an abbreviation of Boitumelo, meaning 'joy'. The symbolism of this act of naming assists her retrieval of her own lost identity.

For Kedibone, her son is "the most beautiful instrument that God used to commence [her] healing" (2006: 136). In order to take further steps towards this stage of overcoming the past, she writes letters to Tim and her mother[12], freeing them from all their sins and accepts that all she had witnessed in her past was integrated into the definition of who she was and is today. Only then, she decides to give voice to her story:

[12] In Sindiwe Magona's novel *Mother to Mother*, the mother of the perpetrator also frees herself from her son's sins by writing about what happened in a letter to the mother of the victim.

> *I respect your decisions and actions and I free you to do what suits you. But what I know and what I have seen, I will tell. By silencing me, you let it happen to me and others, but I cannot let it happen to the daughters of the world, the daughters I might have*. (2006: 156)

Kedibone's aim is to grow old with no regrets and to no longer allow her past to define her and to ruin the interactions with other people. "I am now focusing on everything I still have and all that I will have soon: a future free from pain, fear, anger, and resentment" (2006: 162). In the end, Kedibone frees herself from the name and the legacy that has come along with it. With a strong and confident voice, the novel ends:

> It depends solely upon my belief and acceptance of myself, and my willingness to take from the world and life all the good that I want and deserve. […] It has started me on a journey of renewal and acceptance and I am learning how to live my life to the fullest. I have no idea where my journey will lead me. But I continue to walk. (2006: 169)

A Daughter's Legacy is, in this view, a valid example for the potentiality to embrace a troubled past and re-define the future in the individual's own ways. In the *Author's Note,* Hlapa votes for this new start by saying that

> [i]n the midst of everything, you stop and say 'enough crying and struggling to hold on'. When you do that, a sense of serenity is born of your acceptance; a new-found confidence is born of self-approval. You stop blaming yourself and other people for things they did to you or did not do to you. You acquire a new sense of safety and security from self-reliance when you learn to stand on your own.

In this sense, both Hlapa and the main protagonist of her novel break free and, instead on fixating on their past, they seek for orientation in the future. Based on the example of Hlapa's novel, growing up in post-apartheid South Africa has definitely proven to challenge the new generation. But as multi-faceted as the generation is, it has taken on this challenge and has mastered this step each in their own ways.

4.1 Same Same But Different

This initial struggle of the adoption of Kedibone's past and reconstruction of her self is not shown in Matlwa's novel *Coconut*. In the novel, the life stories of two girls

intertwine, who both struggle for recognition in the present. Ofilwe's family, who has just moved from the townships to a high-security county estate called Little Valley, has it all. Her father has benefited from the Black Economic Empowerment policies of the post-apartheid government[13] and is, hence, able to provide his family with a life in luxury. Their new status is, however, overshadowed by the white people that live in their new area. Now that the Tlou family has joined the middle class, they are constantly confronted with the cultural practices of their new surroundings and have to experience that the white minority still lays down the rules. Fikile, on the other hand, is an orphan and is raised by her uncle who shows pedophile tendencies. She wants to be called Fiks in order not to reveal the origin of her native name. Her life at the townships displays a traumatic past: her father is absent, she witnesses her mother's suicide, the grandmother has abandoned her and she is subsequently forced to stay with her uncle in a tiny shack in the backyard of another family's home. When Fikile[14] drops out of High School, she starts to work as a waitress in the suburbs while aspiring to possess all the privileges of the whites. Due to the social expectations of their assimilation of a hegemonic westernized culture, the two girls, in the course of the novel, betray their African culture and are excluded from both worlds. Spencer claims that the novel

> interrogates the various ways in which cultural tensions created by the historical legacies of apartheid, conjoined with American global power, produce a cultural hegemony that privileges 'whiteness' over 'blackness', and results in 'whiteness' becoming a new form of aspirational identity. (2009: 68)

A source of resistance can, however, be found in Ofilwe's brother Tshepo, who fights against the superior white power and aims to study African Literature and Languages because he wants to speak up for the people of his culture.

> I want to say those things that people are afraid to hear. Those things they do not want to face. In the pages of a book, in the privacy of their minds, where they feel a little less vulnerable, I will talk to them, long after the book is down, we will converse, my readers and I, and they will know. (2007: 80)

[13] BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) is a concept that emerged in the early 1990s which aims to address the imbalance of power within the state and economy between the black and white population and focuses on increasing the black ownership shares. Although it has been said to favor only a small group of the "wealthy ANC-connected 'empowerment elite'" (Southall 2007: 67) businessmen without capital were also offered financial assistance from the state or the private sector.

[14] Ironically enough, Fikile stands for "you have arrived", she, however, constantly seeks to leave the townships behind and strives for wealth and respect.

Ofilwe, on the other hand, constantly tries to negotiate a space in the white post-apartheid South Africa and stumbles back and forth in search of the one identity to be aspired to, which is associated with economic stability. Just like Fikile, she is in two minds on how to act. They both do not value an ethnic African ideal anymore and rather strive for the global values of whiteness. The novel depicts their quest for identity, torn between the two worlds, and shows which challenges are faced by the generation of the *born-frees*.

4.2 Language as a Means of Inclusion or Exclusion

Although the multiplicity of languages in South Africa might draw a different picture, English remains the dominant language of the country that is associated with power and finance. As whites have set the standard on how to speak English properly, it mainly evokes the image of 'whiteness'. The mechanism of inclusion or exclusion becomes apparent in Fikile's attitude towards the language, she automatically excludes herself from other black Africans who do not master the English language:

> Many people think I am foreign, from the UK or somewhere there. I think it is because my accent is so perfect and my manner so refined. Yes, I have always been different. I never could relate to other black South Africans. We've just never clicked. (2007: 146)

Due to her English skills, Fikile feels superior to other black Africans and loathes the ones she is associated with due to her outer appearance. When she is spoken to on the bus by a black father, who worries about his daughter refusing to speak Xhosa at home, she does not share his concern. He, however, fears the influence of the school and of the imperial powers of the world:

> Standing at the edge of the playground, I watched little spots of amber and auburn become less of what Africa dreamed of and more of what Europe thought we ought to be. Standing at the edge of the playground I saw tiny pieces of America, born on African soil. I saw a dark-skinned people refusing to be associated with the red soil, the mud huts and the glistening stone beads that they once loved. (2007: 189f)

He is torn between seeing his daughter happy, chatting away with a cute "half-metre milk bar" (188) and the fear that his daughter might forget the traditions and customs of her culture.

Ofilwe also denies a part of herself as she is ashamed of her mother who does not speak English sufficiently. She keeps silent about the parents' evenings at school because her mother's English is *ghastly* (cf. 2007: 51). When she is being asked at school what language she speaks at home, she confidently answers "English". Her teacher does not believe her and tells the "*three white unidentical men in serious suits*" from the school governing board to tick Zulu as these native languages are "*all the same*" (2007: 57). Ofilwe believes that she speaks the TV language, such as her father does at work, the language that her mother never gets right and that, to her, is the one that speaks of "sweet success" (2007: 54). She does not speak Sepedi and also knows nothing about the customs of their culture. When her mother invites some of the nursing sisters she used to work with, Ofilwe addresses them with a simple 'Hi' and her mother asks herself what kind of children she is raising, who forget about the cultural etiquette and how to show respect towards elders. Her family goes to church whose history she does not understand but she feels that she belongs there. She asks herself where an unused language goes and if her own tongue escaped from her completely.

> Is it packed away in an old crumbly cereal box along with a misplaced tomato, your old locker code, first telephone number and the location of your budgie's grave, and then shoved into the dusty garage space of your brain? Or is it blown up or deleted or is it shredded up into a gazillion fragments or degenerated or decomposed into a nasty small and excreted out of your body? Could it all possibly be flushed away? (2007: 57)

The same way she lacks Sepedi, Ofilwe seemingly also struggles with English. Her friend Belinda draws her attention to the correct pronunciation of words and hence positions herself superior to Ofilwe. Belinda does not want her to get laughed at again by other students but Ofilwe rather wants to play outside. She refuses to believe that she does not master English but she has suppressed Sepedi and she feels confident about her knowledge of English: "It is because I am smart and speak perfect English. That is why people treat me differently. I knew from a very young age that Sepedi would not take me far" (2007: 54). She observes that all the people around her who are economically

privileged do not throw around words in their native language but continuously talk in English. In her family, she is treated better than her cousins because of her English skills. Fikile also believes that the English language will help her to achieve her goals:

> I have even started speaking in the English language even when I do not need to. I am no longer concerned with what I sound like because I have come to believe that I sound like any other English-speaking person. I use words like 'facetious' and 'filial' in everyday speech and speak English boldly, without hesitation. […] There is this new drive that she has taken charge of me: it urges me to take command and create my own destiny. I am certain of where I am going and know exactly what it is I want out of life. I have worked hard to be where I am and have little tolerance for those who get in my way. (2007: 137)

Blackness is Only Skin-Deep

"And you, Fikile, what do you want to be when you grow up?"
White, Teacher Zola. I want to be white." (2007: 135)

The title of Matlwa's novel *Coconut* already refers to the conflict of the two girls "whose skin had been marked by a fiery kiss" (2007: 84). It is used as a derogatory term to refer to a person

> […] who is black but who speaks like "a white person"; that is, it refers to one who speaks English most of the time, choosing it over an African language, or who is unable to speak an African language, and who is considered to "act white". (Spencer 2009: 67)

The novel depicts the inner conflict that the two girls Ofilwe and Fikile struggle with: they are black on the outside but white on the inside. Spencer claims that "[i]n the coconut metaphor, blackness is only skin deep, while the inner self is reconfigured by education, social and cultural hegemony" (2009: 68).

For the two girls, the body has become a way to mediate their real inner self, a way to construct their identity. In the magazines they both read, they are constantly confronted with images of white privileged people and as they have both internalized the values of this 'whiteness', they strive to assimilate and belong to this elitist group.

As a child, Ofilwe would cover her bedroom wall with people she thought were "the greatest breathings of our time" (2007: 92). When she proudly shows this wall of fame to her brother, he tells her to take them down. "White. White. White. There was not a single face of colour on that wall. I had not noticed. Honest" (2007: 92). Ofilwe strives to be accepted by the white kids in her school, however, this attempt fails at the color of her skin. At a sleepover, "another suburban ritual" (Spencer 2009: 73), the kids play spin-the-bottle and one boy refuses to kiss Ofilwe because her lips are too dark.

> Now with eyelids fastened tight (No ways! Her lips are too dark), I shifted back to my ready spot (No ways! Her lips are too dark), unsure of what to do next (No ways! Her lips are too dark), whispering the words to myself (No ways! Her lips are too dark), not believing that they were spoken words (No ways! Her lips are too dark); live words (No ways! Her lips are too dark); words that had been followed by an explosion of general laughter (No ways! Her lips are too dark). (2007: 45)

Her brother, although he would not have to work, is given a job at Instant Fried Chicken and believes that these people, the white customers, do not even hear him when he speaks to them and they "click their fingers at [him] as if it is the only language [he] understands" (2007: 29). Tshepo, who contrarily to his sister embodies a romanticized African identity, wants to study African Literature and Languages against his father's wishes. He does not believe in relationships with white people as they are not interested in real friends but rather hope for an audience to share their lives with.

> Do you not feel like a fool, taking part in conversations that have nothing to do with you? Conversations that will never have anything to do with you. You are the backstage crew in the drama of their lives. If they need you, they do not know it and do not care. Open your eyes. [...] Friends, Ofilwe, know your name. Friends ask where you come from and are curious about what language you and yours speak. Friends get to know your family, all of them, those with and those without. Friends do not scoff at your beliefs, friends appreciate your customs, friends accept you for who you really are. (2007: 43)

He wants to make Ofilwe aware of the fact that she will never be like the people she strives to be and, as much as she pretends, she is never going to be one of them. In this attempt, she is going to lose the bonds to her people because of the way she has transformed and will thus be shunned by both worlds. When Ofilwe draws back from her friends and seeks for a reintegration to her cultural community, she receives a letter from Belinda, telling her how much she misses her friend. She still thinks back to those

times but believes that she is better off without them and that she is tired of explaining the traditions of her African ancestors. She attempts to get in touch with the customs of her culture.

Fikile's principle, on the other hand, is not to mingle and talk to the people on the train or bus as well as firmly intends not to mingle with black men, just because it makes things easier[15].

> *I am not one of you*, I want to tell them. Some day you will see me drive past here in a sleek air-conditioned car, and I will roll up my windows if you try to come near me, because *I am not one of you*. You are poor and black and I am rich and brown. (2007: 140)

Her attitude has been established very early in childhood, various glances of retrospect show that she has grown up with magazines of the white. When she is told to go outside and play with the other kids, she refuses to go: "*It's hot outside and my skin will get dark*" (2007: 131). The man on the train sees through her: "You know, those *abo mabhebeza* who are always wishing to be something that they ain't never gonna be" (2007: 133). Fikile is, however, determined to make it out of this misery and has set herself the goal that she is not going to end like her uncle who was given the chance of an education by a white family and who, "*growing too big for his boots*" (2007: 126), was excluded from medical school. "*He'd outgrown not only his boots, they had said, but his black skin*" (2007: 126). Fikile wakes up every morning, full of new hope, knowing that she is going to make it in this world, even though she has "not a cent in the bank, nor very much education, but a heart so heavy with ambition that it may just fall to the depths of my stomach if Project Infinity is not realised" (2007: 109f). All of Fikile's belongings, such as her skin lightener, are in one box and to her, she has already made it into a better world:

> The dainty little emerald-green coloured lenses that float gracefully in the sapphire blue contact-lens solution are a reminder of how far I have come, […] the charming young waitress with pretty green eyes and soft, blow-in-the-wind, caramel-blond hair (pinned in perfectly to make it look real), working at the classiest coffee shop this side of the equator. (2007: 117)

[15] Just like the protagonist in Hlapa's novel *A Daughter's Legacy*, Fikile "never had a father" (2007: 127) and does not get involved with men throughout the novel. Kedibone gets involved with men but is abused and ill-treated.

4.3 A New Black Middle Class

Ofilwe's father, who has benefited from post-apartheid government, has made it possible to move up to the middle class. Due to his company's winning of a Post Office tender, the family moves from the townships to a county estate, where they live in a triple-storey Tuscan-styled house. The kids both attend a private school and, on numerous occasions, a lack of a sense of belonging and a dismissive tone of other pupils is present. When a white girl asks her to do her hair, and later screams that Ofilwe 'did this' to her. When she is asked where she was born, nobody believes her when she says Johannesburg: "Don't lie, Ofilwe, you were born in a stinky shack[!]" (2007: 14). One day, her father picks her up in his new Mercedes-Benz and a colleague jokingly accuses her father of having hijacked the car.

Her dad plays golf and listens to classical music and Ofilwe keeps asking herself if he had always like this taste in music or if he acquired the taste of money that has led to these things that 'insinuate wealth and stability' (cf. 2007: 64). Their mother gave up nursing and rather decided to become a housewife, and now lives on her husband's weekly allowance. Ofilwe overhears a conversation of her mother and one of her friends when they talk about getting a divorce.

> Koko said that Mama needed to stop acting like a spoilt child. Koko said that John – Daddy – was a man and that men do these things with other women, but that it does not mean he does not care for Mama. Koko said that Mama lives a life that many women from where she comes from can only dream of and that she cannot jeopardise that by 'this crazy talk of divorce'. (2007: 12, cf. to Wanner's novel *Behind Every Successful Man)*

The family tries to blend in but is harshly reminded by their community and weekly visits to the Silver Spoon Coffee Shop that they are different after all:

> Look at us, Lord, sitting in this corner. A corner. A hole. Daddy believes he enjoys his food. Poor Mama, she still struggles with this fork and knife thing. Poor us. [...] What are we doing here? Why did we come? We do not belong. (2007: 31)

The coffee shop, where only the important people of the village enjoy their hot beverages, brings the two girls together. Fikile, who works at the shop as a waitress, hopes to find her way into the social circle and treats the white customers like her

friends but black people with disdain. She loathes the Tlou family, who, to her, are all about new money.

> Them. The Tlous. The family I hate with everything in me. […] New money is what they are and that is why I hate them. That is why I avoid them. […] I know what they are like, these BEE families. Fake hearts and fake lives all dressed up in designer labels bought yesterday. (2007: 164f)

Fikile believes that she can make out the people with new money who are all 'fake' (174), however, she herself makes up stories about her past and claims that "[t]he pretend stories of [her] life serve the purpose they are required to fulfill, 'Fake it 'til you make it.' I feel no shame at my slight stretch of the truth"[16] (cf. 2007: 147 and Mhlongo's novels that are discussed later). Fikile's uncle, contrarily to Ofilwe's father, has not received his share of the pie. He is a fake black senior partner, only hired to make people believe that the company, Lentso Communications, has adjusted to the changes in government (108). Fikile believes that people who have benefited from the BEE government, such as the Tlous, have not fought for anything. Not like she fights for her Project Infinity, which she frantically pursues. The bad conditions, under which she suffers, such as the fact that there is no bath or inside toilet, are, for her, a stimulus to ascend to another class:

> They can serve as a constant reminder to me of what I do not want to be: black, dirty and poor. This bucket can be a daily motivator for me to keep me working towards where I will someday be: white, rich and happy. (2007: 118)

Fikile believes that she is already accepted by the people in the coffee shop, without realizing that they are living their own lives. Her co-worker Ayanda tells her that she is trying too hard and her attempts to make the customers her friends are fruitless as they would not even notice her on the streets (cf. 2007: 142f). He is disgusted by the paradox of the country that ten per cent of the white population still inhabit ninety percent of the land while the blacks are pushed back in the remaining ten percent of the country.

[16] Also note that she steals a pair of black jeans from the store, which are essential for her to keep the job at the coffee shop as she has to adjust her style to the ones of the waiters.

4.4 Across the Color Line

Hlapa, in her own way, has drawn a picture of a little girl from the townships who is deeply traumatized by various events in her past. Only too often, the intimate relation to the author herself is identified. By breaking the silence, she not only gives voice to her protagonist but also narrates her own life story. In a way, the novel can be seen as her own testimony and way to overcome trauma by the carving of this narration. Unlike the two characters in *Coconut*, Kedibone realizes that she has to live life to the fullest and not regret her actions. She has not the power to change her past but she is the agent of her own future.

Both girls in Matlwa's *Coconut* seek for recognition and desperately want to be accepted by the white society and, in that attempt, make advances without noticing that they are simply ignored by the whites. Ofilwe constantly worries that the people around her will suddenly see through the façade that keeps them from acting in their normal cultural way in order to blend in.

> We dare not eat with our naked fingertips, walk in generous groups, speak merrily in booming voices and laugh our mqombothi laughs. They will scold us if we dare, not with their lips, Lord, because the laws prevent them from doing so, but with their eyes. They will shout, "Stop acting black!" "Stop acting black!" is what they will shout. (2007: 31)

Their life styles do not fit their daily routine in the townships, Ofilwe has long escaped from a life in poverty and Fikile still struggles to break free. Although they struggle to negotiate a place for themselves, they are still marginalized by the white society. The two are divided by their socio-economic conditions but they both struggle with the same problems and are shunned by both worlds. They feel they neither belong in the filthy townships, nor do they feel they are accepted in the public places of the white. They refuse to believe that their performance of whiteness stops at the color of their skin and are, in this way, trapped in-between lives. In the epilog, Matlwa says the following:

> It is not a piece of literary genius. It is the story of our lives. It is our story, told in our own words as we feel it every day. It is boring. It is plain. It is overdone and definitely not newsworthy. But it is the story we have to tell. (2007: 191)

In claiming that the story is not worth being told, she at the same time contradicts the notion that it is a story that has to be told. Her novel is unique in the way that she covers the life of two young girls on one day, who do not accept each other while not acknowledging that they have much in common. Just as the magazines that they both read, their lives have been airbrushed and in trying to escape from the townships, the two girls often forget their roots and color until they come to a halt the color line.

5. INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE IN MONTANA'S *FANIE FOURIE'S LOBOLA*

5.1 Interracial Ties

5.1.1 Interracial Relationships

His heart told him that she was 'The One!' but his head said: But I had no idea that it would be somebody black . . . ! (Motana 2007: 4)

Upon falling in love with a black woman, Fanie Fourie is confronted with a series of predicaments, among those, the challenge to overcome disagreements within his family and between the two cultures that impinge on his relationship with Maki, short for Dimakatjo.

Their first encounter is accidental as Fanie is sent to the doctor's office by his black friend George, otherwise, chances are he would have never contacted a black doctor. People in the doctor's practice are surprised to see a white guy in 'their' surgery, even after more than a decade into 'new' South Africa, the sight of a white male in a black environment is still unusual today. Maki is stirred by Fanie's courtesy towards her, she is "used to admiration from black patients; but to be looked at with such interest by a white guy was something new to her" (2007: 3).

When George learns that Fanie is in love with a woman other than his girlfriend he automatically assumes that Fanie is chasing after a white lover, it does not occur to him that he might be panting after somebody black. Even Maki cannot believe that she has feelings for a white man and that, then again, someone white could ever be interested in her.

> Fanie dared to take Dimakatjo's hand as they walked, and to her own surprise, she allowed it. Every so often she would lift their joined hand and gaze at their

> entwined fingers, as if fascinated by the sight of Fanie's white flesh against the smooth coffee-brown of her own. (2007: 18)

Maki cannot believe the occurrence of events – her meeting a white man and falling in love with him – and, apparently, the environment neither apprehends nor approves of their relationship. Maki contemplates on the comments people of Fanie's neighborhood would make behind their backs, she knows that these people most certainly believe that "interracial relationships only flourish[ed] in parts of the country that they regard as 'Sodom and Gmorrah'" (2007: 27). Maki, who remembers looking upon mixed-race couples adversely, knows exactly what the people in her neighborhood are thinking about the couple.

> Like so many people in the community, she had always considered that black women who took up with white guys were women of questionable morals. *Tiekie-lines* – brazen tarts! Gold-diggers! She had despised them passionately. (2007: 22f)

While Maki worries about other people's opinions on their relationship, Fanie is torn by the dichotomy of, on the one hand, his clear assumption that she would not refuse him, "taking advantage of the fact that he was white and she was black" (2007: 33). On the other hand, he believes that this is new South Africa, where skin color is no longer relevant. His thoughts, nonetheless, keep revolving; various situations evolve when he is drawn back into old South Africa.

> The emotional part of him told him to run after her, while the rational part said: *No, what will people think of you, a white man chasing after a black woman? What if she screams 'Help! Rape!'?* (2007: 33)

During the apartheid regime, Maki and Fanie would have trespassed against the so-called Immorality Act that forbade sexual contact between black and whites[17]. Even now, Fanie's mother is deeply distressed by the erotic relationship as, for her, the old order is still intact. Fanie in a sense feels guilty although, in a deeper moral sense, he is innocent and his mother is actually the 'guilty one'. Due to his dominant mother, however, he even pictures the court hearing that would be about to take place if this still

[17] Jann Turner's novel *Southern Cross* depicts the love between a black woman, Anna, and her white boyfriend Paul during apartheid. Paul, who has been to the prison numerous times, is murdered and Anna brings his murder to the TRC in the newly democratic South Africa ten years later and uncovers the lies that surround her lover's case.

were the old South Africa. He would have violated the laws of society in the old days but judged by moral norms and in the context of the new South Africa he is a hero for defying racism of society.

5.1.2 Interracial Friendships

Friendships between black and whites can only be found among the younger generation in the novel. Fanie grew up on his grandfather's plaas and used to play with the children of their black servants and workers. The innocence of children is of particular importance, they connect interracially as they are not aware of the etiquette. Fanie and his sister were raised in the surroundings of black people and hence speak their language, Sepedi (cf. 2007: 79). Now that Fanie is a grown-up, he still maintains friendships with black people, e.g. to his colleague George and his mother's maids. George claims that Fanie is "now a relative of us blacks" (2007: 56) when he learns about Fanie's love for Maki.

Fanie's sister Anna-Marie is pictured as the rebel of the family, she is depicted as the progressive liberal white in a new South Africa who is exultant about the interracial bonding of her brother. Whereas her mother treats her black maids as lifeless statues, their maid Selina and Anna-Marie have always had a close relationship, which is strengthened due to Fanie's evolving relationship with Maki.

Fanie's ex-girlfriend Gerda, described as "a 'liberated' young white woman" (2007: 13) initially mistakes Maki as the maid via the phone because it does not occur to her that Fanie might choose a black woman over her. Initally, she has reservations towards Thoko, who takes over the hairdresser salon at which she works. She is intimidated by her new black boss and thinks about quitting her job as she feels uncomfortable working for a black woman. Thoko, a Rastafarian whose skin has the 'wrong' color, soon develops a friendship with Gerda and senses that something is wrong with her when Fanie breaks up with her. Thoko later becomes her confidante and comforts her, she even adopts 'black resistance music' to her situation, clings to Bob Marley's words and convinces her to 'fight for her rights'. She encourages her not to give up that easily and a friendship between the two women evolves.

Thoko, who always accused her mother of worshipping white flesh, develops feelings of compassion for Gerda and takes her to a *matwetwe*, a traditional healer and diviner. Gerda, who has no idea of the customs, copies Thoko's gestures "like a child observing from a parent" (2007: 149) imitating her actions. When the healer wants to expel the bad spirits and the bad luck of her ancestors, she panics and runs away, screaming that she does not „[…] want to be raped by sex-crazed black men" (2007: 154) as she does not believe in black magic and thinks this will not work on white people. The healer and Gerda are shocked by her inappropriate behavior. In the course of the novel, one witnesses how initial reservations are discarded and friendship comes into existence. The two are not united by their skin color, however, they find their way together as two women who are both carving their paths into the future.

5.1.3 Generational Differences

The generational differences are most apparent in the mother-son relationship in the novel. Fanie's mother Louise serves as representative of the old generation, who ensures that the old order is still intact; she is opposed to her daughter, who is the rebel of the family and constantly challenges her mother's believes. Louise uses the bible to justify apartheid, she claims that her daughter does not understand Dutch and elucidates what is being said.

> In simple words, it tells us that God made boundaries between different countries and races. God did this because God's plan is that people of the same race should fall in love and marry, have children and raise them in the same culture. […] That God made boundaries between the races. Only fools cross these boundaries. (2007: 106)

Anna-Marie implores her mother not to use the bible to justify apartheid and at the same time her mother's attitudes make her feel ashamed to be an Afrikaner. Fanie's uncle, however, is a religious man and does not share the same values as his sister Louise. "As a religious man, he had made the crossing into 'new' South Africa a lot more graciously than others of his upbringing generation." (2007: 138) The racist mother, however, acts as a surrogate of apartheid and an *old hand*; apartheid is ingrained in her psyche. Fanie and Anna-Marie, who were raised liberally, do not carry the burden of the past.

> [Fanie] understood that the legacy of the past, which had endured for more than 300 years, would not just grind to a halt simply because the political leaders of the country had signed apartheid's death certificate! The habit of inferiority and superiority was deeply engrained in the marrow of a whole generation of South African's, and would remain so for years to come. (2007: 107)

Fanie begs her not to ruin his life and future with her racism, he would always choose Maki if she made him opt for one of the two. Anne-Marie claims that she "belong[s] in the museum of apartheid!" (2007: 111) She does not deserve to be in the new Suid Afrika as she is behind the times. Due to her children's modern attitude in regards to interracial relationships, Louise seeks the help of a psychologist, neglects the old patterns and overcomes the trauma of the past through the help of Catholicism.

> Her tears flowed freely as she talked, and it was as if the poison in her heart flowed out with them. […] Tonight was a night of renewal, and she wanted no reminder about what had been in the past. She felt she was a new person, and therefore wanted to write on a clean slate; to write new things, beautiful things. (2007: 188f)

Louise, who at first embodies apartheid, later experiences posttraumatic growth and is healed in the course of the novel, her tears indicating hope[18], which shape the fertile ground for the future. As she is initially depicted as the epitome of the old structure, her transition indicates strongly that there is a trend towards the future and beyond trauma.

5.1.4 Differences in Living Conditions

One cannot speak of a new South Africa without taking a closer look at the living conditions of its inhabitants. Fanie resides in an apartment in Pretoria city; his surroundings are rather separate units in a conservative neighborhood where he has an allotted parking bay. His apartment is described as full of rich and heavy wood, burgundy colored sofas that match the gray carpets and pot plants.

> What was surprising about Strijdomhuis was that, notwithstanding 'new' South Africa, it still serviced white only. There was not a single black face to be seen in its corridors, excepting the labourer, Nicholas Molwantwa. […] Whenever a flat was vacated by a white individual or family, they made certain that it was occupied by other whites. (2007: 26)

[18] Note the comparison, here, between the heavy rains that fell in *Quarter Tones* and the tears of Fanie's mother.

Whereas there are no black people to be seen in Fanie's neighborhood as the whites always seem to let the ones of their own race go first, a few brown people are found in Gerda's vicinity. Although it was once a place for low-income whites, Daanville was opened up for other races; there are a few brown faces to be seen, however, the area remained conservative as ever. As can also be seen in the friendship Gerda takes up with Thoko, the person herself and the environment is in transition. Later in the novel, the immutable situation is emphasized.

Maki lives in an informal settlement in Mandela Village where she owns a shack. The first time Fanie pays a visit, he notices how – judging from the outer looks of the shack – the inside of the house was furnished so beautifully. "He was full of admiration for the way she had transformed it into a warm and cheerful home" (2007: 69).

Also the difference in education shows a major gap among the races, Fanie is reminded of the school uniforms they had to wear and how he was the only one among his black friends who wore shoes. He also remembers that his black friends were always proud to be associated with their white friend Fanie (cf. 2007: 98).

In both environments the couple is looked upon critically, neither blacks nor whites endorse the relationship. The new South Africa has not found a way into the various places of habitat yet.

5.2 Clash of Cultures

5.2.1 Gender Roles in the different cultures

The clash of culture is, for one, viewed in the perception of gender among the different race groups. In Fanie's eyes, black women are real women; they do not complain, they act mature and are passionate about their men.

> 'So tell me Fanie, what do you find so interesting about a black woman?'
> 'Love knows no colour,' retorted Fanie.
> Then he fleshed a naughty smile: 'A black woman is quality. She is a Mercedes Benz!'
> 'And what is a white woman? A Volkswagen?' George retorted.
> (2007: 58f)

Men are viewed according to cultural believes and in the way they treat their wives. Tau, the son of the chief, Maki claims, stands for a "backward culture"; he does not believe in Valentine's Day as he believes that white men introduced it to make money out of blacks (cf. 2007: 9) and principally rejects the culture of the whites. Fanie, however, is pictured as a modern man in his outlook, he has a black friend, enjoys playing 'black music' (cf. Motana 2007: 30) and falls in love with Maki, a black woman. Maki's friend Nthasbiseng captures the male difference between the races:

> White men, when they are in love, have tender care: they spoil their women with nice presents, breakfast in bed . . . they help to cook, and change the baby's nappies, and . . . […] But black men! […] They read newspapers when there's work to be done, and they are quick to "panelbeat" their women! (2007: 57)

Maki, who chooses a white man over someone black, is described as a beautiful African woman, who shows pride in her roots and traditions. She consciously wears traditional African clothing and is proud of her vision in the mirror and identifies with the traditional clothing of her ancestry. During the novel, she is numerously depicted as a black beauty, a Black Pearl and undisputed African queen.

5.2.2 Lobola

Lobola[19], a traditional bride-price that was formerly paid in cattle but nowadays given as a cash payment, is very important for Maki's family. Upon its completion, it constitutes an authentic marriage certificate in traditional culture; even more so, African culture considers lobola more important than a white wedding. Lobola follows a strict framework that must not be changed in order to proceed successfully. Janet Hinson Shope (2006) believes that lobola is a fixed set of cultural believes that, although it has been said to discriminate women and to stress their inferiority, it has proven to create friendships between the two families and has affirmed women's value. It is also used as a means of standing by women and officially accepting her as the man's wife and additionally provides women with protection against abuse and neglect. She claims that the money is vital to pay for education of siblings or for the household and that, depending on the different sets of belief, either "limits the conditions for women's full and equal participation in society" (2006: 70) or supports them in their quest for equality. She encourages women to speak with a loud voice and encourages them to state their wishes during the negotiations.

At first, Fanie is surprised that one still has to pay lobola, he believes that this tradition is no longer intact in the new South Africa. He later learns that it is still an important part of their culture.

> New South Africa or not, Fanie, lobola is still important. It's a must if you want our marriage to have the blessing of the ancestors. And be taken seriously by my family. Lobola is our culture. Without it our marriage won't mean much to me or my people; it will be nothing but vat-en-sit! (2007: 103)

For Maki, lobola is deeply ingrained in her culture and leads back to the roots of her families; not parting with lobola would not grant a happy and loving marriage but rather a living next to each other. Fanie realizes that he has to respect Maki's culture if he wants her to be his wife and he is aware that he also needs to show interest in her roots and ancestors.

[19] The term lobola is commonly used by rural residents while lobolo is usually applied in academic circles.

Maki's relatives initially cannot believe that Fanie intends to pay lobola as he is a white man and not aware of the traditions of their culture; more importantly he does not believe in these traditions the way they do. Instead, they want Maki to marry Tau, the son of the chief, in order to receive a huge amount of lobola. Fanie's status as a BMW driver leaves him envied by the black people of Maki's township. In their eyes, a BMW is seen as the ultimate thing to be aspired in black culture, it is viewed as the "ultimate status symbol of the upwardly mobile" (Motana 2007: 6). Thoko also owns a snow-white three-litre BMW, indicating her status of a wealthy and independent black woman in South Africa. The paratext of the book already suggests that the BMW serves as a status symbol and reveals Fanie's wealth. The new stage is indicated and new chances adapted as cows – a cow in banknotes would be R200 – are no longer used in the negotiations but Maki's relatives rather derive Fanie's status and wealth by his car. Upon learning about his wealth, the ancestors rejoice in the wedding; their simple logic being: "If he is white then he is rich! All whites are rich!" (Motana 2007: 122).

> That day Mma-Dimakatjo's heart was 'white', as her people would say: full of peace and joy and all good emotions. […] Mma-Dimakatjo was not bothered that her future son-in-law was a white man – and a *boer* to boot. What was of paramount importance to her was that her daughter would, at last, have a child within the security of marriage. (2007: 116)

The ancestors are rejoicing, which serves as a prerequisite as they need their consent in order to lead a blessed marriage. The significance of the ancestors leads back to the deep roots of the country that is linked to their identity as Africans.

Some of Maki's relatives are motivated by greed as they learn about Fanie's wealth, the order in which the lobola has to proceed is nearly halted by their intervention. They believe that the white population of South Africa has 'reaped from the field of apartheid' and now they are also taking away their women. Due to her transformation, Fanie's mother also takes part in the lobola negotiations, she decides to join her son in, what to him, is now the most important day in his life. „Her decision to attend Fanie's lobola day at the place of his bride in what was, to her, 'darkest Africa', had not been an easy one for her to come" (Motana 2007: 230). The colorful play with the *darkest*

Africa is placed in contrast to the *white wedding* Maki dreams about, which is later interfered by Gerda in her dream[20] (cf. Motana 2007: 198).

As the negotiations are long and enduring, Fanie doubts that the ceremony will come to a positive end for the couple. He is told that, if he manages this rough and painful experience, he will come out a man in the end. The issue of lobola shows that Africans' traditions are still intact, they have never given up on their culture but rather maintained it as a status symbol for their heritage. If anything, they have outlived the past because of their deeply rooted identity. Upon the completion of the ceremony, Maki's family, the Machabaphalas, celebrate that „[t]oday apartheid is dead! A white man is our son-in-law" (Motana 2007: 303). Fanie is a member of their family as he has respected their ancestors and cultural believes.

5.3 Head over Heels in New South Africa

Motana manages to depict a classic love story of boy meets girl from an Afrikaner's perspective, which examines cross-cultural dating and handles the subject of interracial ties with great humor. The novel serves a quest for the new South Africa that everybody is talking about. Fanie not only falls in love with a black woman but is also head over heels in new South Africa. He always questions this new-found status of the country as he is not sure if it actually exists. Nevertheless, he wants to believe it does. Numerous times he questions the situation's precariousness, after all, apartheid is over and times have changed in the country. He initially believes that the tradition of lobola is not intact anymore, however, he learns that Maki's relatives value tradition and culture. His culture, on the other hand, is rather characterized by degeneration. The generational differences are resolved as Fanie's mother overcomes the trauma of her past and rejoices at her son's marriage with a black woman. Characters that represent the old days are simply neglected or overrun by characters who are modern in their outlook. Tau, on the other hand, is simply neglected; such is Gerda. The mother, at first being the epitome of Apartheid, later shows growth in her personality.

[20] The color white here denotes the skin color as well as the white wedding dress that Maki does not wear; her culture's customs do not stipulate this etiquette.

The couple travels along an uneven path that is marked by obstacles, in the end, however, Fanie and Maki are happily married, which serves as an indicator for the actual existence of the new South Africa. *Time did not sit on its buttocks*. – The quote that Motana uses numerous times throughout the last few chapters of the book create rhythm and pace, it indicates that the time that has passed since the fall of apartheid has brought change to Africa and this process points towards the future. Although their story seems too good to be true, they overcome various problems along the way. The question remains if *Fanie Fourie's Lobola* is a fairy tale or actually represents the current situation in the country. Nevertheless, after all they have been through, they find a path into the new South Africa together and hence demonstrate that it does, if only in literature, exist.

6. THE FEMALE ROLE IN POST-MILLENNIAL SOUTH AFRICAN NOVELS

Van der Merwe (1994: 50) describes the traditional and ideal Afrikaner female as a "volksmoeder", a woman in a male dominated society who is desired by men and combines motherhood and the needs of the nation in one person. This concept, however, only applies to the white Afrikaner woman as the racial purity has to be preserved. The man serves as the successful breadwinner who holds the final authority, the woman, merely mother and wife, devotes all her time to her children and husband. Women, depicted as passive on-lookers but with tender and caring features, are viewed as *the angel in the house*. Over the last few decades, however, this pre-colonial image of the iconic African mother under male patriarchy has changed. The future, according to van der Merwe, holds a different development, the man adores his wife's beauty, she, however, takes initiative and leaves him with the kids behind in an attempt to break free and to escape traditions as can be seen in Wanner's novel *Behind Every Successful Man*. Woods (2007: 100) captures the old racial differences in the following allegories: Male/Female, Good/Evil, Superior/Inferior, Subject/Object, Self/Other, and claims that African women's writing needs to be highlighted in order to shed light on the female perspective of history. Writing, in this view, is a means of discovering the source of rebirth and reconciliation while at the same time achieving healing of the narrating self and to redefine the roles of womanhood.

> Women writers especially have been interested in re-appropriating the past so as to transform peoples' understanding of themselves, valuing memory as a viable alternative to oppressive history. […] Their voices echo the submerged or repressed values of African cultures as they rewrite the 'feminine' by showing the arbitrary nature of the images and values which western culture constructs, distorts and encodes as inferior by feminizing them. (Woods 2007: 101)

Woods goes so far as to claim that, if colonialism posed a traumatic experience to African male novelists, then African women novelists have suffered an even worse disruption of their psyche.

Booysen-Wolthers et al. (2006) examined the development status of South African women from 1996 to 2000 and came to the conclusion that it has dropped significantly

over those years when the examinations took place. Although the gender imbalances were to be dismantled in the course of drafting the *1994 Women's Charter*, ensuring women's rights in the new political era that was about to start, women are suffering from unequal conditions. The empirical evidence Booysen-Wolthers et al. provide ranges from a higher rate of illiteracy among women to the drop of enrollment of girls that represented a smaller share in 1996. The girls are kept away from school as they have to look after their younger siblings, perform household duties in the absence of the mother or serve as caregiver in the event of parents falling ill and hence cannot pursue an education. Spencer (2009:67) believes that female writers

> are concerned with re-interpreting their experience from a female perspective through prose narratives; in the process they extend the range of female characters and experiences that have been portrayed in fiction by established writers. These emerging female writers focus on representing conflicting, contradictory and ambiguous identities and revealing the complexities of the female experience in both public and private spaces.

In an interview with *Conversations With Writers* in 2008, Wanner was asked which challenges she faces as a female writer in South Africa. She answered that

> [her] greatest challenge is being referred to as 'a good female writer', as opposed to just being a good or bad writer. I think it's awfully patronizing and I tend to dismiss people who refer to me as that because my writing (essays, blogs, etc.) is not limited to 'female issues' (whatever that is) and even if it was, women make up half of the world anyway.

In her novel *Behind Every Successful Man*, she deals with traditionalism versus modernism as she questions the image of the ideal African mother who is devoted to her husband and children without any urge to fulfill her own dreams. Nobantu, the protagonist of the novel, breaks free of the traditional role of the perfect housewife and pursues her dream. Her husband, not too fond of her self-fulfillment, unexpectedly has to learn how to be a father for their children and Nobantu, in turn, experiences how to survive without the security of her husband's money.

6.1 Male Dominance and Women's Status in Wanner's novel

Andile and Nobantu have the perfect marriage. He is a successful businessman who supports the family, and she is the ideal woman, mother and wife. Upon taking a closer look behind the curtain, however, one sees that the family picture that is upheld in Wanner's novel is not made to remain. Nobantu, who is fed up with only being a mother, wants to open her own boutique, Andile, on the other hand, threatens her with divorce as he cannot accept that the wife of a successful man of the mining industry wants to earn her own money. He is more concerned about what their friends and his business partners would think about his working wife than about her wishes. "What would people say when they hear that my wife is working? That I am incapable of taking care of you and the children[?]" (2008: 31). His urge to keep up the traditional family picture is supported by Nobantu's mother who tells her not to be ungrateful for all the trips Andile has taken her on and clothes he has bought her; she cites her sister's motto: "Better to cry in a limousine than laugh in a taxi" (2008: 33). Nobantu's mother upholds these archaic gender roles, which her granddaughter Nqobisa revolts against. Nobantu is torn between the norms of society and her own wishes of a self-fulfilled life.

> I feel constantly as though I am a shadow of you and not a person in my own right. I keep asking myself whether being a mother and wife is all there is to me, and time and time again the answer that comes back is a resounding "no". I want to make something of myself. I want to pursue this dream that I have. (2008: 63)

In the beginning of Andile's and Nobantu's relationship, he takes over the active part and decides that he wants to get married to her. "He loved her, but more importantly, she had the type of demeanour that would make her a great wife for the type of man he knew he wanted to become" (2008: 17). He wants to possess Nobantu the same way he feels he possesses *his* city Johannesburg. Although she wants to wait, she is persuaded by her mother to marry Andile.

When Andile gives Nobantu a Jaguar for her birthday to "show off his muscle in public", she senses that all the effort he put into this party was not done to celebrate her birthday but rather to impress investors of his firm. Instead of celebrating her birthday with her friends, of which none are present, he uses the occasion to invite powerful and influential partners to show off his wealth, his wife only serves as an expedient. Her

friend tells her that "BEE South Africa's a man's world, honey. We women just live in it" (2008: 80). After over fifteen years of self-abandonment, Nobantu decides to take her life into her own hands and leaves her husband and the children behind. Andile feels like womankind is conspiring against him and, for the first time, their gender roles are reversed as Nobantu works on her business plan and Andile has to deal with their kids' problems and fears.

6.2 *Goodbye rich bitch, hello independent woman.*

When her husband claims that she is "just a housewife" (2008: 25), Nobantu wonders if that is all there is to her life as a mother and wife.

> There was more to her life than this. There was more to her than just a housewife and she, Nobantu Makana, would prove it, with or without Andile's blessing, marriage be damned! (2008: 33)

Andile threatens her with divorce but she is determined to launch her own youth label called "Soweto Uprising"; nevertheless, she is "[…] too much of a good mother, reared by traditionalist parents, to want to get a divorce" (2008: 20). Her daughter's comment on her being only a stay-at-home mom, however, initiates her to take the final step and move out of the house that is sheltered by big fences and bodyguards. Although her daughter's future is still a giant variable, Nqobisa know what she does not want to do later on in her life: be just like her mother.

> […] I know what I don't want to be. I don't want to be like my mother. She does boring stuff like going to the salon and getting her nails done. She just waits for Dad to pay for everything. (2008: 44f)

Nobantu is encouraged by her friend Ntsiki, gathers all her strength to move out of the house and to leave Andile and the kids behind. Although she constantly fears that she might fail with her business plan or that Andile might not take her back, she seizes the opportunity and breaks free. Upon reaching the point at which she packs her bags and sits in her Range, ready to leave this life behind, she is simultaneously overcome by her frustration she felt at her marriage and the liberated feeling of knowing that this day was "the first day of the rest of her life" (2008: 49).

Nobantu's friend Ntsiki, a tomboy and lesbian, encourages Nobantu to live her dreams. She is pictured as an independent woman who lives her own life and does not need a man to be happy[21].

> Look at Ntsiki, many a man's dream girl – beautiful, ingelligent, witty, nice house, great job – and yet she was a lesbian. […] Maybe that's why she was a lesbian. No man could put up with her attitude. (2008: 83f)

In Zakes Mda's novel *Black Diamond* (2009), the reader learns that women have far developed since the days of apartheid. One is introduced to Tumi, a former top model and now successful model agency leader, and Kristin, a white authoritative magistrate. "This is new South Africa. The sisters are doing it for themselves, as they say. You don't need a guy with big bucks; you make your own" (2009: 60). Kristin has already secured her status as an independent woman as a magistrate[22] who holds authority in court. Due to the divorce from her husband, she is not used to a man making decisions for her in her private life either. Tumi has always been successful and rather guides her boyfriend Don than the other way around.

6.3 Black Diamond Aspirations

Tumi saves Don from a life in possible misery, if it would not have been for her, he would have stayed in Soweto with his former guerilla comrades and get drunk every day, too afraid to take life into his own hands.

> But thanks to the fact that he and his childhood sweetheart Tumi rediscovered each other, he pulled himself together, got a job as a security guard and worked his way up. Even then Tumi had high hopes and big plans for him, and was determined to groom him, not only into the clean, fresh and urbane man he is today, but into a Black Diamond. (2009: 13f)

[21] Van der Merwe (1994) notes that unmarried women, as well as homosexuals, are looked upon in South Africa; Andile also remarks that being a lesbian is just not done by Afrikans and is only told in the strictest of confidences. He additionally wonders if his son might be guy as he spends so much time with his mother doing housework; in his eyes, it is unAfrican to be gay (2008: 59).

[22] She benefited from the redressing of the white, male-dominated apartheid past and was hence appointed to this position.

Tumi's determination to turn Don into a presentable man prevails[23]. He wants to be the major shareholder of VIP Protection Services in order to become a Black Diamond and is encouraged by Tumi, who is determined to turn him into a *fat cat*. Don feels under pressure to live up to all her wishes and expectations towards him and feels like he has to keep up with her demands, he, however, cannot identify with a Black Diamond.

> After all, real Black Diamonds are not behind with their instalments on a sports car they can't afford. The car was Tumi's choice and she paid the deposit for it, and promised she would help whenever Don had problems with the monthly payments. He didn't tell her that he was having difficulties, and now gets threatening letters from the finance company, which he hides from her. Black Diamonds don't live in their girlfriends' one-bedroom apartment either. (2009: 12)

Tumi encourages him not to give up and constantly challenges him to strive for more by claiming that 'positive thinking' is the only way out of his situation. "You gonna get that promotion, baby. You gonna be the Chief Executive of VIP Protection Services. You're a Black Diamond, Don. You should learn to live like one" (2009: 12). In order to be a Black Diamond, Tumi educates him to behave like one, while he has always enjoyed sleeping naked, his girlfriend now wants him to wear silk pajamas and to take up playing golf so he can meet up with potential business partners that way. She drives a Jaguar while he sits on the passenger seat next to her, just like in their relationship, she takes the lead and has a saying in everything. Andile (*Behind Every Successful Man*) also draws this comparison: "[…] my role has always been that of a provider. I was the guy in the driver's seat. Now, suddenly, she doesn't need me" (2008: 139).

Don, raised by a single mother, has learned how to cook and wants Tumi to benefit from his culinary skills. She, however, reminds him that she does not like her man to stand in the kitchen with an apron, especially now that he is going to be a Black Diamond, his behavior is not appropriate anymore. Additionally, she is concerned about what her friends might think if they come over and find Don cooking in the kitchen. In Tumi's desperate attempt to turn Don into a Black Diamond she tells her mother that he already is a BEE Fat Cat[24]. Her girlfriends accuse her of governing Don's life as she

[23] The reader learns from Wanner's novel that the biggest mistake a South African woman can make is to have an underachiever as a boyfriend (2008: 130).

[24] BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) is a concept that emerged in the early 1990s which aims to address the imbalance of power within the state and economy between the black and white population and

creates a man according to her own wishes and imaginings (cf. 2009: 60). Don, on the other hand, tries to live up to her expectations and accepts a job as a bodyguard for the female magistrate Kristin Uys whose home is invaded and vandalized due to her sending Stevo Visagie, one of two Visagie Brothers, to jail for contempt of court. The Brothers, who run a brothel, receive all of the magistrate's attention as she set herself the goal to wipe out prostitution in the town. The magistrate is fighting her own wars as she was humiliated by her husband in the past and hence filed a divorce. She now lives in an average suburban house with her cat, which she has not yet named.

While women are depicted as strong and independent individuals, Don, on the other hand, is emasculated by Tumi as she takes the lead in their relationship. The women in Mda's novel not only demand the right of womanhood but also want to be seen as autonomous in nature and have additionally set their goals to shape their husbands careers in order to turn them into successful and affluent business men. Don does not seem to strive for this self-fulfillment the women aim for.

6.4 Reversed Gender Roles

> You don't find guys like Don in Johannesburg anymore. There is a drought of men in the city, not because the species is extinct but because it is intimidated by successful women. (2009: 60f)

Kristin Uys works in a male-dominated business. In her courtroom, she has the upper hand and does not allow impudence. When the Visagie brother insults her by making sexual comments, her dignity is only so long insured until she sentences him for six months in prison. In court, she is used to having her orders obeyed. In private life, however, "she seems unsure and uneasy, quite a contrast from the brash and confident magistrate of the courtroom" (6). When her husband wants her to dress like a whore for them to be intimate, she feels dirty and humiliated[25], this abasement gets even worse when Barend is caught in one of the brothels in town.

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focuses on increasing the black ownership shares. Although it has been said to favor only a small group of the "wealthy ANC-connected 'empowerment elite'" (Southall 2007: 67) businessman without capital were also offered financial assistance from the state or the private sector.

[25] Tracey Farren's novel *Whiplash* (2008) highlights the inferior status of prostitutes as marginalized women.

> Do you know how it felt when I saw on television that a brothel had been raided by the Hillbrow police…and there was my husband…my childhood sweetheart…among the regular patrons who were caught with their pants down…right there on the TV screen…handcuffed to a whore! (2009: 107)

Kirsten is, however, strong and independent enough to break free, she divorces her husband and is appointed a magistrate. When she is threatened by the Visagie brothers, she at first shows no signs of fear, later on, she grows weary of all those threats and displays signs of real anxiety for the first time.

> She does not know how to handle this situation. If she were in her court she would know exactly what to do – cite the impertinent upstart for contempt and summarily sentence him to a term of imprisonment. No one has ever tried any bullshit in her court. Until Stevo Visagie. And look where she is now. (2009: 93)

The Visagie Brothers have invaded her private space and she feels like she loses control over her life, "[s]he hates to display any signs of weakness if she can help it. She is ashamed of herself for breaking down like this as it is, and tries to push everything aside by changing the subject" (2009: 108). Don, on the other hand, displays female feature, he owns a cat, loves to cook and cleans the magistrate's house. He is also the one who is injured by Stevo in the end. This untypical female characterization is at first only found as long as he is with Tumi. As opposed to Tumi, Kristin actually enjoys his cooking and claims that "there's something sexy about a man who knows his way around the pots" (2009: 151). As soon as he watches over the magistrate, he shows signs of stereotypical male behavior, he has to protect her but, at the same time, also finds pleasure in cleaning her house and cooking for her. Additionally, he feels liberated from Tumi's plans for him. The stark contrast of him, at first being ruled by his girlfriend, who later morphs into a strong and protective bodyguard, depicts the contradictions of fixed stereotypes. Kristin regains her self-consciousness in the end while Don is injured by Stevo's attack and has to go to the hospital; Kristin brings flowers to his bed, once again stressing the reversed gender roles in the novel. When Kristin claims that he is a black man and hence not supposed to love cats, he ripostes that she is a white woman and not supposed to smile at a black man (2009: 133f).

When he cheats on Tumi with Kristin, the two lovers bring out more stereotypical features, Don protects Kristin, while he is psychically wounded by the Visagie Brothers.

She reveals female traits for the first time and has removed the armor that used to protect her from outside influences, she is feminized due to her relationship with Don. “Then she becomes embarrassed that she has displayed this outward sign of fear, […]. She needs to steal herself for the war of nerves that lies ahead and must never show weakness, not even to herself” (2009 54f).

Their comfort zone where they can be themselves – Kristin as a sensual woman and Don as a cooking and cat-loving man – dissolves, when he stages another threat by putting the pig’s head up at her house in order to have a reason to stay with her. She is defeated by his action, although she does not want to admit it, and throws him out of the house. Immediately after this incident, the magistrate regains her old self and fights back. “Tears threaten to steam out of her eyes. But she’ll be damned if this man sees her cry. Not for this. Not for him. The old Kristin Uys is back” (2009: 188). In order to make it in this world, she needs to become inure to such things, success is the only way of showing signs of male power in order to succeed in a world governed by men.

The contrast between the women shows that Tumi depicts a strength that is present at home as well as in her business life, whereas Kristin gives orders in court but feels unsure about herself at home, stemming from the things her ex-husband put her through. Now, she is determined to make it on her own and never to let anybody hurt her like that again.

6.5 Behind Every Successful Woman, is There a Man?

The saying that Wanner chose for the title of her book goes: *Behind every successful man, there is a woman*. From the female perspective, the following question arises: Behind every successful woman, is there a man? In Wanner's novel *Behind Every Successful Man,* Nobantu, at first, stands alone in her fight to be considered an independent woman in South Africa. Nobantu is viewed as a "single mother" due to the lack of Andile in her children's lives. In Jooste's novel *People Like Ourselves,* the new South African family is depicted similarly: the mother Julia associates with the inner circle of Johannesburg high society while her husband Douglas is a notorious adulterer. Their daughter Kimmy, having had to experience her parents' fights and being raised by a "single parent", as her mother claims, cannot stand the situation at home and the absence of her father, steals and is a drug addict. Julia thinks about divorce and in the end discovers that Michael stays with her in good times as in bad times when her doctor finds a lump in her breast. In the end of Wanner's novel, Nobantu is also supported by her husband. She can, therefore, be seen as the personal heroine of South African women. She breaks free from all the conventions and regains independence, hence opening the way for the ones to follow. *Behind Every Successful Man*, published in 2008, therefore depicts women's first steps of self-discovery, while *Black Diamond*, published a year later, shows that women have acquired a certain status and are portrayed in their own rights. The earlier notion of sex being linked to reproduction with an emphasis on motherhood is not realized in the novels discussed. Instead of women who stay at home and lead a life of self-sacrifice, they break free of old conventions. Female protagonists depict various aspirations while their weak traits are barely revealed.

The depictions of women in the novels show that the three generations all stand for different convictions, the older generations of grandmothers (or mother's of protagonists) try to keep the old order intact and uphold the image of the ancient tradition of a perfect housewife, hence also pass on their believes to their daughters. MaVisagie, the head of the Visagie family, leads the family and is depicted as a strong and determined personality. The daughters of the next generation are often in between lives; this transition is apparent in Nobantu's attempt to escape that pictures the struggle

to break free from male dominance. Their daughters, on the contrary, are modern in their outlook and depict the new generation of the new South Africa.

A different progress than the one presented in *Behind Every Successful Man* can be seen in *Black Diamond*; while Tumi is sure: "You don't *find* a guy [like this]; you create him for yourself" (2009: 126), it soon seems that she is too self-assured as, in the end, her own creation of a man has left her for another woman. Kristin visits Don in the hospital after he is wounded by one of the Visagie brothers. The protagonists of *Black Diamond* fall out and back into their stereotypical roles numerous times, the order is not re-established in the end, or it might be as he is so brave as to take a shot and survive. He is wounded by the bullet while she visits him in the hospital and brings flowers to his bed. "She could say 'thank you for saving my life' but that would not sound like her. That would sound too maudlin" (2009: 207). The constant back and forth of the various stereotypical features, its construction and constant re-construction, and the ironies that are exposed throughout both books picture the new-found essence of contemporary life.

Darling, go home, your husband is ill.
Is he ill? Let them give him a pill.
Oh, come my dear Franz, just one more dance,
Then I'll go home to my poor old man,
Then I'll go home to my poor old man.
(Makeba 1960: 1-4)

7. "Get a Life", Get Alive! Nadine Gordimer Revisited

Many writers who have dealt with Nadine Gordimer's works believe that, as Gordimer was the conscience of the anti-apartheid struggle, her significance for the country has subsided in the post-apartheid era. Dimitriu has set herself to reread Gordimer in this new state and suggests that the return to relative normality has reduced politically dramatic aspects in Gordimer's fiction although these issues were never entirely banished in her works. Dimitriu (2000: 17f) starts from the hypothesis that "politically less severe times could encourage a reconsideration of relationships between the public and the private experience", which brings those two aspects together that were formerly strictly separated. This notion indicates that there is hope for a democratic non-racialism beyond the struggle. Dimitriu suggests that Gordimer's "skepticism is a sign of her responsible opposition to the absurdities of the society in which she lives and must analyse" (2000: 19) and that a revitalized humanism is present in her work. In her return to the "civil Imaginary", a term coined by During in 1990[26], the desire to "re-integrate the private and the public, especially in societies seeking to recover trust in everyday life, including its routines and institutions" (2000: 20) is highlighted. Dimitriu aims to stress one specific trait of Gordimer:

> In the novels written in the years after 1990 and back in the 1950s, I have emphasised not a 'different' Gordimer, but a Gordimer who, in freer spaces than those of monolithic Apartheid, has continued to resist any temptation to spring her characters free of their societies as they pursue individual selfhood, however uncomfortably the journey. (2000: 191f)

Nadine Gordimer, the white South African Nobel Prize winner, was harshly criticized for her post-apartheid novel *Get a Life*, published in 2005, as well as for the silence that has surrounded her since the end of apartheid. Especially, she has been criticized for failing to portray the conflicts that still dominate the political sphere of life. Gordimer, who focuses on the private as well as the public life of her protagonists in her former novels, puts emphasis on the private in *Get a Life*. Despite all the criticism, Dimitriu suggests that the critic "should be sufficiently generous to grant the author the value of

[26] During: "It produces representations of manner, taste, behavior, utterances for imitation by individual lives" (1990: 142).

her own impulsions, sufficiently generous to permit Nadine Gordimer, after apartheid, to "get a life". (2009: 134) She sets out the question: "Is it not – 'beyond 2000', almost 20 years into our democracy – legitimate to permit writers the freedom of their fictional choices to depict what they know most intimately" (2009: 126)?

The novel *Get a Life* narrates the life of the protagonist Paul Bennerman, a sick family man and ecologist who is qualified academically at universities and institutions and fights against economic and political interests[27]. When he is diagnosed with cancer of the thyroid gland, he is forced to take an extended leave from his work. Due to an interim of four weeks of recovery until the radioactive iodine treatment will be harmless to others, he is put into quarantine. From the moment of the diagnosis on, "[e]verything evolves into what has to be done next" (2005: 9). The treatment forces him to stay in isolation and his parents accommodate him in order not to expose his son Nicki to the radiation. His wife Benni, who earns a living as a copywriter for international advertizing companies, earns more than he does, "but that's no matter of imbalance in the mating since the role-casting of the male as the provider is outdated[28], as the price of feminist freedom" (2005: 6f). From the moment the diagnosis was expressed, Paul feels that something has him by the throat, he is silenced by the disease and put away in what, for him, seems like an asylum.

> Literally radiant. But not giving off lights as saints are shown with a halo. He radiates unseen danger to others from a destructive substance that has been directed to counter what was destroying him. Had him by the throat. Cancer of the thyroid gland. In hospital he was kept in isolation. Even that of silence; he had no voice for a while, mute. Vocal cords affected. He remains, he will be still, out of his control, exposing others and objects to what he emanates, whomever and whatever he touches. (2005: 3f)

Paul is the "lit-up leper" (2005:33), the "Untouchable" (2005: 43), living in his private place asylum and although his parents are there for him, "he's alone, apart, with anybody – everyone" (2005: 16). Paul's parents decide to send their servant – "now called housekeeper" (2005: 16) – home but assure her that this is not a banishment, they

[27] Postcolonial ecocriticism contests the Western development ideologies and rather seeks for viable alternatives. The political interest of the West plays an important part in this struggle. Note that Damon Galgut's novel *The Impostor* also deals with issues of ecocriticism when one of the main protagonists named Canning plans to build a gold course on his father's so far untouched land.

[28] Note that this change of gender roles is not present in novels such as *Behind Every Successful Man* or *Black Diamond* anymore.

want her to be safe from their son's radiation. Primrose, the housekeeper, decides to stay on, "[p]erhaps the woman had survived so much in her life that she couldn't really believe in the danger they couldn't say came only from a cough, [etc.] (2005: 20), Gordimer suggests. Paul does not understand why Primrose and his friend Thapelo expose themselves to the danger of the radiation, something that "members of the white middle class, fully versed in the dangers of disease" (Tenenbaum 2011: 49) would never do.

> How was it these two had no fear; too easy to attribute this sentimentally, as a white man descended from a history posited on the tenet that black were worse, to evidence that both were blacks, and better. Willing to take risks, in contact with fellow humans. (Gordimer 2005: 60)

In Tenenbaum's article on 'Survival Systems' in *Get a Life*, he addresses this willingness of the black characters, which shows that they associate with Paul in a symbolic rejection and raise the awareness that inequalities no longer exist but that friendships evolve. Tenenbaum notes that the temerity of the black characters depicts the enduring power of South Africa's natural environment and claims that Gordimer "uses social elements of class orientation and racial background as well as environmentalism in the service of a larger theme, that is, the influence of nature on human existence" (2011: 44).

In the aftermath of his sickness, Thapelo makes him aware that the people of South Africa would gain from a construction such as the construction of the dam he fights against. A better life for South Africans would be ensured and workers would have jobs and earn money. He is still concerned with the South African ecosystem, nevertheless, the needs of those whose income is jeopardized are also not to be neglected. He disregards his previous views on the building of the dam as he accepts the moral system that ensures a decent life for the black community. Due to his sickness, Paul realizes that nature has a power that humankind underestimates and that is above in hierarchy and able to influence human existence. Tenenbaum (2011: 48) notes that

> [s]uch a fact forces Paul to compromise his obsession to preserve the land as it once existed, a commitment that had aligned his values with those of white liberals who are themselves somewhat myopic in their concern for the environment when

> such efforts may harm the many marginalized blacks who will benefit from the jobs created by these projects.

7.1 *Paul don't you think it's time you came in?*

Back at his parents' home, the only thing that abides during his quarantine is the garden that lets him return to his youth. He is brought back to childhood memories and is treated like a child. His mother Lindsay, in a ritual of former times, kisses him goodnight, which depicts her maternal courage, because, although he is radiant, "[…] how can you fear your own child" (2005: 32). Paul spends time in the garden, has his friend over and is looked after by his mother. Their intimate relationship that was destroyed by his marriage is now restored when his father is away on the evenings and they get a chance to spend time together.

> And in a way that was a treat, when last had mother and son the chance to spend an evening alone together. The small boy, the adolescent one mustn't intrude upon too closely, emotions must turn away from the one woman to other women, the young man with whom there had been adult friendship and understanding of one another – these had became the man with a wife. (2005: 25)

The same way he spends time with his mother, he is bonds with the nature outside. By lying on the grass, he is connected to the soil beneath him and, while he feels imprisoned in the house, he enjoys the nature of the garden.

> It is not often a grown man lies down on his back on grass; there're the plastic-thonged chaises longues meant to be unfolded in the sun or under the shade of the jacaranda. […] Perhaps there are beetles, ants, moving unseen, as the predator cells in their terrain, all life is one, it's said. (2005: 38)

Paul hopes that he is healed by his sense of justice and his moral acting regarding the construction of the dam that would destroy the ecosystem of the Okavango river bed. He believes that nature is on his side. Tenenbaum remarks the following:

> The view that all of life is one manifests in the dependent interaction of the insects that he views within the ecosystems of his parents' lawn and represents his recognition of his obligation to the preservation of the environment that he has sworn to maintain as one of the 'priests of nature'. (2011: 48)

In this first part of Gordimer's book, called "A Child's Play", Paul returns to his childhood and, rediscovers a childish carefreeness. As the garden is his place of introspection and his refugium, he realizes what is important in life: to be alive and to live every moment as if it were his last.

> The innocence of the tree that was climbed, the perspective of being alive, from up there, the mind's sketch of the treehouse-gycaeceum of the sisters – everything accepted, the sin behind the pampas grass, capture of the freedom of butterflies, fall of the slingshot bird. (2005: 58)

When his black friend Thapelo wants to come over, Paul warns him that they could not sit in the same room, "[they'd] sit in the garden like a couple of kids sent out of the way. And even then, who knows. Why should you risk anything at all, I'm my own experimental pebble-bed nuclear reactor" (2005: 59). Although Paul is against the building of the dam, he is, nevertheless, aware that the treatment of the cancer saved his life although it has interfered on nature's plan for him. In his despair, he reads up on the thyroid gland in order to be briefed on the organ that is affected by the cancer.

> It is a vital factor in growth along with the pituitary, which is hidden behind your forehead, he wouldn't have come to adolescence, physical and mental maturity, without it. These sites should be marked like the sacred signals coloured on the brows of Hindus. (2005: 20)

Paradoxically, this organ contributes to a person's growth. In this view, Paul returns home as an adult in a new state of existence.

When Nicki is allowed to see his father the two are still separated by the garden fence. The emotional defense, which the adults have built up, is in danger of breaking down when Nicki expresses his desperation:

> And then there came the day he flew into a tearful, violent rage, weeping as he clutched the bars and yelling, Daddy, Daddy, *Paul*, Daddy, *Paul*. The one called upon had to go away into the house so that the child could be persuaded, in despair, to let go of the quarantine bars. No-one of the adults who had brought him there to visit his father could reach the depth in him that was perhaps sure he would never see his father again. (2005: 31)

Nicki is, subsequently, no longer brought to the house, Paul's wife Benni calls to tell him how his son is doing but still keeps him away as the grown-ups cannot face their own fears that their son so innocently expresses. When his sister visits and starts crying at the sight of him, he tries to keep away from then on in order not to stir her up anymore. In contrast, his parents and his wife follow their normal routines and put effort into making everything appear normal in order to maintain the emotional defense that holds everything together.

Tenenbaum addresses the efforts of human beings who intervene in nature's pattern through systems that aim to minimize its dominant position. Paul tries to fight against the proposed construction of a dam that will destroy the Okavango system due to an increase in harmful salt content in the rivers that is caused by such an infrastructural change. His wife gets involved in the promotion of the developments and their involvement further causes tensions in their marriage. The confirmation of the deal also pays for his treatment, so in a way, by accepting the treatment, he automatically also promotes the construction. "He is aware that this exaltation is also relief because her commission on such a deal will be substantial enough to help pay laboratories and doctors" (2005: 39). Their different world views show the incapability of the advertizing industry and the environmental protection and affect their private life.

> What is her conviction when he comes from the wilderness and tells of the irreplaceable forest felled to make way for the casino, the fish floating belly-up in all that's left of a watercourse diverted to feed an Olympic-size swimming pool and replica of one of the fountains of Rome. (2005: 57)

It is in the garden that Paul realizes that his wife's ideals have always differed from his, the morals of an environmental protection and her conviction in the advertizing industry will never be compatible. For the first time, the topic of divorce arises (cf. 2005: 61) but is instantly disregarded when, in this "No-Man's Land, the safety of the garden, and unbidden, inappropriate, nerves coming alive from some anaesthesia, he has the surging yearning to touch her" (2005: 30). In the later course, Benni reveals that she would like to have another child with Paul. Due to his treatment and not being able to get up and fight the intruders that are in the house one night, he feels that he is impotent in what regards taking actions and giving life. His time in isolation results in a passive state, from which he only emerges when he realizes, in the vastness of the nature, that life is

all about survival and that he has survived the cancer. He returns to his home with a changed personality: "It was decided that he would *leave home* this second time to go *home* as an adult, …" (2005: 88). The estrangement to his son is shown when he hides behind his mother as he does not recognize the person his father has turned into. It becomes clear that he suffers from this new state of existence his father has adopted during his absence.

Paul, who, during the *interregnum* at his parents' house, learns to accept the co-existence of opposites – even in his marriage – realizes that everyone has to live in a way that is authentic for their state of existence, such as his wife's diverging attitude towards ecocriticism. In embracing these manifold attitudes of people and nature, he feels the sudden urge to foster his social circle and invites his co-workers and environmentalist fellows in order to "come to life in the variety of friends and stimulating jostle of lively acquaintances…" (2005: 103). His wife feels that he is different, in the way he talks, moves and makes love to her. Tenenbaum (2011: 46) notes that "[…] their separation during Paul's quarantine forces her to reconsider her own loyalty to environmentalism in light of the devastation that other natural processes have inflicted on her family."

In the company of his friends from work, the harmonious interaction between blacks and whites is evident. During his illness, when he is nursed by Primrose, conditioned formulae in the two divided worlds "bring[s] policies of reconciliation to an everyday level of polite convention" (2005: 22). This living together is also depicted in the private schools children attend these days, with "all the complexions and features characteristic of in-between colours" (2005: 112) that emphasizes this state of co-existence. When Nicki starts to speak Setswana with his nanny – "policitcally correct: child-minder" (2005: 15) – Paul is delighted that his son embraces the different languages:

> The boy loved the woman, a cousin supplied by Primrose, and, without being aware of it, was learning to speak Setswana with her; a new generation that might produce white multilingualists, if not quite up to the level of Thapelo. The father grinned with pleasure, each time, to hear the little boy's few words. (2005: 125)

Thapelo, who works and lives in a world of English speaking people, has not abandoned his own language and incorporates some of the expressions in conversations:

> These words in the slang of his mother tongues (he speaks at least four) aren't italicised in Thepelo's talk, they belong in English just as his natural use of the scientific terms and jargon of his profession does. […] It's not what he's emancipated from: it's what he hasn't, won't leave behind. So the scientist talks like a tsotsi when he pleases. That's how Paul teases him; in appreciation. (2005: 83)

Berenice also exchanges agency gossip with black colleagues since the BEE policies provided them with work and also some of their clients came from black-owned companies. She notes that "young women [are] indistinguishable in their styles of dresses and vocational jargon, except for the colour of their skin and elaborate arrangements of their hair" (2005: 41).

Paul's mother, after learning about her husband's affair with a Norwegian girl, adopts a black, orphaned, HIV-positive, rape-victim girl and in that way, gets a life. Although the agency thinks it might be better if the girl would be raised with siblings and her daughter-in-law is worried about her son being somehow infected, she takes on the child, and asks herself if she did it out of selfishness, in order not to be alone after her husband left her. "Is she compensating for lack, loss of him, Adrian – is he coming back" (2005: 155)? In a distant manner, she remarks that "[w]e don't own one another. Man and women don't" (2005: 133). Tenenbaum notes that

> [w]hereas her career has trained her to address even the profoundest emotional traumas with objectivity, the novel reveals the impossibility of approaching all situations with equal detachment. (2011: 47)

Here, the emotional defense of the adults is once again evident. Lyndsay struggles to keep up the normal course of her everyday rituals in order to be in control of her life.

7.2 Survival in a hopeless place?

This new trope of Gordimer of forcing a young man to retreat from the world into illness and isolation in order to figure out what is most important in life also underlines that there is no simple solution to ecologically-aware global consciousness as well as life in general. The only quintessence one learns by reading the book is to lead a happy, healthy, and fulfilled life. This new state of existence serves as an emotional fulfillment for all of the characters in the novel who live every moment of life as if it was their last. As Paul, in the safety of the garden, reassesses his priorities in life he notices that people's lives are, in fact, governed by the laws of nature. Tenenbaum (2011: 45) aims to show that

> [t]he text demonstrates the principle that the only protection against the impact of natural depredation is the rejection of such human constructs that are ultimately rendered ineffectual in light of natural processes.

Dimitriu asks the question: "Is a young white male in the new South Africa 'the new leper'?" (Dimitriu 2009: 127) by disregarding the transformation he goes through. Paul survives his sickness in the same way Africa survived apartheid. In feeling that he still cannot trust his body, the comparison is drawn to the country and its past. The regenerative nature of life is stressed by his healing and by Benni, who gives birth to a healthy child in the end.

> The son has emerged to take on the world with all the necessary equipment, weapons—two arms, two hands, ten prehensile fingers, two legs, feet and toes (verify ten), the genitals which were already evident in the foetal scan, a shapely head and open eyes of profound indeterminate colour that are already reacting with the capacity of sight. The sperm of the radiant progenitor-survivor has achieved no distorting or crippling of creation.

When she gives birth to his son, Paul is assured that his sperm has survived the same way he has fought the cancer.

The novel pleads for getting a new life. A life after Paul's cancer, after his father's death and after the building of the dam. In a sense, every character in the novel receives a life, if through mere survival after a life-threating sickness like Paul, in bearing a child like Benni or in adopting a black girl like Lindsay. The bearing of a child highlights the

importance of procreation, a continued existence, to preserve the human species. Lyndsay, who aborted a child a few years earlier, takes on a helpless child in an act of selfishness in the end. Adrian gets a life when he starts an affair with a Norwegian girl, who is about 30 years younger than him. His digging in the prehistoric past and his liaison certainly does not fit into the picture of a home and family that was contracted in marriage. He continues writing letters back home and one day dies peacefully. His girlfriend informs Lyndsay via letter about the sudden death.

In *Get a Life*, the racial 'quarantines' of apartheid are imposed on a white, who is joined in courage by blacks. The anxiety of the white middle class is hence stressed, which indicates the loyalty of the blacks. The central element in the novel, however, is the mere survival and the search for meaning and authenticity in every individual life, which Paul, in the end, understands when he gets alive.

8. CONCLUSION

Proceeding with the assumption of trauma's omnipresence, the question that remains is how to deal with the constant reminders of the past that are lurking in the background. None of the novels that are dealt with in this thesis show a way of suppressing their own history as this would not allow an outlook into the future. In order to overcome trauma, mourning has proven to bring forth a transformation that leads to a growth in personality and a different perception of the world such as can be seen in Hlapa's *A Daughter's Legacy*. Hlapa herself arrives at a point at which she realizes that she cannot live with her country's legacy anymore and reaches out for the future by telling her own life story and accepting the past.

In Mhlongo's novels, irony is deployed as a means to discount the past with humor, which sometimes even reaches the absurd. On various occasions, the protagonists of his two novels *Dog Eat Dog* and *After Tears* exhibit a way of handling a situation with wit and satire, often not aware of the seriousness of the situation. Mhlongo himself simply ignores the AIDS crisis, which is only dealt with on the margins of the narration. Gordimer's novel *Get a Life* gives a positive outlook by allowing every protagonist of her story to lead a life that is authentic for each of them and bringing forth new life in the form of the two babies being born or adopted. The optimism of the new country is also addressed in *Fanie Fourie's Lobola*, which depicts an interracial relationship, which, against all odds, leads to unification in marriage.

By reading these novels that were published after the turn of the millennium, recurring topics and patterns are detected. Among those, the coexistence of black and white that is present in every novel, either in the blooming of relationships between the two races as in *Fanie Fourie's Lobola* or in the friendships of co-workers as in *Get a Life*. In a same way that unification is depicted in the novels, divorce is a topic in nearly all of the narratives and point to women's possibility of leading an autonomous life. This way of personal freedom is also depicted in Wanner's novel *Behind Every Successful Man*, which narrates the story of a wife who leaves the protection of home behind to start her

own company. Additionally, the topic of abortion is discussed in the novels by Hlapa and Gordimer. In Mda's *Black Diamond*, women are depicted as strong and independent beings whose success defines who they are. Here, the women point their men into the right direction. Mhlongo's novels mainly deal with the disappointment in the ANC government and show the first generation of university graduates who are expected to improve the lives of their families in the townships. The common features of the stories, however, do not – or only rarely – include the legacies of the apartheid past. On a more immediate level lies the recurring notion that life goes on, even after all the atrocities the country had to witness. Each of the protagonists, in the end, realizes that life has to be lived at its fullest and, due to that epiphany, find their individual ways to happiness.

South Africa is a nation in flux. Not even a generation has passed since the fall of apartheid and the 20th anniversary of the new era still lies ahead. For something that started in the 17th century, it is logical that such a short time span cannot sufficiently contribute to the healing of the nation just yet. In fact, these 18 years have only served as the beginning of a long period to come that records the happenings of the past in order to come to terms with the history of the country and enriches our today's generation. We are allowed to witness a new generation of writers who finds inspiration in topics that are not dominated by the history of the country or that place special emphasis on apartheid. These narratives of the 21st century highlight the regenerative competence of the new South Africa. In the way that Warnes calles Mhlongo's works "novels of deception", a more appropriate term in the light of the thoughts stated above would be "novels of beginnings" that are starting to evolve and flourish in the years to come.

'I don't live in the past,' she said.
'And the future?'
'I'm not afraid of it.'
(Miller, *The Optimists* 2005: 278)

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10. APPENDIX

10.1 ABSTRACT (GERMAN)

Besteht die Möglichkeit, in einem Land mit einer Vergangenheit wie der Südafrikas, Literatur zu produzieren, welche sich mit anderen Aspekten als dem Trauma des Apartheid-Regimes beschäftigt? Dieser Frage stellt sich die vorliegende Diplomarbeit, welche die südafrikanische Literatur nach der Jahrtausendewende untersucht und dabei Werke von Autoren wie Zakes Mda und Niq Mhlongo heranzieht, die unter anderem auch die Vergangenheit des Apartheid-Regimes in ihren Texten aufarbeiten. Bei einem theoretischen Einstieg in das Thema, welcher den Zusammenhang zwischen Trauma und Gedächtnis behandelt, wird auch ein Vergleich zur traumatischen Vergangenheit von Holocaust-Opfern und deren einschneidenden Erfahrungen gezogen. Des Weiteren wird Elleke Boehmers Ansicht, dass Trauma im südafrikanischen Kontext nicht wegzudenken ist, aus einer von ihrer Theorie abweichenden Perspektive betrachtet.

In den weiteren Teilen der Arbeit werden die verschiedenen Aspekte, mit welchen sich die zeitgenössischen Werke auseinandersetzen, beleuchtet. Bei diesen kommt es auch zu einem Vergleich mit der damaligen Situation zu Zeiten der Apartheid, beispielsweise werden die Bedingungen der schwarzen Bevölkerung auf den Universitäten während des Regimes und in der Zeit danach behandelt und ein Einblick in das wegweisende Ereignis der Wahlen von 1994 gegeben. Die Arbeit setzt sich des Weiteren mit der damaligen Problematik interrassischer Beziehungen auseinander und zeigt auf, dass Vorurteile auch heute noch existieren. Darüber hinaus wird das Aufwachsen der Kinder Südafrikas beleuchtet und das Bild der Frau in der südafrikanischen Literatur untersucht. Das Thema Scheidung findet sich in vielen Werken der zeitgenössischen Kultur wieder, welche auf die wandelnde Darstellung der Frau hinweist und die neugewonnene Willensfreiheit dieser widerspiegelt. Im letzten Teil der Arbeit wird das Buch *Get a Life* der weißen Afrikanerin und Nobelpreisträgerin Nadine Gordimer behandelt und ein Licht auf die Kritiker ihrer Literatur geworfen. Abschließend wird plädiert, dass die Periode der Apartheid eine lange Zeit einnahm und nun, da die nächste Generation sich ihren Weg in die Zukunft ebnet, erste Ansätze in ein neues Leben fern

von rassistischen Tendenzen und der damaligen Politik sichtbar sind. Eben beschriebene Veränderungen darf der Leser gespannt in diesen „novels of beginnings“ verfolgen.

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