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1 Introduction

In two years time, the so-called rainbow nation, South Africa, will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the abolition of the atrocious and ruthless apartheid regime. Today, more than eighteen years after the official abolition of the modern system of slavery, one expects time to have healed all wounds because generally, time heals all wounds, or does it?

Despite the long period of time having passed and the ameliorations having taken place in South Africa, the country seems to be still struggling with its past and the influence of the long abolished regime on its present. South Africa's national security and consequences of the past were tackled once again in the mass media back in 2012, shortly before the World Cup. According to Finnlo Rohrer's BBC Online article "How dangerous is South Africa"¹, high criminality rate with approximately 18,000 murders per year and 18,000 attempted murders per year, draw a grim picture of the South African national security.

Ultimately, overcoming the injustice done to the South African black population and coming to terms with the traumatization they had to suffer for over four decades are both highly complex and continuous processes to go through and take place. Time is a fundamental if not crucial component of these processes. Legitimately, different aspects of time, such as historical time, loss of time and memory, play an extremely important role and are dealt with in great detail in a large number of contemporary South African novels.

In literature theory, the concept of time as such coupled with the concept of memory can be found quite early. However, according to Andreas Huyssen, the obsession of our contemporary Western culture with the concept of memory and consequently that of time, gives both prominence and visibility to those concepts. (Huyssen 1995: quoted in Whitehead 2009, 1) With the work of his life *Time and Narrative*, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur extended the

¹ For more information see BBC Article <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8668615.stm>

notion of time by indicating and reinforcing the importance of time in literature. Thus, generally, Ricoeur's thoughts on time and memory are fundamental for this thesis. However, with the concept of time being a highly complex, partly ambiguous, and very sophisticated aspect and the analysis of the sense of time in contemporary South African literature, the introduction of other concepts, definitions and perspectives, which highlight the importance simultaneously with the complexity of the concept of time, is inevitable if not mandatory. Hence, Mengel's and Borzaga's thoughts on the complexity of the concept of time on the one hand and the inevitable modification of the time concept in the South African context on the other hand, represent the building stone of this thesis.

With trauma being a consistent part of the South African nation in general and of the literary works analysed in more detail in this thesis, a general introductory chapter – Western perspective: trauma an identifiable event – which includes the thoughts of the most prominent Western authors on trauma, provides the reader with basic knowledge of the term trauma in general known in the Western studies. A general, introductory chapter on trauma and its specifics in the Western culture, along with the thoughts of several important authors on trauma, seems mandatory because it does not only reinforce the differences between the Western and the South African concept, but it offers the reader the chance to recognize the necessity of a modification and complementation of the Western definition, when using it for the specific South African trauma. In the third chapter the concept of trauma is brought to the reader from the South African perspective and seeks to partly redefine and complement the Western term of trauma by including aspects, which cannot and should not be left out when talking about trauma in the South African context. Again, the ideas of several important authors and their new perspectives on trauma in South Africa are included.

As Borzaga argues in her essay "Trauma in the Postcolony: Towards a New Theoretical Approach", such a perspective, i.e. a modified and complemented perspective, is necessary if not obligatory, when talking about trauma and time

in South Africa. Obviously, from a post colonialist perspective, South Africa's history and development from a racial tyranny of apartheid to a democracy in 1994 and the on-going traumatization, which came as a result of the history, cannot be left out. As opposed to the Western concept, trauma in South Africa cannot be said to be an identifiable event with a starting and ending point. Quite on the contrary, South African trauma is in the air – for a long time present but unspoken.

The three novels, *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* by Rachel Zadok, *Mother to Mother* by Sindiwe Magona and *The Memory of Stones* by Mandla Langa, analysed in more detail not from a clinical perspective but in terms of presentation of trauma in contemporary South African literature, will complement the theoretical part of this thesis, which seeks to provide an insight into time and its role in the three contemporary South African novels listed above in a wider context, and the presentation of historical accuracy – i.e. historical happenings and their influence on the characters of the stories.

2 Western perspective: trauma an identifiable event

Concerning the development of the concept of trauma in the Western culture, a constant fluctuation of trauma studies can be observed. Hence, one finds a growing interest in trauma studies particularly in Europe shortly after World War I, with a particularly high number of soldiers suffering from the so-called war neurosis; a clear decline during and after World War II and a boom in the 1980s, when the symptoms of deeply traumatized Vietnam soldiers, were referred to as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Originally, the Greek word trauma referred to an injury inflicted on the body. Nowadays, Webster's Dictionary defines trauma as "an injury [as a wound] to living tissue caused by an extrinsic agent" and as "a disorder psychic or behavioural state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury."² It was only in 1922 that Sigmund Freud described trauma as the wound of the mind in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*³. Caruth, however, in her highly praised and recently highly criticized book *Unclaimed Experiences*, takes Freud's definition one-step further by stating that:

[...] what seems to be suggested by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is that the wound of the mind – the breach in the mind's experience of time, self and the world – is not, like the wound of the body, a simple healable event, but rather an event that [...] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. (Caruth 1995, p3ff)

What Caruth seems to imply with this extended definition of the term trauma, is the representation of trauma as a repetitive, never ending event. Hence, Caruth argues that it is difficult if not even impossible for a traumatized person to leave the vicious circle of living and reliving, experiencing and re-experiencing, being traumatized and re-traumatized by the traumatic event

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma>

³ Cf. Freud 12.

repeatedly is difficult, or as a matter of fact, impossible. In her eyes, traumatic events are and remain unclaimed experiences. Hence, the coming to terms and healing from trauma is not possible.

A crucial reason for the reliving of the traumatic events is, in Caruth's, eyes the fact that trauma represents more than a threat of life. As "[...] the threat is recognized as such by the mind "one moment too late" the victim, the survivor of the traumatic event is doomed to reliving the traumatic events repeatedly. This reliving of the near-death-experiences can be re-traumatizing for the survivor and can even lead to suicidal thoughts or even suicide in the aftermath of the event. (Caruth 1995, 62-63) However, what differentiates Caruth from other authors cited in this thesis is the fact that for her, overcoming trauma is not possible; the traumatic events cannot be claimed. To put it in her words:

"[...] trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is otherwise not available. (4)

In my thesis, however, traumatic events, as rightly pointed out by other equally important psychologists and authors on trauma quoted at a later point in this thesis, can be healed, trauma survivors can learn to cope and consequently, to live with the traumatic events and the trauma they have suffered. As reality as well as many therapies, case studies and literature show us, there is hope for trauma victims.

Hence, Caruth's definition of trauma as '*being out of time*' and thus not graspable, is only used to the extent that regards trauma as an event, which repeats itself. Building on other important authors, in this thesis Caruth's definition shall only be used to such an extent as that it regards trauma as a repetitive event, which is difficult to be claimed. Her assumption that traumatic experiences cannot be claimed and consequently trauma can never be healed is clearly rejected.

Turning to other thoughts and definitions of trauma, Kai Erikson, an American sociologist, defines trauma as a "blow to the tissue of the mind",

which results in injuries that break something inside the traumatized person. For Erikson, trauma breaks “[...] whatever barriers your mind has set up as a line of defense. It invades you, takes you over, becomes a dominating feature of your interior landscape” (183). What is worth mentioning is the emptiness trauma leaves behind. According to Erikson, it is an emptiness, which can result in feelings ranging from restlessness and agitation to numbness and bleakness. (184) Van der Merwe’s idea of emptiness, which he addresses as a void, is comparable to Erikson’s idea of emptiness, as for him “[...] traumatic events that produce traumatic effects create a void.” (24) For Ruth Leys, the emptiness or the so-called black holes created in the mind of the victim are due to the emotions of terror and surprise, which were originally caused by certain traumatic events.

In van der Merwe’s eyes, the most striking feature of trauma is the destruction of the belief that we are in control of our lives. When a person experiences trauma, he/ she seems not to be able to handle such extreme situations, as traumatic experiences are usually not part of the daily routine.⁴ He compares the state of traumatized people with a state of being frozen; there is a so-called silencing of the senses that takes place, which he expresses with the following words:

When people are overwhelmed by a traumatic experience, there is a silencing of the senses, a state of being frozen. The silencing is more than a lack of words; it is also a lack of understanding of what has happened to them. Trauma overwhelms the psyche; it contains no reference points in terms of one’s former experience.
(26)

Hence, there is a certain sense of ‘unbelievability’ for the traumatized person, a so-called lack of capacity to understand what is actually happening.⁵ Concerning trauma and the sense of time, Van der Merwe’s aspect of silencing

⁴ The exception proves the rule. There is a distinction between trauma as an event and trauma as a condition. In South African reality we find both. Cf. 2. A South African concept of trauma.

⁵ Cf. Van der Merwe 26ff.

of the senses is an important feature because the moment of being frozen in time, the mind and the body seem to be captured in a particular moment in time. There is a stop in time, which takes place, and memories, which cannot be restored in the mind. Thus, a loss of the sense of time takes place, which does not allow the victims to restore their memories and have a clear cut between the past and the present. The inability to continue with the process of restoring makes flashbacks and reliving of the traumatic episodes possible.

Leys puts this lack of capacity to deal with trauma as follows: “[the victims are][...] unable to register the wound to the psyche because the ordinary mechanisms of awareness and cognition are destroyed.” (Leys 2)

Similarly to Leys, Judith Herman sees trauma as a rupture, a violation of human’s most basic beliefs and conventions, because the basic human relationships, in terms of family, friendship, love and community, are called into question. As a result, the victim is thrown into a state of existential crisis, because all belief systems that give meaning to human experience are threatened or even damaged.

Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim’s faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis. (Herman 51)

To what Van der Merwe refers as a silencing of the senses, Leys talks about a dissociation of the mind caused by the strong emotions of terror and surprise of certain events, which make the process of integration of wounding experiences into one’s consciousness almost impossible. (2) Besides Leys, Caruth (1995) sees the process of coming to terms with trauma as a very difficult one. The past seems to be returning literally and the traumatized person, who is possessed by his/ her trauma and who is not in full control of his/her own mind and soul seems to be somehow possessed by a ‘demon’ of a higher force. According to Allen, the re-experience of the thoughts, feelings and

images reminiscent of trauma, is inevitable. He intensifies this inevitability of re-experiencing trauma by adding that:

[t]he re-experiencing may begin to occur soon after the trauma or it may be delayed by weeks, months, or years. It may take several forms, including recurrent intrusive memories, distressing dreams or nightmares, and extremely vivid sensations and feelings that lead you to feel as if you are back in the midst of the traumatic situation. (90)

What Susan Brison (1995) defines as the “unmaking” of the self, and to what Herman addresses as a shattering of “[...] the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others” (51), can already be found in early psychoanalytic formulations by Charcot, Janet, Breuer and Freud, who agree that extreme forms of trauma may “lead to some kind of psychic rupture, a tearing apart of the integrity of the self.” (van der Merwe, 25)

However, despite the difficulty, trickiness and complexity of the integration of the traumatic events into one’s consciousness, remembering and being able to talk about what happened is of crucial importance for the traumatized victims to come to terms with their past, to start to learn to live with the traumatic events and to start the process of healing. Furthermore, the integration of the traumatic events into one’s mind is an important factor for psychological health, as being able to remember and tell the whole story of one’s life, gives the victims the feeling to have power and control over their lives. Van der Merwe argues that it is the tearing apart of the integrity of the self which influences and sets the way experiences are encoded in the human minds; hence, that traumatic experiences are encoded in a different way than everyday experiences because traumatic event have been reported to be perceived as a chaotic experience, as an earthquake, which wipes out the world, as it was known and, which leaves behind a destroyed self in bits and pieces, which will eventually have to be put together, in order for the long process of healing to start.

However, sadly enough, due to the overwhelming shock and effect trauma has on trauma survivors and the lack of language or the so-called ‘unspeakability’ of trauma, traumatized persons have extreme difficulties to talk

and narrate about what has happened to them and the trauma they have experienced. According to van der Merwe, among the incapability to store the traumatic events in the consciousness, the inadequacy of the language to express the severity of trauma is another factor, which makes it problematic and burdensome for the trauma survivors to talk about the particular experiences. For Leys, the inability to talk about the experienced traumatic events lies in the fact, that the ordinary mechanisms are destroyed and therefore, the events cannot be understood or perceived. Nevertheless, in one way or the other, remembering is indispensable when it comes to coming to terms with trauma. It is only when the traumatized person has found the words, the language to express her/ his pain and to talk about the traumatic events and experiences, which usually dominate the mental life of the victims, that he/ she will be able to derive meaning from trauma and consequently, to start a long process of healing. This for the fact that we as human beings analyse, understand and make meaning of the world through the relation of current experiences to past ones. (cf. Allan 90)

To put it in other words, all authors quoted above, despite their different approaches to and various perspectives on trauma seem to agree that trauma as such is perceived as an act of humiliation, which among other forms of losses, causes loss of identity, belief and control over one's life. This is due to the fact that during the traumatic act, trauma victims face helplessness and find themselves in complete control of the perpetrators. When the act of humiliation is finished, the wounded survivor is left with nothing but a complete powerlessness. As a result of the overwhelming force, of the shocking experience, trauma victims believe to no longer be in control of their traumatic memories, which, given the impact and the destructive force to shatter the life of trauma victims, cannot be stored anywhere in the human mind. As the human mind is no longer able to deal with such destructive events, order and structure them into the so-called plot of one's life – a crucial plot for the daily survival of the humans – the traumatic events are relived in different forms and turn the healing process into a very difficult task to fulfil. Given the failure of the

integration of the traumatic memories into the mind and consequently into one's life plot, the life of the victims becomes unbearable, uncontrollable. However, as previously mentioned, in order for the healing process to take place, trauma victims have to remember, as remembering, i.e. the victim living in the present has to go back in time physically, in terms of going back to the place where trauma was experienced, and psychologically, trying to remember exactly what happened and face the traumatic event and include them into his/her present, is the only way which makes the treatment and the healing process possible.⁶

To recapitulate, Western authors on trauma studies define trauma as an identifiable event, which happened at a certain point in time. Concerning the sense of time, the importance of the Western definition of trauma as an event lies in the fact that trauma is defined as an event, i.e. a process with a starting and obviously, a certain point where it comes to an end. Due to the shattering force of trauma, the human mind is no longer able to deal with the events and consequently cannot store them into one's consciousness. As a result, trauma becomes the black hole in the life of the victim and reinforces the belief to have lost the control over one's life through various repetitive forms, such as flashbacks, nightmares and intrusive memories. The powerlessness over one's memories, particularly those memories which seem to be lost, and the inability to control the repetitive forms of trauma, force the victim to live and re-live the traumatic event frequently by strengthening the belief to have lost the control of one's life. Besides Cathy Caruth, all other Western authors cited in this chapter do believe that traumatized victims can be healed and learn to live with the loss. However, time is indeed needed for the healing process to take place.

⁶ At this point, it is important to emphasize that the healing process as such does not represent an end to all the suffering and the pain. Quite on the contrary, the process of healing should be seen only as a process to face and work through trauma, in order for the victims to balance the tragic loss and gain meaning in their trauma. Thus, the process of healing is about learning to cope with trauma. (cf. van der Merwe)

3 A South African concept of trauma

Contrarily to the rather new concept of South African trauma, the field of Western trauma studies experienced its renaissance in the West in the 1980s, when American war soldiers returned home from Vietnam and had difficulties to continue their lives after what they had seen and done in Vietnam. The atrocities of the bloody war had traumatized them as they had all been witnesses of a cruelty taking place far away from home, had killed and seen their comrades being killed and had narrowly escaped death themselves. Their time as soldiers had turned them into traumatized people and consequently changed their entire lives. Even when the war, the identifiable traumatizing event in the Western concept of trauma, was over and the soldiers were safe back home, they were not able to overcome trauma. The images, the murdering, killing, slaughtering they had experienced in Vietnam, haunted them for a very long time. Given the history and the situation of the traumatized soldiers, Western authors defined trauma as an event with a starting and ending point; in the case of Vietnam war soldiers: from 1955 to 1975.

Turning to the South African context, for a brief moment, imagine an on-going war with no timeframe, a whole population leading a dog's life because one race believes to be superior to the other. A nation, where the minority of the population holds the power and passes one law after the other to make sure that their power, superiority and authority is not threatened; a nation where the relocating, killing and torturing of the majority is protected by law. The oppressed majority, the natives of the nation, suffer all the atrocities that come with all the laws and the acts of the minority. Imagine a nation where the education of the majority teaches them that they are not equal to the minority. Imagine a nation where one as a young adult does not fulfil the requirements for college and is consequently, obliged to join the army; an army involved in several non-official civil wars taking place all around the borders of the nation. Now imagine all these atrocities and from the 21st century perspective absurdities, are true and represent the history of colonialism and apartheid

regime in South Africa. What is left from the historical past of the country is not only a group of soldiers who go back home and try to find their place in the society, try to overcome trauma or at least to learn to cope with all the traumatic events, but a whole traumatized nation, which does not get to choose a different way of life and has no other place to go because they are home already. Sadly enough, they cannot escape all the traumatic events, traumatic experiences and conditions the black majority and partly white minority, have to suffer and survive on a day-to-day basis. This, for the reason that the dog's life with all its trauma and traumatic conditions the nation still faces nowadays, came into being as a consequence of its historical development. Thence, it can be argued that in the same way that historical development of South Africa is different from that of the United States or Europe, the Western concept and theories of trauma are valid only to a certain point and consequently, can be only partly applied to the traumatization of the South African nation.

As Mengel and Borzaga rightly point out: “[...] Western trauma theories – as they have been developed by scholars such as Caruth (1995; 1996), van der Kolk et al. (1996), Herman (1992) and others – are *insufficient instruments* with which to analyse the more complex situation in a postcolony such as South Africa. (xi; emphasis added) Therefore, additional concepts of postcolonialism and aspects such as colonialism and racism, and other perspectives on trauma, such as perception of time, have been modified, suggested and added in order to adapt the Western concept of trauma to analyse the trauma of a nation as particular as South Africa.

3.1 Trauma and the sense of time

As previously alluded to, in contrast to the Western concept of trauma, which defines trauma as an identifiable event, which occurred at a point in time, the South African perspective, given the historical development of the country, approaches trauma from a slightly different perspective. As Borzaga, among

other scholars, rightly emphasizes in her essay “Trauma in the Postcolony: Towards a New Theoretical Approach”, the Western concept of trauma is not the proper tool when approaching trauma in South Africa, because contrary to the Western trauma as an event concept, from the South African point of view, trauma is perceived to be more a condition. This is due to the fact that the largest part of the South African people lived and is still living under conditions that traumatized and keep traumatizing them continually. Life in townships, loss of home, day-to-day survival, senseless murders, killings and necklacing under the apartheid regime; rape, misery and the hopelessness for a better future in present South Africa, are only a few traumatizing factors to mention at this point. Given the complexities that came along with the historical development, Borzaga argues for a new concept, the so-called “[...] concept of ‘entanglement’, used by both Mbembe⁷ and Nuttall⁸, [which] avoids the Western way of thinking in dichotomies of black and white, past and present, wound and healing.” (xix) Interestingly, the concept of entanglement, among other important concepts, draws the attention to the concept of time in South Africa. This is not only due to the strong impact South Africa’s past has on its present, but also due to the highly complex relation between time and its permanent presence in the South African context.

Generally, the complexity of the term time has already been treated by a vast number of authors. Amongst the most famous ones, Paul Ricoeur’s thoughts on time as such and narrative in *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*, which are indispensable for this thesis can be found. To explain the complexity of time, Ricoeur introduces the term cosmological time – universal time, which refers to the way human beings experience time; thus, as a linear succession of our lives from birth to death. To put it in other words, cosmological time refers to the simple action of experiencing the passing minutes, days, months and years.

⁷ See for example Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley CA: U of California P, 2001.

⁸ See Nuttall, Sarah. *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post Apartheid*. Johannesburg: Wits UP, 2009.

Phenomenological time or lived time, on the other hand, refers to our perception of time in terms of what has been – past –, what will be – future – and what is at the moment. Hence, the past, the present and the future serve as a means of orientation in phenomenological time – lived time.

Given the apparent paradox between universal time and lived time, Ricoeur suggests a third term – historical time – where both, universal and lived time can coexist and harmonize.

[h]istory initially reveals its creative capacity as regards the refiguration of time through its invention and use of certain reflective instruments such as the calendar; the idea of the succession of generations – and, connected to this, the idea of the threefold realm of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors; finally, and above all, in its recourse to archive, documents, and traces. (104)

As Ricoeur mentions in the quote included above, the harmonization is achieved through different means: calendars or the idea of succession, in order to be able to cosmologize lived time and vice versa. For instance, “[t]he time of the calendar is the first bridge constructed by historical practice between lived time and universal time.” (105) This, for the reason that calendar time does not “stem exclusively from either of these perspectives on time.” (ibid.)

Concerning time and narrative, Ricoeur argues that narrative has a very high capacity to represent the actual experience of time by humans. This for the reason, that similar to our capacity as human beings to perceive time not only as simple successive actions and separate, singled-out time units, but also as complex co-existing of the past, the present and the future, a narrative can imitate our highly complex perception of time by, for example starting with a culminating event and bring the story to the audience through memories, flashbacks and dreams. Ultimately, the culminating event serves as a point of reference for the audience and will surely help the reader to complete and solve the puzzle – understand the plot. Thus, what is illustrated as the past, the future or the present in a narrative, does not necessarily have to follow a chronological order. Quite on the contrary, the novels included and dealt in detail in this thesis

make use of this feature of the narrative and enthrall the audience throughout the novels. To put it in Ricoeur's words: "Fiction, I will say, is a treasure trove of imaginative variations applied to the theme of phenomenological time and its aporias." (128)

To summarize, the highly complex relation between trauma and history in South Africa cannot be left out, when analysing different aspects of contemporary novels. Thus, going back in time and having a closer look at some other important, however traumatic events, which did not only change the life of the people of South Africa but eventually led to a traumatized nation during and in the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid regime, is mandatory for understanding the complex relation of time, trauma and history in South Africa

3.2 Dis-linearity of time in the South African context

The concept of time and its linearity in the South African context is a further aspect, which Borzaga touches upon in her essay. As previously mentioned, in terms of Western culture and Western trauma, the traumatic event, which took place at a certain point in time, traumatized the victim. It is through flashbacks or other psychological repetitive forms, such as nightmares, that the traumatic event is relived and consequently, the difference between past and present is no longer possible. Thus, this leads to the question: how is trauma, in terms of time, perceived in South Africa? What do we make out of traumatized South Africans, especially black South Africans, who lead a life in places with no electric power, not enough food for the children, not enough schools and with an educational system that educates young black Africans to become the slaves of the white supremacy? How do South Africans learn to cope with the traumatic conditions they live in? What do we make out of a still traumatized nation, which keeps living devastating lives with blurred perspectives for the future?

As Borzaga rightly emphasizes in her essay, the Western concept of time and its linearity in the concept of trauma, given the past of South Africa, cannot be fitted into South Africa's trauma concept. Considering the fact that the Western trauma concept perceives time as linear, meaning that there is a past, present and future, this assumption cannot be taken for granted in the trauma concept in South Africa. This is due to the fact that the traumatic experiences, which cause black holes in the memories of trauma survivors, make a linear perception of time difficult if not impossible.

There is definitely a past, a present and a future in South Africa. However, it is the way these three units of time are intertwined in the South African history, that make the perception of time and of trauma as such a very difficult one. Particularly the past and the present are the units, which despite the abolishment of the apartheid regime, cannot be clearly identifiable. On the one hand, South Africa's past is an identifiable phase: colonialism and apartheid regime. However, on the other hand, South Africa's present is a consequence of its bloody past. Furthermore, despite the official end of apartheid in South Africa, South Africans still live in conditions that came into being because of its past. The legacy of apartheid is still present because „[t]hey [the past and the present] cannot be distinguished as two clearly identifiable phases in a continuum of time but are superimposed on each other, interpenetrate one another, and in this way, form a 'tangle' or knot in which their separation is suspended.” (Mengel and Borzaga 2012: viii)

Referring to Bracken, who he himself relies on Heidegger, Borzaga pleads for a different process of healing, i.e. of coming to terms with the past or learn to cope with trauma:

It is clear that, if we envisage the past, present and future as a *unified tangle*, the repetition and re-living of traumatic experiences as well as the potential for overcoming trauma: i.e. the process of working through it, are not separate and set at the two ends of the spectrum but coexist and struggle with one another in complex and unexpected ways. (Borzaga 2012: 78; emphasis in the original)

For Sindiwe Magona too, the morbid condition of trauma, which is caused by violence holds true for the South African nation. She obviously alludes to the complexity of past and present in South Africa when she says that “trauma is *in the blood* for the people of South Africa; [and] they can neither escape it nor ignore it.” (Magona 2012, 95; emphasis added) Hence, in some way or other, all traumatized South Africans have to learn to deal, to cope with all the traumatic experiences and the trauma they have lived through and had to suffer for years. The aim of the TRC was already a first step toward a new, healed nation, a new South Africa. However, as often enough criticized for its non-universal characteristic and as being open only to the ‘stars of the apartheid’, the TRC remained only a first try to come to terms with the past. The healing process of the traumatized South African nation is still a long one, as the legacy of apartheid is still a heavy burden on the shoulders of many South Africans. The effects of the endemic trauma are and will be felt for many following generations.⁹

Finally, having a closer look at the South African trauma, one should be aware of the fact that the history of this nation and especially the apartheid regime – the modern form of oppression – with all its injustices, horrendous losses, suffering, murders, poverty, rape, humiliation, degradation, shame, disgrace and dehumanization that came along with the modern form of slavery, and unfortunately, did not disappear when the regime was officially abolished with the first democratic elections in 1994 must be taken into consideration. It is due to its brutal, violent past and legalized injustice that the South African people were and still are a traumatized people, continuing to live under traumatizing conditions.

Concerning the Western concept of trauma and the new adaption including the historical past in general and, suggested by other authors, the role of time in particular in South Africa, where trauma is said to be in the blood of the nation, one finds both concepts in contemporary South African novels. Hence, on the

⁹ Cf. Magona 2012, 95.

one hand, one finds novels, such as Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother*, where the mother of one of the aggressors – Mxolisi – responsible for the killing of Amy Biehl, blames the hopelessness caused by the apartheid regime for the transformation of her son into a criminal. Her novel reads like a testimony of the life of a black woman living in the township of Guguletu, who gets pregnant at a very young age and faces a day-to-day survival. Mandisa leads a difficult life. Having three children and going to work daily from early in the morning until late in the evening, neither her, nor her husband, can take care of their children as they both have to work very hard in order to be able to survive in the township. Things go beyond control when teachers and students rise against the Bantu education – an act which had failed completely to increase the inferiority of the blacks towards the whites – and Mxolisi no longer goes to school but wanders the street of Guguletu all day long. On the other hand, one can find a slightly different, so-called white trauma in South African contemporary novels, such as in Rachel Zadok's *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, where not only the historical time the characters live in is a traumatizing factor, but where certain identifiable traumatic events, in this case a single identifiable event, which led to amnesia, flashbacks – represented in form of analepsis – and deep traumatization of the characters are present.

Tony Eprile's *The Persistence of Memory* is another example, where both, trauma as a condition and trauma as a single identifiable event, can be found, as on the one hand, the main character of the novel Paul Sweetbred, a young overweight Jewish boy with identity issues, fights to find his place in the South African society. Paul experiences several traumatizing events during his military service in the South African Defence Force and gets to know the atrocities of the Border War in Namibia. On the other hand, given the fact that Paul has a photographic memory, he remembers every single tiny detail of what he sees. The photographic memory, otherwise considered a gift, turns Paul into a victim of his memory.

Maya in Joanne Fedler's *The Dreamcloth* carries with her Jewish heritage, hence her Jewish trauma, which has been handed on from generation to generation. She as well, is concerned with identity issues and is traumatized continuously by different experiences she makes as a journalist in different trouble spots in the world by interviewing women who had to endure several traumatizing experiences during war. Black trauma, relocation of a whole community and consequently the loss of home, killing of Chris Hani and other historical happenings can be found in Mandla Langa's *The Memory of Stones*.

As listed in the examples of traumatized characters and those 'monsters bred by the society', it can be said that the historical time – the time the characters of the primary sources of this thesis live in – can be a traumatizing factor. At this point of this thesis, the examples above are included to provide the reader with a short introductory orientation. Several references to historical events and the way these events traumatize the characters of the novels are dealt with in detail at a later stage of the thesis.

3.2.1 *The 'out of timeness' of trauma: flashbacks and nightmares*

As already aforementioned, remembering and being able to tell one's life story plays a very significant role when it comes to coming to terms with trauma and start the process of healing. As long as repression and other psychological defence mechanisms are not overpowered and the restoration of the traumatic events does not take place, the re-living and re-experiencing of trauma will be inevitable. Hence, the question to ask is: Where can these traumatic events the human mind is not able to deal with, be stored? How can deeply traumatized victims, trauma survivors remember and store these traumatic events into the consciousness and consequently, be able to tell the story of their life.

The concept of narrative and traumatic memories, to which van der Merwe refers earlier quoted in this thesis, was coined by Janet – who suggested

differentiating between ordinary memories and traumatic memories – because the roles these memories play for the psychological health are quite different. On the one hand, there are the so-called ordinary memories, which can be stored and talked about easily and on the other hand, there are “[...] inflexible and invariable” (Caruth 1995, 163) traumatic memories, which resist the integration in the mind and consequently, are lived and relived continuously by making trauma survivors to experience and feel the fear, helplessness, anxiety and loss of oneself repeatedly.

The fatality of trauma lies in the repetitiveness and the re-living of the traumatic events, which in the worst-case scenario, are triggered off by associations, smell, pictures, and other objects, which the traumatized person is likely to encounter in his daily life. In Allen’s eyes, the reason for re-experiencing and reliving of the traumatic events lies in the tight bond between memories and emotions, due to the fact that “[e]very memory, like every experience, has an emotional charge, ranging from relatively neutral to intense.¹⁰ As mentioned above, given the fact that we as human beings tend to interpret the world and the experiences we make on the basis of past experiences, and the strong bond between memories and emotions, we seem to carry a blend of emotions with us. To put it in other words, narrative memories recreate the past and consequently, help human beings make sense of the experiences. In terms of traumatized persons however, the blend of emotions can instantly overcome the victim by causing a chain reaction of anger, fear and anxiety. This, argues Allen, is due to the fact even the smallest cue that is perceived in the environment the traumatized person lives in, can set off a powerful emotion in a flash. (90)

The re-experience of powerful emotions in a flash which can cause a chain of reaction of anger, fear and anxiety, has been referred to as flashback in medicine, which is defined as “[a] recurrence of a memory, or the experience of

¹⁰ cf. Allen 90ff.

reliving an episode from the past”¹¹ and as “[a] psychological phenomenon in which an individual has a sudden, usually vivid, recollection of a past experience”¹². For Allen, however, the intensity of flashbacks does not lie in the fact that memories from the past as such are relived, but in the fact that the memories are so vivid and intrusive that the person having a flashback can no longer recognize the flashback as a memory but as something that is happening in the present. By doing so, the traumatized person seems to lose contact with current reality and relive the traumatic experience in full force. This leads to a re-traumatization of the traumatized person because the victim is condemned to remember trauma and to undergo trauma every time a flashback is triggered. To put it in Allen’s words “[t]o remember is to re-create previous experience. To remember trauma with its full emotional force is to undergo trauma again.” (92) Caruth, too, sees flashbacks as a repetitive form of trauma, which can re-traumatize the victims. Despite the not life-threatening character of flashbacks and other repetitive phenomena, argues Caruth, “the traumatic repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback [...] is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration.” Furthermore, Caruth states that the shattering force of flashbacks explains the high suicide rate of survivors of Vietnam and concentration camps. (63)

Another important point concerning the occurrence of flashbacks and other forms of repetitive phenomena is the way memories are stored, in the case of traumatic memories not stored, which is important.¹³ Reinforcing Janet’s, van der Merwe’s and the point of view of other important authors, Allen emphasizes the fact that traumatic memories, in contrast to what Allen calls autobiographical

¹¹ Oxford Dictionaries Online: A Dictionary of Psychology
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?entry=t87.e3181>

¹² Online Dictionary of Psychology
[http://dictionary-
 psychology.com/index.php?a=term&d=Dictionary+of+psychology&t=Flashback](http://dictionary-psychology.com/index.php?a=term&d=Dictionary+of+psychology&t=Flashback)

¹³ Cf. Allen 89ff.

memory¹⁴, are a more complicated matter, as there are various ways to obscure traumatic memories. This, argues Allen, for the fact, that traumatic memories are likely to “[...] be stored in fragmentary form, in bits and pieces“, a form of storage, which includes isolated images, such as sights, sounds and smells or body sensations, such as a searing pain, a wave of nausea. “Sometimes [...]” argues Allen, “[...] all that is “remembered” is an overpowering impulse to run away or to lash out.” (104) Hence, this incoherent and unsystematic form of storage does not make sense to the human mind and consequently, makes remembering and telling the story of one’s life an impossible task. (ibid.) For Allen, it is the morbid character of this fragmentary form of remembering, which makes flashbacks, intrusive memories and nightmares possible and leaves behind a traumatized person with bits and pieces of experience that make no sense and cannot be integrated in the life story of oneself.

In terms of time and trauma as an ‘out of time’ event, it can be said that the gravity of flashbacks lies in their ability to manifest themselves weeks, months or even years after having experienced trauma. Moreover, the overwhelming shock a flashback can have and the difference between present and past, which is believed to be no longer possible while having a flashback, contribute to turn trauma ‘out of time’ and consequently, turn the process of coping and coming to terms with trauma more difficult. Nightmares and intrusive memories, further repetitive forms of trauma can have the same impact on the victim, as they occur subconsciously. Victims usually suppress the traumatic experiences and cannot or do not want to be reminded of them consciously. However, nightmares and intrusive memories/ images, in the same way as flashbacks, are triggered by possible cues, which are stored in the mind subconsciously. Furthermore, Allen among other authors argues, that the risk of re-experiencing and re-living trauma in one or other repetitive form, can be triggered by the

¹⁴ Allen defines autobiographical memories as memories, which include memories of unique events and recurrent events in one’s life and should be regarded as a self- portrait. “[...] autobiographical memory is self-knowledge.” (102)

simple act of trying to suppress it. Therefore, these forms of re-traumatization, which cannot be controlled, underline the powerlessness the victims have over their lives. Once again, the victims are reinforced in their belief to have lost the control over their lives and that the bits and pieces, which the traumatic event has left behind, will eventually have to be put together, in order for trauma victims to start a process of healing and in order for the traumatized victims to start to believe that they can, at least to a certain point, control their lives.

3.2.2 *The 'out of timeness' of trauma – transitional-objects*

In 1953, Donald Winnicott in his article “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena – A Study of the first not-me possession” coined the term ‘transitional object’, which referred to blankets, soft toys and other objects, to which children start feeling attached at a very young age. Moreover, Winnicott completes his new concept by stating that the importance of such ‘thing ’or ‘phenomenon’ such as “a bundle of wool or the corner of a blanket or eiderdown, or a word or tune, or a mannerism” lies in the fact that the object the child choses becomes “vitally important to the infant for use at the time of going to sleep, and is a defence against anxiety, especially anxiety of depressive type.” (91) Among other important points, such as the development of the self, Winnicott mentions the importance of the transitional object, as for the children the object in a way compensates the not-present mother-figure. However, the child is aware of the fact that the object is not its mother; instead, the blanket or the teddy bear is only a compensation for the ‘loss’ of the mother.

Transitional objects can also be found in contemporary South African literature. There are blankets and children’s teddies, and there are dreamcloths for the adults. The point of interest lies in the fact that among other literatures and cultures, in the South African context, the concept of transitional object is transferred from the child on to the adult. Hence, one can find different trauma victims, who hold on a piece of something as a compensation for what was there and is not anymore; a compensation for an otherwise unbearable loss. In

the same way these transitional objects help young children to compensate the 'loss' of the mother when they fall asleep, the transitional object helps adults to live with the factual loss of the mother figure in their life.

In the history of the Jewish society in South Africa, the transitional objects play a greater role. Not only do they compensate the loss of the mother figure, as it is the case in Joanne Fedler's *The Dreamcloth*, but they can be also interpreted as transgenerational objects, through which the Jewish trauma is handed on literally from one generation to the next one. Schwab refers to this phenomenon as 'transgenerational haunting'. (7) Another prominent feature about these objects is the fact that in the South African contemporary literature, these objects are not only handed on through generations, helping their possessors to cope with various losses, but, as literature examples included in this thesis show, they help traumatized victims to come to terms with their trauma and can be interpreted as symbols for vital processes. Interestingly, transgenerational objects are more often to be found among the white South Africans, as for instance Jewish families or Afrikaners. Among the so-called black novels, the audience is more likely to be confronted with traditional rituals, totems and other supernatural ways of preserving memory and handing on, for instance handing on leading positions.

Despite their function as utilities, which help trauma survivors deal with the different losses, the transgenerational objects play a crucial role concerning the concept of time and that of trauma being 'out of time'. This for the reason that, in terms of trauma and the sense of time, it can be argued that once again, transitional – transgenerational objects make trauma be 'out of time', meaning that trauma does not necessarily end when the traumatized victim passes away, when the traumatized person leaves the place where trauma was experienced. On the contrary, as Fedler's *The Dreamcloth* and Zadok's *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* show, transitional – transgenerational objects transmit trauma from one generation to the next and help victims overcome their trauma. Again, to reject Caruth's idea of unclaimed experiences and simultaneously support the

idea of many other authors, despite the long period of time that it might take and those black holes the victims cannot claim their for such a long time – in the case of my primary sources a time span of approximately ten years – trauma, as shown in the following chapters, can be healed and trauma survivors can learn to cope with what they have done, seen or experienced.

3.3 Mimicking life – mimicking trauma in literature

Van der Merwe has certainly made a good point when he states that literature in general and modern novels in particular have a healing power because

[t]he literary narrative, more than the academic language of scholars, is an appropriate medium for communication about trauma [...]. The modern novel often contains ambivalences, aporias and open endings; it lacks final certainties - and that makes it an extremely fitting vehicle for conveying the enigmatic experience of trauma. (66)

Another significant factor about the healing power of the literary narratives is the transformation of the chaotic situation trauma leaves behind into a structure, which makes sense and helps the traumatized victim to gain meaning from it. However, as already indicated by Ricoeur on the complexity of time, not all modern novels follow this pattern. Certainly, on the one hand, there are novels with open endings, which leave space for speculations and thus indicate that there is still hope for the South African nation. However, on the other hand, there are also authors who decide to apply other patterns and techniques deliberately. For instance, one finds modern novels, which are structured differently, are non-chronological and interestingly enough, remind the reader of what trauma leaves behind: a shattered self of bits and pieces that have to be put together, in order for the healing process to take place; in the case of literature – a novel which follows an achronological structure, includes many instances of analepsis, flashbacks, frequent changes of narrator. To put it in other words, one is confronted with novels, which do not only focus on the traumatization of the characters as such, but reinforce the shattering, morbid

character of trauma, by breaking the traditional form of narrating and making use of unusual techniques, in order to imitate the effects trauma may have on its victims. The techniques used in each primary novel are analysed and explained in greater detail separately.

3.4 Historical time – a traumatizing factor

According to Ricoeur, stressing “[...] the parallel and the contrast between the imaginative variations produced by fiction and fixed time constituted by the reinscription of lived time on world time on the level of history” (128-129) is of great importance and starts with phenomenological time and universal time. Taking Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway as a prime example, Ricoeur states that

[f]rom the mere fact that the narrator and the leading characters are fictional, all references to real historical events are *divested of their function of standing for the historical past* and are set on a par with the unreal status of the other events. More precisely, the reference to the past, and the very function of standing-for, are preserved but in a neutralized mode [...] to use a different vocabulary, [...] historical events are no longer denoted, they are *simply mentioned*. (129; emphasis added.)

What Ricoeur is basically arguing against, is the idea that historical events included in the narratives can and are fictionalized in each case in a different way. Thus, given the fact that the narrator can basically choose which individual experiences and historical events to put on stage, historical time as such, should be considered as a neutralized one in the narrative.

Ricoeur surely has very strong arguments, when he argues for a neutralization of historical time and historical events in the narrative. However, when it comes to the South African context and South African contemporary novels, historical happenings included or even mentioned in the three novels included in this thesis, have to be taken into consideration – admittedly not as universal correct historical facts – but as historical happenings which had – and partly still have – a very strong impact on people’s lives. Given the fact that the

South African nation seeks to come to terms with its past and overcome the atrocities of the past through literature, where happy and alternative – in reality probably impossible – endings are possible, the historical happenings included or indirectly addressed in the narrative should not be left unanalysed or be perceived as neutral at the level of private life-changing memories. Ultimately, the number of the historical happenings having a strong impact on the life of the South African population in a broader, and the black South Africans in a narrower sense is as expected vast and of great significance.

Apartheid as one powerful, significant historical process, did have – and partly still has – a dominant and profound impact on the lives of blacks living in South Africa. However, the history of South Africa goes beyond the apartheid regime, back in 1652, when Jan van Riebeeck, the Dutch colonial administrator, founded the Cape Colony at Table Bay to provide the ships of the Dutch East India Company with fresh victuals on their way to India.¹⁵

Colonialism in general has been described as a highly complex process, “[...] which locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history. [...] [as] [t]he process of ‘forming a community’ in the new land necessarily meant *unforming* or re-forming the communities that existed there already.” (Loomba, 2; emphasis in the original)

In Sindiwe Magona’s essay “It is in the Blood: Trauma and Memory in the South African Novel”, the coming of the white tribe represents the most violent event in the history of South Africa. This for the reason that

[...] [it] resulted in the struggle for resources, mainly land, and the eventual subjugation of the African and consequent clash of cultures - a clash which ended in the complete domination of the indigenous culture by the invading culture. The ensuing trauma turned endemic. Its effects will be felt for generations to come.” (Magona 2012: 95)

¹⁵ See for example <http://www.sahistory.org.za/timelines> or <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094918>

Indeed, the conflict between the Boers and the natives rose in the late 18th century, when the Boers moved eastward and encountered the Xhosa. With the discovery of diamonds at Kimberly in 1867 and the defeat of the Zulus in Natal, the first war between the British and Boers was pre-determined. Only few years later, in the mid 1880s, when gold was discovered in Transvaal and consequently, the gold rush was triggered, the second Anglo – Boer took place, when the British troops ignored the ultimatum to disperse and leave the Transvaal border in 1902, the Treaty of Vereeniging ended the second Anglo – Boer war and changed the Transvaal and Orange Free State into self – governing colonies of the British Empire.

The way for the apartheid regime was paved continually. Starting in 1913, the Native Land Act¹⁶, also known as the Black Land Act, which formally divided the land between black and white people, is considered to be the foundation stone of a new form of modern oppression: the apartheid. Despite the black resistance of the South African Native National Congress, later known as the African National Congress, the Land Act was passed, which consequently, reformed the land completely. The negative repercussions of the Land Act were mostly felt by the Blacks, a people with a long tradition of farming, that no longer had the right to own land and consequently, could no longer make a living out of it. Ergo, black farmers were forced to work on white farms or in the mines for very low wages and under bad working conditions. This economic crisis eventually furthered the gap between White and Black and led to a two-class system: the whites and all the others. The principles of apartheid were cemented on 28 May 1948, when the Nationalist Party under Dr. D.F. Malan came into power and institutionalized apartheid in South Africa. Parallel to this election, the black resistance grew stronger. However, considering the

¹⁶ The land act prevented the natives from buying land in particular areas in South Africa. Although the black African population made up almost 80% of the population, only 13% of the total land area was ‘reserved’ for them. Furthermore, the sale of White territory to Blacks and vice versa was prohibited. (cf. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/1900s/1910s>)

declaration of the ANC as illegal, the charges of ANC members and their families with high treason, the life-long imprisonment of Nelson Mandela – the leader of the Defiance Campaigns¹⁷ – and other members of the African National Congress, it took the African National Congress around forty years to abolish the apartheid regime completely.

The segregation of the Black people continued and was reinforced continually through different laws and acts, which were passed constantly and changed the life of the blacks in South Africa profoundly. Among the most dubious and controversial apartheid legislations, following acts are to be found:

- Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in 1949, one of the first significant apartheid acts, ensured the maintenance of the so-called ‘racial’ boundaries and the purity of the white Afrikaner race. (Hyslop 1995: 59)
- The Population Registration Act in 1950, which classified all South Africans in different groups and consequently influenced their lives immensely because all of a sudden, belonging to one or the other group predetermined a larger percentage of the life.
- The Group Areas Act in 1950, which furthered the segregation between the Blacks and the Whites and consequently, made the relocation of the Black people possible and legal.
- The Natives Act in 1952, also known as the Pass Laws Act, which forced all Black South Africans over the age of 16 to carry a pass book and allowed them to move in a town where white people lived.

¹⁷ The Defiance Campaign stands for an important demonstration and political mobilization against apartheid laws. The importance of this mobilization lies in the fact that for the first time, a “large- scale multi racial political mobilization against apartheid laws under a common leadership- by the African National Congress, South African Indian Congress, and the Coloured People’s Congress” took place.

(See <http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia.php?id=8>)

- Bantu Education Act in 1953, which reinforced the segregation between Black and White and trained Black people to be servants of the higher class.

- The Immorality Act in 1957, which prohibited ‘adultery, attempted adultery or related immoral acts such as sexual intercourse’ between white and black people.

As a result of the Group Areas Act, more than three million people were relocated in the so-called townships. This action did not only turn many blacks homeless, ripped well-knitted communities apart, but it also put already poor families in the middle of a township, where no plants could grow, not enough houses were built and not enough schools were available. Furthermore, the racially segregated education system and the supremacy of the white Afrikaners did not only underpay the black workers, but it also destroyed the hopes for the future of the young black South Africans. As black parents had to work from early morning hours until late in the evenings, the youngsters were left alone and without parental supervision. There were no mothers or fathers to tell them that education is important and that they have to attend school, unless they wanted to end up like their parents. Sindiwe Magona (2012) draws an ironically beautiful description of life under the apartheid regime in her essay by posing following rhetorical questions:

Is it not trauma when one is born into inescapable, grinding poverty, where the working poor remain stubbornly, desperately poor despite their daily toil under the most unfavourable conditions? [...] Is it not trauma, never to know for sure where the next meal is coming from; never to have all the things you need at school while the government allows you the dubious freedom of not going to school? (97)

Magona includes other deprivations black South Africans had to suffer and among other sufferings, she emphasizes the deprivation of the right to own ‘immovable property’ – thence, the black Africans were legally prohibited to own a home of their own. To put it in her words:

[...] white South Africans still do not understand what it meant to live under apartheid on the receiving end of that stick. [...] we were never citizens [...] we were denied citizenship and all that goes with it. [...] we had nothing; we were here only as hands to work in the cities, and that was our life.” (2010, 32-33)

According to Magona (2010), the irony of being ‘a non-South African South African’ during apartheid, was a fact that very much shaped the life of those who lived under the regime, as the government did not protect and help non-citizens. She reinforces the monstrosity of the regime by stating that it is actually a miracle that so many South Africans survived the inhuman situation, considering the way they lived. (32)

In terms of history and trying to come to terms with trauma, many of the stories of the traumatized victims, but also of the perpetrators, are archived in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission between 1996 and 1998 – an attempt to reconcile the country and come to terms with the past. However, other stories of people living under the apartheid regime and coping with the traumatizing conditions on a daily basis, stories of people who for different reasons did not get the chance to appear before the TRC and tell the stories of their lives, are to be found in a vast number of contemporary South African pieces of literature, particularly in form of novels. For Magona, the stories of the South Africans living, suffering and surviving the apartheid regime, despite their fictionality, is the material these stories are made of. Thence, among other deeply traumatized characters, the reader also finds ‘monsters bred by the society’, such as Mxolisi in Magona’s *Mother to Mother*. Mxolisi is a young black South African living in Guguletu, near Cape Town who grows up under the atrocities of the apartheid regime and is one of the people who stabbed Amy Biehl,¹⁸ to death. His mother considers the system responsible for the way her son developed. In Langa’s *The Memory of Stones*, the reader finds the tragic

¹⁸ Amy Biehl was a Stanford University student and Fulbright scholar who helped the nation organise its first democratic election. She was stabbed to death on 25 August 1993 in the township of Guguletu, near Cape Town. (cf. www.myhero.com/go/hero.asp?hero=a_biehl)

figure of Johnny M, a deeply traumatized character, who ends up in prison, where he is not only gang-raped, but also forced into a relationship with a rapist for few years. These experiences change Johnny M completely who does what has been done to him when he is released and continues to traumatize other people through torture, violence, rape and killings. In Joanne Fedler's *The Dreamcloth*, Asher is deeply traumatized by the loss of his lesbian mother Rochel, who commits suicide shortly after her lover Maya leaves Lithuania to follow her husband Yankel in South Africa. Asher, intensely traumatized by the lifeless body of his mother hanging on the tree, loses his speech for a few years. Later, after having joined the Israeli army, Asher, unable to leave the vicious circle of being hurt and hurting, becomes the perpetrator who destroys the life of those he believes destroyed his own.

Other 'monsters' whose monstrosity was possible and protected by law, the reader finds for instance in Lisa Fugard's *Skinner's Drift*, where the Boer Martin cannot control his desire for hunting and does not stop even when he accidentally kills a black child instead of a jackal. However, he continues his life with the death of the child in his conscience. It is his daughter Eva, who is deeply traumatized by what she sees and by the fact that she has to hide all the traces of her father's madness. After the death of her mother Lorraine, Eva has to organize her funeral. It is only years later, when Eva is forced to come back to the place, which once she considered to be her home, that she confronts her past and is able to talk about that 'terrible accident'. In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* by Rachel Zadok, the six-year-old Faith is isolated in the farm and lives in a fairy world created by her mentally labile mother, who can no longer live with all the violence and humiliation she has to endure. Faith too, becomes witness and as she later finds out, perpetrator of the killing of Nomsa, the black maid. It takes Faith, in the same way as Eva, several years away from home to come back and start coming to terms with the past. The list of traumatized victims, traumatized perpetrators and those that are both – victims and perpetrator – is a very long one. The characters listed above provide only an insight into the

myriads of traumatized characters, which can be found in contemporary South African novels.

To come back to the concept of trauma in South Africa, as Borzaga rightly observes in her essay, the trauma of the South African people can no longer be reduced to a single, identifiable traumatic event, as there are “[...] other traumatizing factors in [...] [the life of the South African people] that cannot be easily described as ‘events’ – rather, as *a series of conditions* in which [...] life unfolds. (Borzaga: 68; emphasis in the original) Furthermore, argues Borzaga, the Western concept of trauma cannot possibly be used to understand trauma in South Africa, as the values and belief systems of the South African nation cannot be compared to the Western ones. Traumatic experiences have to be contextualized and historical specificities have to be taken into account. To put it in her words: “It is difficult to see how such a model¹⁹ could find applicability in a country which, until 1994, officially and legally entitled white people *to traumatize* black people systematically and perversely legislated ways of traumatizing them – from their very birth until their death – [...]” (Borzaga 2012: 80; emphasis in the original)

¹⁹ With ‘such a model’ Borzaga refers to Western concept of trauma, which includes characteristics such as ‘extraordinary’, ‘exceptional’, ‘punctual’. To Borzaga, those are the most striking characteristics of the Western conceptualization of trauma. (80)

4 Gem Squash Tokoloshe: Memory and History

“When I was little Mother used to sing me a fairy song at bedtime:

Little fairy glowing bright,
Lead lost children to the light.
Home to bed they safely go,
Following your golden glow.

Warning comes when glowing red,
Follow then and you’ll be dead.
Green signals a dangerous path,
For soon you’ll meet Dead Rex’s wrath (Zadok 2005,
84-85)

In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, the author Rachel Zadok introduces the reader to a world full of fairies in the deepest parts of the South African country, where Faith, a seven-year-old deeply traumatized girl, can be found living on a farm. Faith is nothing like her peers. Her bedtime songs comprise the most hideous and the worst fairies. Some of them, as the one included above, are even lethal.

In general, the setting of the narrative in the South African mythology and the introduction of the most evil fairy Dead Rex are very remarkable features, which turn this novel into a unique piece of literature. This is not only due to the fact that the reader is abducted into a world that goes beyond the borders of reality, but also because the introduction of the magical world and the fairies help the author address crucial atrocities of the apartheid regime without deviating from the main theme of the novel: the traumatization and the coming to terms of Faith.

Isolated from the society, Faith, the protagonist of the novel, lives together with her mentally ill mother Isabel English on the *Legae la Morweddiak* - “My Daughter’s Home” (72) farm in the Northern Transvaal, rural South Africa. However, Faith’s life is far from being idyllic because she finds herself stuck in the middle of an evil fairies’ and spirits’ world, where she is confronted

continually with fear, menace and death already at a very young age - "I'd lived on the farm from the day I was born, and as long as I could remember, I'd been surrounded by fairies." (7)

Another disturbing factor in Faith's life is the fact that she has almost no one she can talk to. Faith has only her mother, her father Marius Steenkamp on weekends, her best friend, the dog Boesman, and King Elvis, her teddy bear, to keep her company. As her mother is usually working on the farm and painting for the rest of the time – using art as a form of coping with her personal trauma – her father is on different trips and visits only now and then on the weekend, Faith is left alone with her dog Boesman at day, her teddy bear King Elvis at night and the magic evil world of the fairies that surround her all the time.

Her mother's fairy tales and the paintings of the different fairies she paints and hangs up on different parts of the house terrify the young girl, who is left alone to deal with the fear and the danger these fairies represent in her eyes. The fairy world the reader sees and experiences through the eyes of Faith in the first part of the book turns abruptly into a fight against the nightmares, the flashbacks and the darkness, which have followed Faith from the Northern Transvaal to Johannesburg where she chooses to live after the death of the beloved Nomsa, the black housemaid.

In this chapter, the major analysis of the novel focuses on the perception of time by the protagonist and her traumatization, which undoubtedly affects radically the sense of time. Ricoeur's theory on cosmological and phenomenological time is applied to the novel. The presentation of traumatic experiences of the young protagonist, the transformation of Faith's black holes and trauma into a narrative which resembles very much a traumatic experience itself, are further important points included in the following part of this chapter. Moreover, the role of a particularly unstable political situation, which is referred to and delicately woven into the narrative of the novel, is dealt with only briefly. Furthermore, important concepts of postcolonialism, such as racism and the high criminality rate in Johannesburg, are included in order to make the reader

aware of the fact, that *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* is not only about growing up isolated on a South African farm during the apartheid regime but also about the consequences the nation had and partly still has to endure due to its bloody past.

4.1 Faith's traumatization

Trauma being an identifiable event in Western trauma studies, there is certainly one traceable traumatic event in Faith's life, which is presented to the reader at the beginning of the novel in form of a prologue entitled *The Soul Stealer*. However, for the audience it is very difficult, if not impossible to make sense of the description of the night that represents the source of Faith's nightmares and intrusive memories.

In general, the prologue as such differs from the rest of the book not only in terms of time, mode of narration and style but also in point of view. The font type and the grammatically broken sentences are two further differences between the prologue and the rest of the book. Thus, the reader finds Dead Rex, the most hostile and evil fairy, walking round the house and looking for fear, pain and hate to nourish his demon soul. What Dead Rex is looking for, he finds behind the paint-scabbed door.

The fat pig-bristle buttocks, hard pumping, the trouser shackle around his ankles. The dark juice stain on his legs as he mash into woman. Woman bent over bed, dark demon shadows lick her like black dogs. Fat-fingered butcher hand push down her head, fat-arms back behind her, like broken stick they look. He groan-grunts, a pig-beast, hard-boiled-egg eyes bulging. [...] 'He be hurting her,' Dead Rex whisper. 'Hurt him back.' (3)

At this point of narration, deciphering the prologue and understanding who does the evil action is impossible for the reader. Nevertheless, the prologue fulfils its duty and foreshadows an evil, life-changing event to take place.

In terms of trauma being 'out of time' and difficult if not impossible to be claimed, there are several situations in the novel and characteristics of the protagonist, which suggest that Faith is a deeply traumatized person and her traumatic experiences manifest themselves in form of flashbacks, nightmares and intrusive memories. According to Caruth, Herman, Leys and other trauma studies researchers, various symptoms explained and listed in the first chapter of the thesis, such as emptiness, nightmares, flashbacks, sickness, and inability to bind oneself to another person, are to be found in the life of the protagonist of the novel. Faith feels sick for most of the time of the narration, is afraid, and – particularly in the second part of the novel – loses the sense of time several times after the funeral of her mother. The numbness and the ice she feels inside have accompanied her since the day she left the farm.

Interestingly, despite the single main traumatic event, there are several other happenings which traumatize her on a daily basis. Contrary to other novels included in the following chapters, Faith is white and the apartheid regime does not affect her life very much. The scarce references to historical events included in the novel only imply the effect they have on the lives of the protagonists. Thus, the traditional South African concept of trauma as a condition, where colonialism, apartheid and other developments of the South African past represent the core of the concept, can only be applied to a certain point. This is because Faith lives on a farm and does not have to be afraid that the police will come in the middle of the night and take her or her family members away. She does not have to fear to be killed by a self-declared warlord. She is not burned alive inside her home. She has a family and a place to call home, a proper home.

Nevertheless, Faith's isolated life on the farm, the deprivation of school education for financial reasons, the fairy tales of her mother accompanied by the most evil, devious, atrocious and the darkest fairies, Faith's living conditions are very traumatizing indeed, particularly for a seven-year-old girl. Moreover, due to the fact that she does not have a single human soul to talk to and no one

who could explain things to her or to calm her down, she is left alone with her vivid and lively imagination. Thus, it can be said that trauma, both the Western concept – with Nomsa’s killing being the main traumatic event – and an extended South African concept of trauma – with Faith’s childhood living conditions being traumatizing and her being exposed to the traumatization of the family members – can be found in Zadok’s *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*.

Even as an adult, Faith’s memories catch up with her and flashbacks are triggered uninterruptedly by the tiniest details of her past. She feels haunted by the voices of the fairies, who accuse her of Nomsa’s murder. Like Dead Rex’s painting being locked away for years, Faith’s traumatic memories have been locked away in the same way: in the deepest place, far from finding and facing them. Still fighting to find the missing pieces of the puzzle of her memory, Faith accuses Oom Piet for what happened to Nomsa. She firmly believes to have finally found the culprit – at first not understanding why mother would have protected Oom Piet – not realizing that the real culprit is she herself. She is finally able to perceive the blood that has been on her hands since Nomsa’s death. “I sit for a long time, unable to move, then I peel my hands away from the sticky floor and turn them over and I look at the blood that stains my palms red and I wonder why I never saw it before.” (317). Being confronted with what really happened on the farm and with the ultimate sacrifice her mother made for her, Faith is devastated.

He is saying other things, things that reach into the core of me and rip me apart, things I don’t want to believe but I can feel in the soul of me, are true. [...] The pain is sudden and intense and has the effect of clearing the fog, making me fully alert, if only to the pain. (316)

The guilt, the genuine remorse and the large burden she suddenly carries on her shoulders force Faith to succumb to her trauma and consequently fall into a trance and lose all her connection with the real world. Petrus’ women – the new tenant of the farm – invite a healer to take care of Faith, as they are no longer capable of doing so. Being too exhausted from the painful confrontation with her past – the loss of Nomsa, of her mother, of Boesman, her father and her

childhood – Faith recovers only slowly. Eventually, Faith is able to remember and recall the whole traumatic night in detail the moment she, together with Mia and Molly – her real family – burn the painting of Dead Rex. At this point of narration, the hints included in the narrative as to what could have happened the night Nomsa died are finally clear and self-explanatory and the reader is finally at the same wave length with Faith as a protagonist and the narration of the novel.

Iguana tongue slither in, slither out. Iguana tongue tease out memories long-time buried, taste them. Taste the cold on mosetsana's small feet. Taste *the burnt sulphur of gunpowder* on her hand. Taste the fear in her heart and the scream of her soul when she realize it be not easy *to shoot right*. Guns have life all their own. (328; emphasis added)

4.1.1 *Dead Rex – a source of traumatization*

Among other atrocities Faith has to live with, the role Dead Rex plays in her life is of a greater importance as it does not only represent a continuous source of traumatization for her as a young girl but it still has a strong impact on her after thirteen years. The painting helps Faith put the pieces and bits of her life together and finish the puzzle of her memory. With the introduction of the Dead Rex in the prologue, the reader is misguided, as the magical world and Dead Rex' hunger for hate, fear and panic make the plot as such work. Hence, the reader is given the impression that Dead Rex is a real fairy responsible for whatever evil takes place on that particular night.

In a second instance, Dead Rex represents a source of traumatization for Faith. With her mother's fairy tales about the atrocities Dead Rex can cause and with his paintings hanging just above the fireplace, Faith feels threatened every second she spends in that particular room. When Faith finally comes home and discovers the picture of Dead Rex in one of the sheds on the farm, she realizes again the resemblance between her and Dead Rex. It is only late in the narrative that the reader can start to draw a meaning out of Bella's insane statements about Faith being a child of the fairies and about her father Marius

not being present the day Faith was conceived. With Marius gone for weeks, his servitude in the army and the frequent visits of Oom Piet, and Marius leaving the family for good, the audience can only guess the traumatic experiences Bella must have suffered and gone through. Oom Piet probably raped Bella, and Faith is the product of that particular experience. This assumption would explain Faith's different eye and hair colour.

In an attempt to free herself from the burden on her shoulders, suffering from solitude and isolation on the farm, Bella creates world of fairies and paints the fairy creatures. She uses art as a way to deal with what she cannot talk or cry about: with her trauma and her traumatic experiences. For her art is a way to channel her trauma into something meaningful, into something that makes sense, into paintings. Unfortunately, while doing so and trying to help herself to continue living with a firm belief that mourning is something for weak persons, Bella neglects completely the fact that her seven-year-old daughter is deeply traumatized by what she hears and strongly believes. However, art as a healing process does not seem to work for Bella. Quite on the contrary, it drives her even more into her madness and hands trauma down to Faith. Hence, in terms of traumatization, Dead Rex's painting plays a double role: for Bella he represents a 'healer' or a means to overcome her trauma, and for Faith a strong source of traumatization.

Having survived water damage, mice and several dark years in the shed of the farm and being inherited by Faith from her mother, it can be said that the painting of Dead Rex represents a modified transitional object. However, as aforementioned in chapter 3, contrary to transitional–transgenerational objects, which help the proprietors overcome trauma and various losses, Dead Rex can be seen as an implicit and unintentional heritage of Bella's traumatization to her daughter Faith. The deep traumatization of Faith's mother becomes visible to Faith only when she comes home after thirteen years in Johannesburg and finds sketches of herself among paintings of Dead Rex. It is only due to the sketches and Dead Rex's painting that Faith is finally able to grasp the meaning

of her mother's world of fairies. However, at this stage of the narrative, Faith still has her own fear and pain to face and her trauma to overcome: facing Dead Rex, facing her own source of traumatization.

Finally, having Dead Rex at the beginning of the novel talking to Faith what to do and his painting burnt down by the 'power circle of three' – Mia, Faith and Molly – and setting him free from the place where he has been trapped for so long by Bella, it can be argued that Dead Rex is a personification of Faith's and Bella's deepest traumatic memories, which she has not been able to face and finally, to overcome in a period of thirteen years. As a seven-year-old child having the traumatization of her mother in the form of a painting hanging over the fireplace, Faith is not able to understand the sad reality the painting represents. Witnessing the rape of Nomsa, Faith's mind is not capable of handling such a cruel experience. Her vision of what she sees in Nomsa's room is very blurred. That particular blur is reinforced the next day, when she wakes up with her covers soaked in vomit, excruciating pain on her shoulder and her mother tempting her to believe that her falling out of bed is the reason for her big bruise on the shoulder. Thence, she firmly believes that her thought to hurt the perpetrator the night Nomsa is killed, is Dead Rex' voice tempting her to take revenge. The shattering force the killing of Nomsa has on Faith's perception of life leads to a deeply traumatized child, whose mind is unable to deal with the rape and the killing. Thus, memories are locked away and black holes are produced. Faith cannot remember what happened on that particular night. Her inability to recall that particular night is the starting point of all the troubles: she is traumatized, she cannot store the memories of that night into her mind, and consequently, through the strong impact of the flashback, she can no longer separate the past from the present.

4.2 Time and its impact on Faith

Given the intricacy of the novel and the presentation and perception of time by the protagonist of the novel, this subchapter is divided into three parts: General remarks on time in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, Traumatization and Perception of time in Part 1 and Traumatization and Perception of time in Part 2. Both parts on the perception of time are abundant in remarks and references to the plot, which reinforce the complexity of time and the traumatic conditions in Faith's life.

4.2.1 General remarks on time in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*

Ricoeur's remark – included in chapter 3 – on the capacity of the narrative to represent the actual experience of time by humans is to be found in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*. Similarly to Ricoeur's statement, the author chooses a culminating event at the beginning of the story and tells the story of the protagonist through memories, flashbacks. Zadok, however, extends the already complex representation of human experience of time in the novel by the delicate addition of a heavily traumatized protagonist with no remembrance of the cruel past. Thence, the reader is not only introduced to the simple concept of cosmological time, but also to the complex concept of phenomenological time, where the memories of the past define the present and make a future impossible. The growing complexity of the concept of phenomenological time is highlighted by the black holes, the missing parts of the memories of Faith; a narrative technique, which gets the reader hooked throughout the novel because ultimately, one wants to find out where the roots of her early trauma lie.

Thus, time as such plays a crucial role on the different levels of Faith's perception. The temporal setting, though, is easily detected. As the author gives away at an early stage of the novel, the first part of the novel is set in the 1980s and the second part in the 1990s. The difference between these two chapters is

not only evident in terms of time, but especially through the change of perception presented.

The perception of time by Faith as a child and Faith as a young woman living in Johannesburg is remarkably different and makes the reading and understanding of the novel intricate. Hence, the reader finds a regular timeline and, generally speaking, a chronological order of the events and a slow rhythm in the first part of the book. However, this is no longer the case in the second part of the novel, where not only irregularities and a jumping back and forth in time can be found, but also time seems to fly by and go faster. In search for the source of her trauma, Faith's mind seems to rush from one memory to the next one. Thus, building on Ricoeur's thoughts on time and narrative and the way time is perceived and applied in the novel, it can be said that there are at least two ways of how time is perceived by Faith at the different levels of the narrative: on the one hand, there is the so-called cosmological time, which is to be found particularly in the first part of the story, and on the other hand, phenomenological time, i.e. dis-linear perception of time, which is to be found mostly in the second part of the novel.

4.2.2 Trauma and perception of time in part 1

The beginning of the actual first part of the book, set in 1985, presents life as happy and free of care on the farm. The day Faith's troublesome childhood begins is the day the idyllic picture of the family is shattered, namely when Marius leaves the family. Bella forces Faith to wait with her for the return of her father on Sunday.

When the grandfather clock in the sitting room chimed eleven, we went to sit on the wing chair by the front door to wait for Papa. We waited in silence, squinting against the glare, trying to catch a glimpse of Papa's dust in the cloud. We broke our vigil only to use the toilet. (31)

Concerning perception of time in the first part of the book, it can be said that Faith, together with the reader, who sees and experiences the story through her eyes, as a seven year old lonely girl that lives in the present and tries to make

sense of all the experiences she makes on the farm. The omnipresence of the fairies – which exist only in her and her mother’s world – and her mother’s bad mental health make her childhood difficult, if not exceptional. Enlisted below, besides the main traumatic event, one can find some traumatizing experiences Faith is exposed to as a young child and which accompany and obviously traumatize her on a daily basis.

Desperate and hopeless, Bella leaves Faith behind on her seventh birthday in the bar, where apparently Marius’ ‘fancy woman’ works. After a long discussion with Marius, which ends with Marius slapping Bella in her face, Bella suffers a nervous breakdown and no longer leaves her bedroom. Faith is left completely alone to stray the vicinity of the farm and play over and over again “[t]he sound of his fist connecting with her face [which] was hard and soft, like chopping watermelon.” (51) She cannot erase the image of her mother flying into the door of the shed after the punch and the emptiness in her father’s eyes after having realized what he had done. (52) Marius abandons the family and leaves Faith behind. “An empty bottle lay on the floor. Papa was not there. Nor was his car in the drive. He had left without saying goodbye.” (26) For quite a long time, Faith feels very protective of her father and is angry with Bella for cutting papa’s photos.

Faith’s struggle to avoid the fairies is a further traumatizing living condition. Loneliness and inexplicable, devious fairies are two more companions of her constant struggle. Due to her mother’s tales about the good and particularly the bad fairies, which according to her, live in every corner of the farm, Faith’s life consists of a continuous day-to-day avoidance of the fairies. She tries to dodge the eyes of these fairies fearing that looking them in the eyes will turn her into a monkey-child or even worse, her soul will be stolen. However, escaping and avoiding the fairies is in Faith’s case not an easy task to fulfil because they do not only occupy every corner of the farm but her mother’s artistic interpretations of them are to be found in the house as well. There are several paintings of the fairies painted by her mother hanging on the walls of the house. Faith strongly

believes that each movement she makes is watched and followed. “That smell, mixed with the perfume of Mother’s lilac-scented soap, brings Dead-Rex and Tit Tit Tay into my mind, and makes me look over my shoulder to make sure they’re not behind me.” (7)

Despite the naivety included in Faith’s way of experiencing and perceiving her world, the reader is given the impression that there is an ever-present threat around the farm. This threat delicately woven into the narrative in form of evil fairies hovering over one’s shoulder, the mysterious disappearance of Moses and forbidden places to go, does not only represent an inexhaustible source of traumatization for such a young child but becomes reality at a later stage of the novel. *My Daughter’s Farm* is indeed a dangerous place to live in.

Faith’s life changes abruptly when it is time for Bella to have a servant as she is no longer able to take care of the farm and her daughter. Nomsa’s presence, the black maid, the songs she hums to herself at all time and the meals she prepares for the poor girl, change Faith’s life for better. However, her new happiness is short-lived because Nomsa is shot dead, her mother is taken away by the police and Faith is sent to Mia de Sousa, her mother’s old friend, in Johannesburg, where she feels out of space. “I was the child she was afraid of becoming, the motherless child.” (183)

As to trauma and the sense of time in the first part of the novel, Faith experiences time in what Ricoeur calls cosmological: a linear succession of the passing days, weeks and months left alone with no one to look after her and no one to talk to or explain to her all those happenings and dark figures she is afraid of. However, her perception of time on the farm is tightly intertwined not only with Faith’s childish naivety but also with several unclear, non-understandable happenings, things Faith does not understand, like, for example, the monster Bella kills the night Marius leaves her for good, the disappearance of her beloved dog Boesman and the monsters hidden in the orchard.

The world of the fairies and all the atrocities they can cause have been part of her life as long as she can remember. Obviously, Bella wants to spare her daughter the harsh, horrid truth about her origins and all the other atrocities she had to endure, and creates a world of fairies, a place of escape not only for Bella's misery but also for her daughter. Apparently, according to her mother, fairies are less damaging than the truth. Sadly, the world of the fairies is not a place of escape for Faith. On the contrary, it is a world, which casts a permanent threatening shadow over her childhood.

Thus, it can be argued that Faith's daily struggle: staying safe and avoiding the stare of the fairies, traumatizes her constantly. She is afraid to sleep alone at night, she thinks about the fairies hidden in the trees as she walks through the orchard, she senses them in front of her window when she goes to sleep. The omnipresence of a constant mortal danger through the dark world of fairies, particularly that of the most lethal fairy – the Dead Rex –, traumatize young Faith continuously and turn her living conditions into traumatizing ones. The fact that Faith cannot express her feelings, her fears and even fears to cry in front of her mother because she might call her 'cry baby', intensifies her feeling of being left alone at the mercy of the dark, ruthless creatures created by her own mother. When finally Nomsa is brought to the farm, Faith finds her only true human friend, who does not only talk and play with her, but takes away, even if a little and for a very short time – her fear of the fairies; Faith's world changes and becomes a better place to live in.

The night Nomsa is found shot dead and Faith awakens with her blankets covered in vomit and a big bruise on her shoulder, her mother takes care of her. When asked where she got the big bruise from, Faith does not know the answer. She went to sleep and woke up with a big bruise on her shoulder. "Maybe you fell out of bed." – is her mother's explanation, which locks Faith's memory of that particular night for the decade to come, causing black holes in her life-story, lost memories.

For the years to come, Faith remembers Nomsa's corpse, Father's rifle and mother being taken away. To Faith, her mother remains the coldblooded murderer responsible for Nomsa's death until the day she finally manages to face her trauma and realize what she did, namely that she killed Nomsa.

4.2.3 *Trauma and perception of time in part 2*

In the second part of the book, starting with New Year's Eve in 1999, the reader is confronted with Faith as a young woman, living in Johannesburg, celebrating with friends and thinking about throwing herself over the balcony in order to escape the touch of a young man who wants to dance with her. After the ironical statement included below, the real story of Faith's life and the overwhelming traumatic experiences the poor girl had to endure start to unfold in front of the audience. For the past thirteen years, Faith has grown up believing her mother to be responsible for the death of one of her dearest persons, Nomsa.

That's not Mother. I thought, no way, it's somebody else. Something else. A statue perhaps. Mother was never that still. But it was her. I knew that, even if her name was all I recognized. It was her. Was. Mother no longer exists. She's gone to hell to spend eternity with all the other murderers. God forgive her. I can't. (177)

In general, the character of Faith presented in the second part of the book is no longer the naïve, lonely, seven-year-old girl living on the isolated farm in the middle of nothing with a mentally-ill mother and a father having left for good. For a brief moment Faith seems to be strong and to finally have found her place in Johannesburg. However, her bubble is burst the moment she is announced the death of her mother and suddenly, her memories catch up with her.

In Johannesburg the reader finds a young woman, very close to a nervous breakdown after having organized her mother's funeral. Her nervous breakdown is due to her anxiety, recurring nightmares and flashbacks, which increase Faith's feeling of loss of control over her life and the memories she has been suppressing for such a long time. After almost a decade, she feels sick again,

suffers several flashbacks and loses sense of time until the day she finally faces her trauma.

As aforementioned, the second part of the novel is not only riddled with indications on what could have caused Faith's trauma but it also presents the reader to a completely different perception and representation of time, of memories and the past. The way Faith perceives time is very complicated and at times, difficult to follow or understand. This is due to the fact that Faith does not remember her past completely. There are some moments in her life, particularly the happenings of the night when Nomsa was shot dead, she is no longer able to remember or recall. For Ricoeur, the missing parts of the past represent a lack of means of orientation, which compound the way she perceives her life in general and time in particular.

Surely, the black holes in Faith's memory, her inability to remember the whole story of the night Nomsa was shot are the reasons Faith perceives time the way she does. Obviously, time did not heal her wounds and help her overcome her trauma.

Next to her traumatic experiences as a child, the missing means of orientation in her lived time, the so-called phenomenological time, make Faith's life more unbearable and difficult. On the narrative level, similarly to Faith's disordered life-stories in her mind, there is a continuous dis-linearity of time, a chaos, which makes her flashbacks and nightmares possible in a first step, and lose sense of time, i.e. no longer separate the past and present, in a second step. According to Ricoeur, what has been, what will be and what is at the moment are means of orientation, which help humans perceive time. However, this perception is not possible for Faith, as she still misses some particularly important bits and pieces of her past.

As for her *what will be*, her future, is made explicit at one point in the book, namely when the incarnation of the evil is burnt by Faith, Mia and Molly, i.e. there can be no future as long as trauma is still present in Faith's life and sets the tone for her life. Thus, her inability to remember what was done to her and

what she did to others and her lack of means of orientation make Faith's process of coping and overcoming trauma a vicious circle.

The importance of the process of facing the traumatic experiences has already been reinforced several times in the preceding theoretical chapters. The lack of the memories of the particular night dooms Faith to live and re-live episodes of her past continually. In Johannesburg – far away from the farm, from everyone and everything that could have reminded her of her life on the farm, and all her memories from the past – Faith seems to have managed, at least superficially, to suppress her past and live a more or less quiet life. She appears to have left behind all the ghosts and fairies that used to plague her sleep back in her childhood days.

Ironically, her simple action of trying to suppress the traumatic experiences after her mother's funeral triggers one flashback after the other. It is then that the nightmares start again and Faith finds herself standing anew in front of the bits and pieces, the ruins of her life.

[...] the nightmares have started again. I can feel it when I wake up, the sense of futility, that there is nothing to live for, that everything is lost. Sometimes there are snatches when I wake up in the morning, images. [...] I haven't had the nightmares in years. Perhaps Mother's causing them from the grave, unwilling to be forgotten and left to rot. The thought chills me. (187)

Being away from home – the place where she was deeply traumatized – and the timespan of thirteen years having elapsed, Faith is still not able to fully grasp what exactly happened the night Nomsa was shot dead. The second part of the book reads like an on-going fight between Faith and her memories. On the one hand, there is Faith as a traumatized person trying to suppress her memories from coming on the surface and on the other hand, the reader finds her memories triggering flashbacks repeatedly in order for them to finally come to the surface and for Faith to finally face her past and regain the time lost.

Being deeply traumatized in multiple ways, Faith is not prepared to let go of her traumatic experiences or face her trauma. Obviously, she seems to be aware of the fact that the pain it will cause, it will change her forever. Hence, her

memories take her back to her childhood, back to her days in the farm continuously, where she can find her peace after having gained the lost memories.

Among other prominent features to be found in the novel, time lost is certainly one of the most interesting ones. On her journey to coming to terms with her past, Faith's flashbacks make her lose the sense of time. On the narrative level the author chooses the use of flashbacks and intrusive nightmares to make loss of time as such possible. Thus, imitating the way humans perceive time, the story starts with the rape and killing of Nomsa by Oom Piet, and continues by bringing the story to the readers through Faith's memories.

On the time level, however, those flashbacks and nightmares Faith experiences regularly, are not only indicators that Faith is a deeply traumatized person, but also that there are particular important memories in her life, she does not possess and that she will not overcome trauma, tell the story of her life as long as she does not remember them. The magnitude of Faith's flashback is not clear for the reader from the beginning because during her mother's funeral, Faith seems to be still able to handle them and incorporate them in her daily life.

Nevertheless, the intensity of her intrusive memories and nightmares becomes unbearable after the coincidental meeting with the blind woman, who urges Faith to let bad things she has been holding on for so long go and go back home in order for her soul to find the peace it has been longing for so long. For the first time after more than a decade in Johannesburg, terrified by the mysterious blind woman, who seems to look straight into Faith's soul, she is aware that there are things she has forgotten and others she has chosen not to remember. "There is a look in her blind eyes that reminds me of Mother, a madness I've forgotten, or chosen not to remember." (191)

Like other traumatized characters, Faith chooses subconsciously not to remember what happened on that particular night. However, like any other traumatic memory, Faith's memories can no longer be locked away. After

having experienced a nightmare in the middle of the day, Faith's memory is triggered by the word Koko, a name Nomsa used to call Faith. For the time experiencing the flashback, Faith seems no longer able to distinguish between past and reality. She suddenly believes to hear Nomsa's voice and smell her sunlight soap.

'Koko.' Again it comes and this time it brings with it a memory that hits me like I've been smacked with a brick. Nomsa. And suddenly, I can see her, the sharp lively eyes, the white teeth, the smile that speaks of a world of private jokes.

'Koko,' the voice calls, conjuring up her smell, Sunlight soap, Vaseline-oiled skin, iron-hot cotton sheets. (203)

Like with all her other intrusive memories, Faith tries to control the myriads of emotions she feels, but it is to no purpose. Due to the floodgate of memories, which the voice has opened, Faith is able to see Nomsa clearly for the first time since the night she died. Moreover, she finally makes the first steps toward facing trauma and admits to herself that she has been wandering all the time living in Johannesburg, escaping from what traumatized her in her childhood never having had a clear break with her past.

The loss of her memory made me feel small and insignificant and homeless, like I belonged nowhere. Now, years later, the sudden power of the returning memory makes me feel the same way. Fifteen years on I'm still displaced, unsettled, homeless. (203)

Due to Faith's inability to control her feelings and the reliving of those moments, when she was left in the dark with no explanations, to lose the sense of time and not remember anything about it, Faith is even suspected to be under the effect of drugs, when she agrees to meet Mia later and does not appear at the party even after having spent more than six hours at home.

[...] 'Late is fifteen minutes, an hour, tops.' My mind skips over everything he's just said and sticks on the part about it being five-thirty. I look up at the timer on the microwave oven; it flashes 17:46 [...] I feel dizzy, it can't be that late. [...] I blink, so slowly that the world is dark for a moment and when I open my eyes [...] the microwave flashes 17:49. [...] I know something's wrong. I could swear the clock said 17:46 a few seconds ago, and the whole day, gone. (210- 211)

When Faith comes home to find the blind woman sitting in the living room and making Faith fall into a sort of trance, she is finally able to realize that she has never been in control of her life. The powerlessness she feels towards the strong eyes of the blind woman and her repetitive flashbacks and nightmares, reinforce Faith's belief to no longer be the master of her own life. It is then that she starts to slowly but surely think about her past and realize that she has been nothing but a spectator of her own life. Furthermore, for the first time in years, Faith realizes that she has some serious issues with her past as

[...] There is something inside that is beating to get out, some violence that I buried, an anger that, if I remain here and ignore it, it will end up harming [...]. There is something inside of me and it's out of control. A thing that has been suffocated for too long and now claws its way up, gasping for air. It's the voice that attached itself to me long ago, before I was aware of the dark things that grasp. I feel it beating against my ribcage, like a giant irregular pulse. If I don't do something soon, it will be all of me, and I will be like Mother, a nothing locked inside my body, waiting for death. (243)

With the gravity of Faith's traumatization and the complexity of the process of coming to terms with trauma, Faith has still a long process to undergo, when she decides to go back to *My Daughter's Home* and regain the memories, the time lost.

4.3 One form of traumatization: historical time

Concerning historical time as a traumatizing factor, it is astonishing to find out – given the fact that the novel as such can be seen as a collection of personal memories and a struggle to overcome trauma – that several references to historical happenings are included. However, to argue that the scarce side remarks do not have an impact on Faith's life would simply be wrong. This for the reason that the few remarks included in the narrative do traumatize other characters of the story, such as for instance Marius Steenkamp, who influence the life of other people in return, such as Bella's and

Faith's – thus, creating a vicious circle. Altogether, it can be said that Faith was not directly influenced by what was happening outside the farm and all the atrocities of the apartheid regime, which influenced and destroyed the lives of so many South Africans. The few important implicit references to historical happenings are included in the following of this subchapter.

To start with Faith's father, Marius Albert Steenkamp, Faith does not talk much about him. When she does, her father is always absent, gone. From what Tannie Hettie tells Faith about her parents, the reader understands that Marius was part of the South African Army and was recruited every now and then. The premonition of the reader is confirmed towards the end of the first part of the book, when Faith finds the key to the secret cabinet in the house and examines the various objects stored in there.

I turned my focus to the other things. At the bottom of the cabinet were two hard leather cases, stacked one on top of the other, a pair of brown army boots, and a neatly folded army uniform. Papa had to go and be a reserve soldier sometimes, and his was the uniform he dressed in before leaving to report for duty. (156)

The way he has changed after his return from the service does not remain unnoticed in Faith's eye. "Sometimes he'd come back a different person, quiet and moody, other times he would be the same, just not laugh as much as usual. Always, he was glad to be home." (156-157)

In Mia de Sousa's eyes, Bella's best friend, the other person he becomes when he comes home can be also seen as the reason for the discussions between Bella and him and finally, for the end of their marriage. Besides their mutual contribution to the end of their marriage, there are also all the circumstances they live in and the happenings taking place around them, that make their staying together impossible.

'He was quite strange. There was an odd look in his eyes, obsessive. Lots of men had that look, the ones who'd been to the border. He looked at Bella with those eyes, and it freaked her out. [...] After they married, it was like they swapped eyes. Like all the demons he brought back with him from Angola attached themselves to her.' (233)

Similarly to Bella, who hands her trauma over to Faith, Marius mirrors his trauma on Bella and consequently, on Faith. The young girl adds one more traumatic experience to her life.

Marius is obviously traumatized by what he sees and does in the army. This is probably the simplest way to explain his mood changes every time he comes back from the army. What is more, he comes back to a deeply traumatized wife and an innocent young daughter who feels trapped and threatened all the time by a world that only comes into existence through belief.

A side remark with a pinch of racism on the riots in the townships and the problems with the blacks is to be found particularly early in the narrative. What in the eyes of Tannie Marie Bezuitehoud is perceived as non-sense is a vital change for the black majority living under catastrophic conditions in their home country.

‘Seems there’s been some trouble with the blacks in the townships again, [...] more rioting in those independent homelands. There is talk of a state of emergency if this *nonsense* continues. [...] I’ve always said that letting the blacks govern themselves was a bad idea. (34; emphasis added)

A further reference to the riots, violence taking place in the townships is included in the narrative in the form of a muted news broadcast, where cars on fire and burning buildings are shown.

I stared at the man on the TV: The sound was very low and I didn’t know how to turn it up. The pictures changed to show a building in ruins. Policemen wandered around rubble with dogs. Then another man came on; he stood in front of a burnt-out car. He spoke into a microphone and gestured at the blackened car. It wasn’t very exciting. I looked around the room. (111)

The disinterest Faith shows for the violence taking place in the world outside the farm can, on the one hand, be certainly explained as a childish non-interest and a lack of understanding the gravity of the problems of the black South African population under the apartheid regime. After all, she is only seven years old. What, at this point must be remarked, is the excellent and subtle way the

author chooses to weave the problems of a whole nation in the narrative of Faith's life.

Contrary to the first part of the novel where the reader witnesses Faith's hideous childhood, her life in Johannesburg is interspersed with several remarks considering the situation and the danger hanging in the air. In the same way she felt surrounded and threatened by the fairies at the farm – she feels threatened in Johannesburg “[...] [d]ark figures shifting in the shadows of the trees [...] I knew they were there, hiding in the shadows, coming ever closer. Dark fairies. Dead Rex.” (45-46); she feels being watched and stalked in the big city. “I can feel them closing in, I’m as edgy as the knife blade I imagine being pressed into me.” (208) However, in contrast to her imagined fairy world, the world of Johannesburg is the sad reality of a post-apartheid South Africa, a deeply traumatized nation; a place where even the most casual task, such as drawing cash on a Saturday afternoon, can become life-threatening.

The apocalyptic, dark picture of Johannesburg the author draws abducts the reader into the darkest corners of the suburbs of Johannesburg, Troyeville – the underbelly of the world.

Drunks throng along the bottle store, alcohol-fuelled aggression sparks off fights, people are mugged, there is a very real threat of violence. [...] [e]veryone sees me; the harmless, who shake their heads and click their tongues before turning away, no one wants to be a witness; the leering catcallers; the opportunistic muggers. (207-208)

Among other atrocities of the apartheid regime, the novel reveals at quite an early stage racism – in different forms, shapes and beliefs – as a crucial component of the ruthless regime. The reader encounters the theme of racism in South Africa in the first part of the novel, chapter five, when Faith overhears Marius explaining to Oom Piet how he squeezed profit from the tragic happenings on the farm, because “[...] the previous farmer had gone mad on the day his wife gave birth to their first child, a child so dark it might well have been a kaffir.” (44) When the farmer kills all his labourers, his wife and finally commits suicide, the *kaffir* baby is the sole survivor.

As a child, Faith is of course not aware of the beliefs being implanted in her mind. Hence, she imagines black babies to be evil, dangerous and threatening.

I spent hours running my fingers over the weather-worn wood, imaging kaffir babies. Pitch-black babies with sticky treacle skin and hot breath that stank of tar. Babies with small protuberant tails or puff-adder scales instead of hair. Babies so hideous they could drive you mad just to look at them. (44-45)

Quite subtly, the author puts the word kaffir in the mouth of a seven-year-old child, who is not aware of the insult and the meaning of it, to draw the attention of its readership to the daily part of racism included in the life of the Boer.

At a later stage, when Nomsa, the black housemaid, is taken to the market because Bella is not in a fit state, the reader perceives the frightening hostility in form of angry looks, hostile faces, and loud and strong discussions towards the maid. “‘This person,’ he gestured towards Nomsa with his clipboard, ‘cannot, under any circumstances, own a stall here. If she wishes to sell her kaffir *mielies* [...]’ (93) In her naivety, Faith cannot understand why “[e]ven people [...] she had thought were nice, the ones who stopped to chat with Mother every week [...] gave [...] [them] a wide berth.” (95) It is only later that day that Faith understands it is Nomsa that people in the market dislike.

Sadly, even after more than a decade, when Faith decides to leave Johannesburg for her hometown, a deeply rooted racism is still an essential component of the white South African society. Back on the farm, in the firm belief that a connection to the outside world will certainly make her feel more secure and less isolated, Faith decides to apply for a telephone on the farm. It is at the post office, where she meets Tannie Marie Bezuitehoud, an ‘old friend’, who notes:

‘Can’t have you on that farm alone with no phone for three months, what with the blacks killing farmers all over the country.’ She mouths the word ‘blacks’, like it’s some dirty word she doesn’t want Elsie to hear. (281)

This observation does not only hint at the racist belief still alive in the society but also at the unstable political situation more than fifteen years after the abolishment of the apartheid regime.

4.4 Coming home to a new home: towards a new South Africa

When Faith finally decides to follow the advice of the blind woman and goes back to the only place her soul can find peace, she is not prepared at all for what awaits her there. There are particular changes Faith does not expect to find there. Like for example Petrus and his family living in the compound of the farm, using Bella's van and taking care of particular parts of the farm. Coming back after approximately thirteen years, Faith is perceived as an intruder rather than as the master of the property. A particularly important change in the relationship between colonizer and colonized, black and white has certainly taken place in the farm in post-apartheid South Africa.

Back on the farm, Faith forgets her reasons for coming back home and engages herself in a senseless, useless fight for power over the farm. She tries to take control over her property. However, with her being isolated at the farm, Petrus' women being around and Petrus being familiar with all the facilities of the farm, it seems difficult to take control and restore a new power relation.

Outside the microcosm of the farm, the struggle for power and control is certainly a synonym for the on-going struggle in the South African country between the blacks and the whites. After several futile attempts, Faith finally understands that the on-going struggle for power is lost. Ultimately, with no other options in sight, Faith has to have faith and trust Petrus' women to take care of her when she is no longer capable of doing so.

Although there are still reservations from both parts – Faith's and Petrus' family, by the end of the novel, a coexisting is necessary, as a matter of fact indispensable, inevitable, in order for both parties to survive and continue living

together on the farm. In a wider context, Faith as a member of the white Afrikaner group and Petrus' family as part of the black South African majority, despite the harm they have been causing to each other for such a long period of time, they have to learn to coexist in a new and changed South Africa where they are dependent on each other

Regarding trauma and the sense of time, the author seems to be very cautious when it comes to deeply traumatized South Africa and implies that the process of healing the nation will not be as easy and short as that of Faith facing her trauma, facing her past and regaining her lost memories. The last part of the novel, which provides a closing for the framework, indicates that the character of Dead Rex will continue living as there is and will always be pain, hate and cruelty in the world. This implication applies in the first instance to South Africa, which still has a new path of reconciliation to follow, but can surely be applied to other nations in the world, where war and the atrocities are sadly still strong components of the daily life.

It be not so easy now to find fear-hate to eat. Things be different. [...] But there will be them that hate, and Dead Rex will look hard to find them. When he do, he will swallow them down, and he will be fat with them once more. And when he fat, his belly will bloat and he will regurgitate hate into the world and it will grow and feeding will be plentiful again. (328)

5 Omnipresence of trauma in *Mother to Mother*

In *Mother to Mother*, Sindiwe Magona leads the audience into the most private life of Mandisa, the mother of one of the four killers of the American Fulbright scholar Amy Biehl, brutally stoned and stabbed to death in the township of Guguletu in 1993. A prominent feature, which makes the novel stand out among the large number of contemporary South African novels is the plot. Based on a true story – the killing of Amy Biehl – enriched with the life-story of Manqina, a childhood friend of the author and adorned with fictionalized characters, Magona has created a beautiful novel with a highly ambitious and fundamental aim: “[...] to ease the other mother’s pain... if a little.” (Magona, vi) Thus, the introductory part of the novel consists of the author’s preface, where the author lists her reasons for deciding to do what was not done by others, namely, to write and let the audience become acquainted with the other side of the coin: family, life and history of the perpetrator, and to call the brutal apartheid regime to account for what was done to Mxolisi, one of the fictional perpetrators, and consequently to Amy Biehl on the 25th of August, 1993. Magona expresses her aim for writing the novel with the following words:

In my novel, there is only one killer. Through his mother’s memories, we get a glimpse of human callousness of the kind that made the murder of Amy Biehl possible. And here I am back in the legacy of apartheid - a system repressive and brutal, that bred senseless inter- and intra-racial violence as well as other nefarious happenings; a system that promoted a twisted sense of right and wrong, with everything seen through the warped prism of the overarching *crime against humanity*, as the international community labelled it. (v-vi; emphasis in the original)

Similar to other novels discussed in this thesis, Magona’s *Mother to Mother* reads like a masterpiece which wants to provide a common ground for both: South Africa’s past – including the brutality and atrocities of a modern slavery system such as apartheid, and South Africa’s present in 1993, a troublesome time of transition.

Through an epistolary excerpt to the mother of the victim in the first chapter of the novel, the audience is given the impression that this novel is a long letter to the Biehl mother. The central character’s subjective perception of the happenings the day Amy Biehl was killed and her personal memories about her

childhood and early South African history, create a harsh picture of the impact of the past on South Africa's present. This impact is reinforced through several important historical happenings, which influenced very much Mandisa's and her family's life.

In order not to limit the traumatic experiences, such as relocation, poverty, uprooting of her community, deprivation of education, only to a certain family or community, Magona applies several prominent measures. Among others the audience can notice that the suppression of the name of Amy Biehl throughout the narrative is intended. The author chooses deliberately the use of other names, such as your daughter, she, etc., not to diminish the high aim Amy Biehl was following in South Africa or to belittle the sacrifice brought by her, but to reinforce that her story is the story of other women: tortured and killed during the apartheid regime. Hence, *Mother to Mother* is not only the lament of the mother of the killer; it is also the life-story of a daily survival of the women living in the townships.

5.1 Historical time: a traumatizing factor

In general, living in a particular era can be traumatizing and life-destroying. When having a closer look at history one finds a wide spectrum of examples: thousands of deeply traumatized soldiers, deeply shaken witnesses of atrocious killings, senseless wars and conflicts. Being born and raised in the South African apartheid society, experiencing poverty, injustice, violence and killings first hand, is certainly a traumatizing experience. Sadly, in *Mother to Mother* the traumatization is not only to be found in all the survivors of the particular era, but, to put it in Magona's words it breeds monsters, deeply traumatized young people stuck in a vicious circle of violence, atrocities, rampage and re-enactment of violence.

Despite Ricoeur's statement to treat historical references in literature merely as side remarks, as neutralized references, history in contemporary South African literature plays indeed a significant role. Surely, historical events are not

treated as a universally acknowledged truth but merely as part of South Africa's past with a strong impact on the life of the protagonists. In her essay "Affecting Politics – post-apartheid fiction and limits of trauma", referring to the importance and representation of history in literature Vilashini Coopan states that

Apartheid's regime of state-sanctioned violence has often been formulated as a traumatic history, meaning a history marked by (1) its shattering effect on individual psyches, group identities, and public and private forms of sociality; (2) the repeated experience of those effects in the moment of their instantiation and again in their ghosting of the post-apartheid present; and (3) the collectivization of those effects, such that individual states of trauma become the trauma of the state. [...] *All stories* of post-apartheid South Africa thus become realizable within a model that has trauma as its core, history as its content, narrative as its melancholic modality, and mourning as its cure. (49)

Thus, in a post-apartheid era, post-colonial, contemporary South African literature plays a greater role than the entertainment of the audience; it plays a significant role for the processing of trauma and the healing of the nation. Similarly to trauma and the personal traumatization of the characters, history as a strong component of the narrative must not remain unnoticed or even be ignored.

For instance, in *Mother to Mother* the important role which the bloody South African history plays for the development of the protagonist of the novel Mxolisi, son of Mandisa and China, is already stressed at the beginning of the novel, in the author's preface, where referring to the bloody apartheid regime and her reasons for writing the novel, Magona states that there is only one killer in the novel. Surely, she does not deny the fact that a mob of young students attacked the car, smashed the windows with stones and stabbed Amy Biehl to death. However, the mob is represented as an implicit agent of the apartheid regime, as a non-calculable by-product of the apartheid regime.

Through representation of the life-story of Mandisa in the first person perspective, the author strives to evoke sympathy and understanding for Mxolisi and the circumstances he grew up under – a murderer made by the apartheid regime. Thus, several historical happenings that influenced and traumatized Mandisa first hand as a child and later as an adult are included in form of

private memories. The traumatization of the young four-year old Mxolisi is brought to the reader through Mandisa's eyes.

Apart from the killing of Amy Biehl mentioned in the letter to the mother of the victim, the first detailed and life-changing reference to South Africa's troublesome history is to be found very early in the narrative: *Operation Barcelona*, a campaign that did not only intend a stop of the deliveries in the townships by making the townships uncontrollable, but which also urged the students to stay away from schools and support their teachers in the Western Cape with their initial aim: recognition of the South African Teachers Union (SADTU).

Wednesday is a school day. However, not one of my children will go to school. [...] Two days ago, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) ordered the schoolchildren to join Operation Barcelona, a campaign they say is in support of their teachers who are on strike. Students were urged to stay away from school, to burn cars and to drive reactionary elements out of the townships. (10)

The main aim of Operation Barcelona as stated in the TRC Hearing on the killing of Amy Biehl states that

[...] the [main] objective of the offence in question was primarily directed at making townships ungovernable and was also aimed at destroying State and company property, State personnel and private property and individuals. State personnel was also targeted. Also targeted was private property and individuals who were seen as standing in the way of realisation of these objectives. The applicants acted on the instructions and with the approval of PASO and APLA.²⁰

For Mandisa a good education is a crucial part of life; an invaluable asset that will help her children to get out of the misery and consequently, out of the shacks they have been calling home for such a long time. However, reality is different: Guguletu's youths roam about the township all day long after the parents have left for work at the houses of the white Afrikaners. Given her firm belief that education is the key to a life different from hers and her ancestors, she disapproves of the campaign that, in her eyes, keeps children from where they should be: at school, learning and preparing themselves for a better life; for

²⁰ See http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/capetown/capetown_biehl01.htm

a life different from those of their parents and grandparents. But how should they get a better education if the government enforced the Bantu Education Law upon the black South African population and made sure that they were taught only the bare essentials? Among other dissatisfactions, Mandisa's rage at the government for not offering a proper education to the blacks is expressed continuously in different shapes throughout the narrative.

The vulnerability of the black population and their perilous situation in South Africa is reinforced several times throughout the narrative. Policemen in a black township connote always big trouble because as Mandisa notes "[t]he police are not our friends." (44) Thus the audience finds that the expected role of the police is only partially fulfilled, as the police seems to be concerned only about the safety of the white population. The fear and the terror caused by the police are mentioned several times in the narrative. The police station which is situated only 'a stone's throw away' from Mandisa's home is perceived rather as a menace because of what it is heard during the late night hours. Indeed, her description of the police station offers a glimpse into a dark world.

The warning has dredged rumours of horrific deeds in that building. Unconscious memory takes reign. In the middle of the night, blood-curdling screams have been heard coming from it. Awful things were said to happen to those dragged there by the police. Terrible, terrible things, some, worse than death. Of course, death too happened there. Of course. (18)

Indeed, the dubious role of the police under the apartheid regime was recorded in several reports. The "Former South African Government and its Security Forces Final Report"²¹, for instance, offers an overview of amnesty application from members of the security forces for crimes committed between 1960 and 1994. Furthermore, the dubious role of the South African police and other security forces of the government was mentioned and documented in several TRC hearings. As Mandisa notes "[t]he police are no security to us in Guguletu – swift comes the correction as I remember people killed by the

²¹ Online on http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/vol6_s3.pdf p. 1-263.

police.... *including children*. Mzamo. Zazi. The police even killed important people like Biko.²² (84; emphasis added)

The recklessness and the ruthlessness of the white South African police is again confirmed the night after the killing of Amy Biehl when the police bursts into the shack of Mandisa's family looking for Mxolisi. When the police leaves, they leave behind a shack, which looks like it had been hit by a hurricane. Lunga, Mandisa's younger son is beaten up badly for no particular reason, Dwadwa – Mandisa's husband is beaten up as well. The ruthlessness of the police is described as common, as something customary, which takes place on a daily basis. It is Mandisa's family that is left behind with a house pulled apart and with a *hokkie* to be build up from scratch. (86) The note Mandisa makes to herself when the police leaves indicates a traumatization of the family, as all of them are left behind deeply distressed and traumatized; jolted awake by the sudden house search and by the senseless violence against the father and the innocent brother of the family.

Now they were gone. [...] Gone to wherever they had come from. We could not. No, not us. We could never go back to who we were before they had come. We could never go back to that time or place. Nothing would ever be the same for us. We had been hurtled into the eye of a raging storm.

The damage, the literal bits and pieces the shack is turned into and those wounds of the damaged soul and minds of the family left behind by the police would eventually have to be put together for the family to overcome this particular traumatic experience. Ultimately, they would be able to forget the horror and learn to live with the fear that the police will eventually burst into the house and comb for Mxolisi, however, as Mandisa observes, after this experience the family will never be the same. Even when they will learn to cope and consequently live with the permanent feeling of insecurity, of exposure and fear, life will be changed; will never be the same again. Furthermore, how can a

²² Here Mandisa refers to Stephen Bantu Biko, a Black Consciousness Movement most influential and radical student leader in the 1970s. He was arrested by the security police at the age of thirty and died in detention under mysterious circumstances in 1977. For more information see <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/stephen-bantu-biko>

healing, a coping with trauma possibly take place in an environment where daily struggle and survival is on the agenda?

The main historical event of the novel is at the same time the starting point of the novel: the killing of Amy Biehl. Throughout the narrative the author falls back on her violent death and leads the reader in a retrospective search. Ultimately, several questions cannot be answered and about the real reasons for Amy Biehl deciding to drop her friends of in Guguletu, in a place where far and wide no other white people are to be seen, can only be speculated.

Drawing the reader's attention to the reasons for introducing historically accurate happenings into the post-apartheid novels seems very important and relevant at this point of the thesis. Among other equally important authors, Vilashini Coopan stands out when she notes that being given the chance to mourn is probably one of the most relevant reasons. With trauma being a persistent traumatic condition in South Africa, a commonplace companion of the lives of so many South Africans, with the various losses taking place on a quotidian basis, there was no time left to mourn for the losses and to come to terms i.e. to live and incorporate them. Similarly to the TRC hearings, where a healing of the nation was intended, Coopan argues that literature does the same: through inclusion of the historical events and the personalization of history, South Africa is given a second chance to mourn for the losses; a chance to finally stop dwelling on the past, act in the present and dream about the future.

5.2 Trauma as a condition and dis-linearity of time in *Mother to Mother*

When compared to other novels included and discussed in this thesis, *Mother to Mother* is certainly a novel where the South African conception of trauma, i.e. trauma as a condition, where racism, apartheid and dis-linearity of time are taken into consideration – is to be found. Despite the misleading of the audience at the beginning of the novel where the killing of young Amy Biehl is

presented as the main traumatic event, the reader has to change his/her mind while reading and identify the brutal killing only as the act of a deeply traumatized group of youngsters, as a consequence of a deeply rooted continuous trauma of the South African nation. However, similarly to *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, the author chooses to begin the novel with a letter, where the culminating event can be found. The introduction of the letter as such represents a literary technique, which does not only imitate the perception of time by humans, but it also enables the author to start with a culminating event – and tell the story in the next step through the memories of the mother, in retrospect.

Given the complexity and unpredictability of trauma and the difficulties to transform trauma into a literary text, the reader can state for him/herself very early in the narrative that chronology and linearity of time are not given in *Mother to Mother*. Certainly, the lack of these facilitators for the reader make, on the one hand, the reading of the novel as such difficult. However, on the other hand, through the dis-linearity of time and the consecutive going-back in time – back to the early main wound of the body and mind – the reader is taken back repeatedly to the main traumatic event, the coming of the whites to South Africa, which was slowly but surely turned into a way of living. As stated and explained in more detail later in this chapter, the coming of the whites to Africa and their decision not to leave the country, represents in Magona's eyes and probably in the eyes of all blacks, the starting point of all the evil, atrocity, malevolence and loathsomeness for the black South Africans.

The novel does not only represent life and trauma of a deeply traumatized mother and an equally traumatized young boy, but through the intertwined use of the present and past, the flashbacks and memories of the protagonist, the narrative itself adopts the patterns of a traumatized person. Thus, similarly to *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, there is a continuous jumping back and forth in time, the protagonist is torn between the chaos in her present life – the country experiencing a bloody and troublesome transitional phase – and the deep traumatization originating in her early childhood – the black population experiencing unimaginable injustice under the apartheid regime.

Given the numerous time perceptions and time lapses of the novel by the central character, the subtle intertwinement of her life and that of her son and the chaos reigning among her memories, this subchapter is subdivided into three parts: early past, recent past and the present. In each part, Mandisa's remarks on her perception of time, memories about early past, recent past and her present and the trauma she experiences are listed and explained.

5.2.1 *South Africa's early past*

Very early in the narrative, the novel draws the reader further into what can be called the crux of all the problems of the black population living in South Africa. The narrative does not stop at apartheid South Africa, an extremely traumatic place to live, but abducts the reader further into South African history and reveals that problems, dissatisfaction and the fall of the black population started with the first settlers setting foot on South African ground. Magona's personal opinion on South African trauma and its beginning, which is reflected several times throughout the narrative.

[...] they called this the place of storms. [...] 'Did he not know that the biggest storm was the storm they themselves brought? They came to find food and water. Then they liked the food so much they stayed. They found people already here. But that did not stop them from staying. And, having stayed, from taking the land from the people they had found here. Yes [...] the biggest storm is still here. It is in our hearts – the hearts of the people of this land. (174-175)

To put it in other words, according to Magona the main wound of the South African country is certainly the coming of the whites to their country. However, what started as an event with an exact starting point – namely the coming of the first European settlers in 1652 – was very soon turned into a permanent condition because the settlers did not only decide to stay, but also took over the land.

The importance of history and historical time, where the co-existence of the threefold realm of contemporaries, predecessors and successors is made possible, was already mentioned in the theoretical chapters. *Mother to Mother*,

however, contrarily to other novels which make use of calendar or particular processes of preservation of memory, makes deliberately use of one of the oldest South African traditions to include the legends of early South African past: the oral tradition of word of mouth. Similarly to her grandfather who was told the story of his country – the legend of Nongqawuse and imfecane fleeing Shaka, Mandisa is reprimanded for her incorrect version of history and is told the black South African version of the settlement of the whites and the sufferings of the black population. Thus, due to the fact that history books, other sources and the educational system as such made sure that the black population was told what the white reigning race wanted them to hear, it can be argued that the tradition of word of the mouth is not only used as a means of orientation, but also as a reflective instrument to re-figurate time, to bring the past into the present. It is mostly through South African oral tradition that the early past can be perceived as such: as what was before the whites came to Africa, as early past: one component of phenomenological time. However, the strong influence of the apartheid regime and the grievous wounds it inflicted on the souls of the blacks made a perception of the recent past as such impossible. The impossibility to talk about the elephant in the room did not only traumatize the successors but made the borders between present and past fuzzy. In the case of Mandisa, she still carries in her mind all these vivid pictures of the people chaining themselves to their houses and trying to save what once was their home and brings the trauma of the past into her present, and consequently into the life of her own child Mxolisi and her family.

The smouldering resentment and the lasting enmity between the two races is reinforced through the legend of Nongqawuse.

In terms of time, the story of Nongqawuse – the Xhosa prophetess – is certainly of crucial importance because it reaches back into early South African history and thus, reinforces the timespan during which the black population has lived and suffered under the white regime. Moreover, the legend and its temporal setting as such can be seen as a reliable indicator, an important component of the South African concept of trauma because, as Borzaga argues in the preceding theoretical chapters, the Western theories are insufficient

instruments when analysing South Africa's traumatization, and thus, additional concepts are needed when talking about the trauma of a nation as particular as South Africa.

The importance of the legend also lies in its double role because it is not only a component of the South African concept of trauma but it also offers the audience two completely different perspectives of two distinctive people on the same important historical key memory – Xhosa Cattle-Killings of 1857-1858.

When the grandfather asks Mandisa for the reason of the cattle killing, she answers eagerly, repeating what she has learnt at school that it was “[b]ecause they were superstitious and ignorant.”(175) As a child, Mandisa is not aware of the gravity of her words and the condescension of those who claim such a statement. Certainly, such observations are bitter fruits of one of the most racist laws of apartheid: the Bantu Education act, which “[...] was to make sure that our children only learnt things that would make them good for what the government wanted: to work in the factories [...] they must not learn properly at school like the white children.”²³ Furthermore, this barbed remark reaffirms the dynamics of inequality between colonizer and colonized.

Mandisa encounters a world full of hostility and aversion; a world, where the roots of hate run exceptionally deep when grandfather tells her the way South Africans perceive the intrusion of the whites in the country. “So deep, a cattle-worshipping nation killed all its precious herds”(176) in their desperate attempt to liberate themselves of those trying to uproot the natives, the Xhosa.

Liberation from and dispelling of the growing number of white settlers on Xhosa's land was the aim to be achieved. Thus, the Xhosa decided to follow the prophecy of Nongqawuse: kill all their cattle, burn down the thriving fields and wait for the prophecy to fulfill itself, wait for liberation and redemption.

The sun will rise in the east, as usual. [...] Then, instead of going west, it will turn back, turn back and go and set in the east. The sun will set in the east! Then, with the rising of the new sun, all the things that had

²³ Baard and Schreiner: My Spirit in not banned. Part 2

<http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/sidebar.php?id=3>

been killed and burned down would rise again. New corn, cobs tall and big [...] cattle - pure breeds [...] cattle, sheep, goats and all other animals of the home, animals useful to folk... [...] Things would be as good and unspoiled as they had been Embo, in the very beginning. [...] 'A great whirlwind will rise and drive all abelungu to the sea... where they will all drown.' (180ff, italics in the original)

When the days passed and the prophecy did not fulfil itself, a starving people facing the ruins of their lives was left behind. Ironically, it was the white man that came to rescue: “Bringing gifts of food to the starving, dying people. Bringing a golden opportunity never to starve again. “To the mines, to the mines, hasten! Hasten and be saved. Never will you hunger again. Never.”” (181ff.) What was intended as liberation from “[...] the people with hair as the silken threads of corn”, changed into a modern slavery, which mercilessly exploited the black population for about five decades, treated them badly and denied them the right of citizenship in their own state.

5.2.2 *Recent past*

The apocalyptic happenings included in the early South African past reach into its recent past. However, the way Mandisa, her family and whole townships endure the atrocities of the apartheid regime, are brought to the reader through personalization of historical events and experiences Mandisa has as a child and as a young adult.

Thus, in one of Mandisa’s addressing of the mother-sister, the audience is taken back into the 1960s, the apartheid regime’s glorious time, when – surely, on false grounds – approximately one million black South Africans were removed from the now called white areas.²⁴ Eventually, the building stone for the official mass removals of the black population had already been set with the increasing power of the cruel apartheid regime. The central reflector character

²⁴ For more detailed information see South Africa- Overcoming Apartheid, Building Democracy on Forced Removals
<http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia.php?id=5>

offers an insight into her troubled soul and the vivid images of her destroyed home, before being forcibly relocated to the place they – the people who built it – called *Guguletu*, Our Pride. As Mandisa rightly points out, there is nothing to be proud of about Guguletu. “The people who live in ‘Our Pride’ call it Gugulabo - Their Pride. Who would have any *gugu* about a place like this?” (27, italics in the original)

Relocation as a means of traumatization and consistent part of South African history and the apartheid regime was made possible in 1950 when the so-called Land Act was passed. Loss of origin, loss of bond with history and the ancestors, loss of the land where the umbilical cord of the sons and daughters were buried in the ground are only few aspects of what came with the relocation of a whole tribe or community.

Surely, relocation, one way among many, was used to enlarge the widening gap and reinforce the segregation between the white and the black population. In his autobiography, referring to the Western Areas removal, Nelson Mandela states that “[t]he excuse given by the government was slum clearance, a smokescreen for the government policy that regarded all urban areas as white areas where Africans were *temporary* residents. (134; emphasis added) Townships where apartheid rules and laws did not apply were indeed a thorn in the regime’s side. Mandela too, argues that the real reason for relocations was the control of all African movement, which was not an easy task to complete in “[...] freehold urban townships, where blacks could own property and people came and went as they pleased.”²⁵ (135) Consequently, the black population was forced to leave behind what it had called home for centuries and move to new places, start anew.

As an agricultural people living from the land, the confrontation with the infertility of the new place to be called home, worsens the situation and makes a new start impossible. Consequently, the traumatization of a whole community

²⁵ Here Mandela refers to the so-called Pass system, which made movements of the black population in so-called white areas very difficult if not impossible. Black persons working in the white area were handed pass permits to enter the working area without difficulties.

facing the pieces of its life is intensified. The loss of 'Heimat' comes along with loss of home, of a well-knitted and functioning social community. Certainly, the strong bond of the black population and the land aggravates the loss of home because for them, it amounts to the loss of the place where the afterbirths of the children, the foreskins of the boys and the bones of the predecessors lie buried.

What started as rumour and was at first unbelievable with regard to the impossibility of such an action – relocation of a whole community – was transformed to bitter and sad reality the day the government informed the habitants of the township that they would be relocated and forced to settle in Guguletu within a month.

There were so many of us in Blouvlei, the tin-shack location where I grew up. Millions and millions. Where would the government start? Who could believe such a thing? [...] convinced of the inviolability offered by our tremendous numbers, the size of our settlement, the belief that our dwelling places, our homes, and our burial places were sacred, we laughed at the absurdity of the rumour. [...] This was home, they said. Home. Always had been. Always would be. HOME. (54-55)

Mandisa experiences the relocation of her family as a young girl whose only worries are to skip the housework she is assigned. Through her flashbacks about the past, the reader is offered an insight into Mandisa's soul and the images she has been carrying with her for such a long time. The loss of home engraved on the faces of her family and people she knew as her neighbours leave very deep marks on her infant soul. The horrific scene the day Blouvlei was to be abandoned by the black population and the whites were pulling down the sheds the community called homes is unforgettable for Mandisa.

With a lexical field of war, the narrative implies a war-like situation, with "[a]n army of invasion: a fleet of police [...] and army trucks surrounded the location. Completely. In its entire vastness, Blouvlei was surrounded and contained." (65) She becomes witness to an unseen barbarousness and ferocity of the white population against the blacks living in Blouvlei.

Eyes pealed back wide, in horror, I watched. *Abelungu* men charged. Tin walls were torn down with the inhabitants of the shacks asleep inside some. Shacks came tumbling down, revealing Primus stoves alight, pots of mealie-meal porridge madly bubbling away in others. Some of Blouvlei's more stubborn residents chained themselves to the

doors of their homes. But the door frames were pulled down just the same. Pulled down with those poor desperate souls chained right onto them. (65)

Referring to the escape of “imfecane fleeing Shaka more than a century ago” (66), the narrative suggests that the history of the blacks in South Africa, even though in a slightly different form, repeats itself. Once again, the black population, subjected to the white majority, has to leave the place it called home and settle elsewhere.

The ruthlessness and recklessness exercised by the white policemen on the inhabitants of Blouville, traumatize Mandisa deeply. The still clear and vivid images of the people that chained themselves to the doors of their shacks in a futile attempt to save what was theirs and the burning down of the shacks with people still sleeping inside, resist her attempts to erase them from her memory. Even years after the relocation, she can still recall every single detail of her arrival in Guguletu: the place where there had always been trouble.

Trouble is, there is always trouble in Guguletu... one kind or another... since the government *uprooted* us from all over the show: all around Cape Town’s locations, suburbs, and other of its environs, and dumped us on the arid, wind-swept, sandy Flats. My first impressions of the place are still vivid in my mind [...] fresh today as they were all those many years ago when I was still but a child, not even ten...(26; emphasis added)

The on-going traumatization, the never-ending atrocities against her family and her people, the non-existent time boundaries – the troublesome life and the sufferings of the South African black population which started with a journey and was expanded to an uprooting of the natives – make healing trauma problematic, if possible at all.

Ironically, the suffering and misery of the removed families does not end when they arrive at the new place, at their ‘new homes’ because they do not only face the ruins of their lives, but have to start anew in a place where no plants can grow. “Whatever it was, the relentless wind blew the sand everywhere. Day and night, it blew. *We swept and swept and swept*, but still the sand would not leave us alone.” (30; emphasis added) In the same way the

families in Guguletu fight against the wind and sand by sweeping continuously, they do not stop to fight for better living conditions, for a better life at a place where they live against their will. However, living in Guguletu, in a place where “good things are scarce”, where there are not enough schools for the children and not enough teachers for the schools, where there are no parents at home to know about the whereabouts of their children and to make them go to school, is very difficult. The new place changes the people, worsens the life of the blacks. There is no longer a well-knitted community, not the same neighbours, not the same teachers.

5.2.3 *Present*

The first impression the reader gets from the protagonist of the novel is that of a mother in grief for the destroyed future of her son, the murderer of a young white American scholar in Guguletu. In the following, the protagonist takes the reader back to the day – Wednesday 25th August 1993 – which turned her already messed up world upside down – the day the young girl was killed in the vicinity of Mandisa’s home. The fact that her son is accused of being one of the murderers who stabbed the young girl to death worsens the situation and intensifies her sufferings.

As aforementioned, the nonlinearity of the narrative requires a jumping back and forth between immediate present – a troubled South African nation in 1993, in the middle of transition, early child memories of the protagonist – in the middle of the atrocities of the apartheid regime – and early South African history – early colonization history – in order to follow and understand the development of Mxolisi: an once illegitimate but happy child.

The wide gap between the life of the inhabitants of the townships, such as for instance Mandisa’s family and that of the victim, who at the beginning of the novel serves as a model for the white population, becomes visible already during the first chapters of the novel, when the protagonist introduces the

reader to two different worlds. Geographically, Guguletu and the place the young girl lives in are only twenty kilometres away. However, life and the living conditions differ considerably. The daughter of the American mother enjoys the luxury of having a room of her own in the flat she shares with her friends. Twenty kilometres away, Mandisa's family lives cooped up in a "one-size-fits-all houses of Guguletu [which] don't expand as the children come." (6)

The gap between Guguletu and the place the American girl lives in is widened when the reader becomes acquainted with the worries that weigh down on the shoulders of two quite different people, who are separated only by twenty kilometres in terms of geography, but still worlds apart in terms of life, living conditions and socio-economic situation: the young girl worries about how to say goodbye to her friends and Mandisa worries whether her children will attend classes, whether there will be enough for them to eat in case the white woman she works for needs her to stay longer.

As usual, Mandisa is at work on Wednesday, the 25th of August 1993, the day Amy Biehl's car is pelted with stones in the township of Guguletu, and consequently, she is stabbed to death in Section 3, the area where Mandisa and her family live. The spatial setting of the first chapters changes constantly as Mandisa moves from the world of the white – where ironically Mandisa's *mlungu* woman gets Wednesday off, because in the white world "[a] woman gets a day off when she never does any work this house" (20) – to her world, life in a township, where there are no proper schools, not enough space to live and never enough to eat.

For Mandisa, the apartheid regime can no longer dodge the responsibility for the transformation of her son from a fatherless but still lovely child into one of the murderers of the young innocent girl. There is only one single killer – the apartheid regime –, which made his transformation into a killer possible. In the first letter Mandisa addressed to her mother-sister, she states that the killing of the young girl was no surprise to her; nothing he does surprises her anymore. "[...] I was not surprised that my son killed your daughter. That is not to say I was

pleased. [...] But you have to understand my son. Then you'll understand why I am not surprised he killed your daughter.” (1)

What at first glance is experienced as an inferiority and complete indifference of the protagonist towards the mother of the killed daughter is revealed to be a very realistic view on life; a life where there is no hope for a better future and for better days to come. Early uprooting and loss of home, life in poverty and in the township, the disappointment and shame she brought on her parents' house the day she found out she was pregnant without having carried out the proper act of having sexual intercourse with China, Mxolisi's father, deprivation of education and several other traumatic experiences Mandisa had to live through and cope with, have changed her into a person where no such things as hope and joy exist. Life is merely a matter of survival in Guguletu for Mandisa and her family.

However, contrarily to Mandisa who seems to have lost all her hopes for a better future, the youth still have hopes for better education and consequently, a better life in the new South Africa. The struggle of the *Young Lions*²⁶, the resistance of the COSAS and other equally important organizations point to the hope and optimism of South Africa's black youth for a life different from that of their parents and grandparents: for a life without subjugation.

5.3 Time lost, generation lost: Mxolisi's personal trauma

Mxolisi's as protagonist of the story is presented to the audience through Mandisa and the different ways she looks at him. Thus, firstly, we find her in the role of the mother who seeks desperately understanding for what her son has done, the pain he has caused and for what was done to him. Secondly, in the role of the young girl who gets pregnant without having experienced real sexual intercourse and blames the foetus for the hopelessness awaiting her in the

²⁶ A youth organization, which made the townships ungovernable and fought against apartheid regime.

future; in the role of the mother of three children fighting the urge to care more for her fatherless son over her other children and finally, in the role of the mother, who seeks understanding for the child who does not only blame himself for the death of his two best friends, but who has somehow survived childhood facing poverty, rejection from his parents and hunger on a daily basis.

Despite his role as a source of traumatization for his own parents, particularly for Mandisa, Mxolisi experiences his first traumatization at the early age of four, when his two older friends, Zazi and Mzamo both in their early teens, are executed in front of him. Besides the tragic death of the two young boys, Mxolisi is deeply traumatized by his role during the execution. In the firm belief that the two boys play hide-and-seek with the policemen, who search for them intensively in the township, Mxolisi reveals the place his friends are hidden, thus causing a chain reaction, which ends in a tragedy taking place in his presence.

[...] Here they are! Here they are, in the wardrobe! [...] A clever little smile all over his chubby face. He said those terrible words, and swift as a wink, witnessed their outcome. The boys jumped out and made for the window. [...] the police were waiting, and shot them then and there. He was struck mute [...]. His beloved friends. After that, he zipped his mouth and would not say one word. Not one word more – for the next two years. (148)

Mxolisi's behaviour after the killing of his friends corresponds completely to that of a traumatized person. Despite his young age, Mxolisi is aware of his responsibility for the killing of his friends. Their execution being carried out in front of him and the burden of guilt he carries on his shoulders for the rest of his life causes a severe childhood trauma. He loses his speech for about two years and even when he recovers, he never asks about his two childhood friends. For Mandisa, however, talking or at least asking about the two young boys Mxolisi used to love and spend so much time with, it is important. Several times throughout the narrative, she takes the reader back to the issue of the killed friends and wonders why is it that Mxolisi has not asked about them. As a mother and as a very close person to her son, she knows that there is something about the killing that still troubles him. Ultimately, she can see it in his expression and his eyes, which resemble those of an old man. "But then,

there is the terrible guilt I feel he carries. Mzamo and Zazi. But he never talks about them. [...] Poor children. Died like dogs. Shot by the police.” (159)

Not being able to talk about the traumatic experience and its shattering force on his life, continuing to receive an education at schools where he is caned constantly by his teachers for not being able to afford the schoolbooks and other – in Mxolisi’s eyes – unimportant nonsense, he tempts to leave school and work instead. Despite the loss of the father figure, the loss of his two best friends for whose death he holds responsibility, Mxolisi wants to help his mother to keep the family above surface by working. However, Mandisa in her firm belief that high school education will keep Mxolisi away from trouble and offer him a better future, convinces him to attend high school, where – ironically enough – he becomes involved in politics for the first time and soon enough becomes a leader of students politics.

For many Mxolisi – “[h]e, who would bring peace” (136) – becomes a leader, a decent young man, who stopped the rape of a young girl, a hero not afraid to intervene when others just stood, looked, laughed or simply walked away. Mxolisi is the pride, the hero of the township. Just at the moment when things go smoothly for the young man, who seems to finally have found his place in the township, his life changes dramatically the moment the young American girl is stabbed to death in Guguletu and Mxolisi is said to have delivered one of the lethal wounds. Again, Mxolisi finds himself in the eye of the storm, which is bound to annihilate the little amount of hope for a better future, for a different life.

Finally, not only time as such can be traumatizing, but also places can be a source of on-going traumatization. Obviously, living in a township, surrounded by deeply traumatized people, facing death, violence and poverty on a daily basis, leads inevitably to a major traumatization. Certainly, all the sufferings and living conditions are not restricted to Guguletu and can surely be applied to other South African townships or to the South African nation as such. The instability of the political situation, the uncertainty whether there will be enough to eat for the family, the exceptionally great number of losses – loss of the

father figure, loss of home, loss of other beloved persons – the protagonists of the story suffer throughout the narrative, shed light on the omnipresence of trauma, injustice and grief in their lives.

The non-existence of the boundaries between the past and the present, the strong impact of the historical past on the present and death and violence being permanent companions of Mxolisi's and Mandisa's life in the first place and that of the inhabitants of the township in a second instance are all features of a traumatization which can impossibly be identified as an event with a starting and an ending point. As Mandisa notes several times throughout the narrative, violence has been a part of the life of the South African black population for a very long time. The repetitiveness and the self-evidence of violence and mayhem particularly in the township of Guguletu and in a wider context in all South African black townships is highlighted through the recurrence of temporal expressions, which are emphasized in the following quotes.

Guguletu is a violent place. *Every day* one hears of someone who was killed... or nearly killed. Often *more than one*. *Every day* - rape, robbery, armed assault and other, more subtle forms of violence. *Every day*. Guns are as common as marbles were when we were growing up. [...] crime thrives.(44; emphasis added)

The safety of girl children has become a burning issue in Guguletu and all places like Guguletu. *Every day, one hears of rapes. Rapes, not a rape. Rapes*. Which means that, *each day* more than one woman or girl or child is accosted. *Each day. In this place*. (38; emphasis added)

Young and old alike, men and women, no one is exempt from the scourge. Violence is rife. It has become a way of life. When a husband leaves for work of a morning, there is no guarantee he'll safely find his way back home come night. Nor is there such casual certainty about children going to school. Between drunk drivers of stolen cars, the police, *tsotsies* and those who kill those with whom they do not see eye to eye in matters political - safety has become quite, quite fragile. (45; italics in the original)

For years.... many, many years, we have lived with violence. This was nothing new to us. What was new was that this time, the victim was white. A white person killed in Guguletu, a black township. Killed [...] for no reason at all. Killed [...] while doing good...helping the people of the

township. But then again, even that was not totally new, was it? (69; emphasis added)

Then, a man was stoned. A black man from Guguletu. A man - not a car. He was stoned and kicked and punched and knifed. Senseless. Punched blind, he reeled, fumbling his way. (76)

With violence causing trauma, and trauma being a morbid condition, which in the South African country has lasted for more than three centuries, the death of the young girl is explained to the mother of the victim as the action of an agent – the agent being her son Mxolisi – “[...] executing the long-simmering dark desires of *his race*. [...] The *resentment* of three hundred years plugged his ears; deaf to her pitiful entreaties. [...] My son, the blind but sharpened arrow of *the wrath of his race*.” (210; emphasis added) Mxolisi’s murder corresponds to no more and no less but the unconscious collective wish of the nation, which was voiced by Nongqawuse: “[...] rid ourselves of the scourge.” (210)

To summarize, as Borzaga rightly argues in the theoretical chapters for the new concept of “entanglement”, a thinking of black and white, wound and healing, past and present is, as shown in *Mother to Mother*, not possible in a people as wounded and as traumatized as the black South African population. The colonial past and its atrocities for about three centuries, the politics of race and the hatred caused by the apartheid regime for more than five decades, are still deeply ingrained and rooted in the miserable existence and life of the inhabitants of the black townships and the black South African people. Healing is not possible when there is no end to the trauma, the traumatic experiences black South Africans have to suffer on a daily basis and the traumatic living conditions they have to live under and raise their children: the future of the country. According to Sindiwe Magona, if trauma is defined as “a morbid condition produced by violence” (93), then in the South African context, it can be argued that trauma is life itself. To put in Magona’s words:

[...] trauma is *in the blood* for the people of South Africa; they can neither escape it nor ignore it. To do the latter would be well-nigh impossible except perhaps in those individuals who have escaped in madness, and the former is just not possible, as trauma itself, its residue, or its outcomes form an integral, inescapable part of their very lives, of life itself - of all life in South Africa. (2012: 93-94)

In Magona's eyes, South Africa had, has and will predictably have a violent future, as South Africa's violence and its criminal youth – those who turn the streets into battlefield and consequently, the country into one of the countries in the world with the highest criminality rate – have arisen as a result of apartheid legacy. She describes the apartheid regime as “ [...] a nefarious, evil system, (which) could not but bear highly poisonous fruit.” (94) Ultimately, as Mandisa rightly notes throughout the narrative, there is no hope for a change, for a better life, at least not in the foreseeable future, if children continue to live the way her son Mxolisi did. In her desperate attempt to seek understanding for the development of her son, for what was done to him and what he repaid on the young American girl, Mandisa implies an appeal to her mother-sister and the audience by drawing a disturbing picture of South Africa's youth and for what is to be expected from it:

But, even as these voices of concern are raised, calling for what we have not had in the townships for years and years and years, the same winds that gouged dongas in my son's soul are still blowing... blowing ever stronger. There are three- and four-year-olds as well as older children, roaming the streets of Guguletu with nothing to do all day long. Those children [...] - those young people are walking the same road my son walked. (199)

In conclusion, what makes *Mother to Mother* stand out when compared to the other novels included and dealt with in this thesis, is not only the fact that it has the murder of the young American girl killed in Guguletu as a starting point, but also its representation of trauma. Contrarily to the protagonist of *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* and other contemporary South African novels dealing with the representation of trauma as an event, who can, at least spatially, leave trauma behind and try starting anew elsewhere, such an action does not seem possible in *Mother to Mother*. With the protagonist of the novel, a black woman telling the story of his son – the murderer of Amy Biehl –, the readership is offered a different kind of trauma, a trauma that cannot be left behind, an inescapable form of trauma, a trauma that is *in the blood of the black South Africans*, who have been suffering for centuries under the oppressive regime.

Mandisa, similarly to other black South Africans, makes trauma a regular feature of her life and those sharing life in the township with her. Given the fact

that she and her family deal with these traumatic living conditions on a daily basis, there is no such thing as suppression, healing or standstill. Contrarily to the other novels, the black protagonist does not have one, two or ten persons to blame for what was done to her, to her ancestors, to her family and to her community: she has a whole cruel, repressive system to blame – that of modern slavery. Up to the point when the historical apartheid legacy will finally be bequeathed, the memory of the wounds will continue to fester and healing will take place only when the present stops being just as traumatizing as the past. (2012: 99)

6 *The Memory of Stones: Memory and Remembering*

Mandla Langa's *The Memory of Stones*, a further so-called black South African novel, offers an insight into the deepest thoughts and feelings of the people living in Ngoza, Kwazulu Natal. The severe traumatization of the black people caused by the forced removal in the 1970s, when the place they called home was to be allocated to the army, life and suffering under the apartheid regime, life as a soldier in the Border War and other atrocities taking place in a country trying to come to terms with its past, are presented to the reader in retrospect.

When the Restitution of the infamous Land Act finally takes place, the people of Ngoza have the right to go back to their homes and start anew, again. Hence, the audience, after being presented to the protagonist of the novel, Zodwa – daughter of the spiritual leader of the people of Ngoza – is abducted into the problems the people encounter when going back home, back to Ngoza. Among daily difficulties, such as poverty, hunger and dealing with traumatized persons, the presence of the warlord Johnny M makes life more difficult. In order to banish the black population from Ngoza, Johnny M organizes various criminal actions. He does not only terrorize the squatters with his claims that the land they have returned to is under his jurisdiction, but makes their life more difficult by, for example, killing the cattle and destroying the water pump. Zodwa has chosen to leave Ngoza for the Eastern Cape, where she attends law university. Her leaving and all the affairs revolving around her leaving – in the eyes of the inhabitants of Ngoza “Zodwa disgraced the region with her romance with that white lawyer two years ago” make her coming back home more difficult. She thinks constantly about her father, her brother Jonah and the people she left behind in Ngoza. (22)

Mpanza, a deeply traumatized soldier, who does not only find his place in the new South Africa, but also loses his wife and family on account of his love for alcohol and other women, sets out on his journey to get “[...] rid of Jonah's

ghost, which sat on his back like an albatross.” (47) On his seeking for forgiveness and understanding throughout the narrative, the reader becomes acquainted with his innermost feelings and troublesome past. On the other hand, Venter, Benedita’s husband, seeks to take revenge on Grey, lover of Venter’s wife, police officer and co-operator with Johnny M. Benedita is in search for her identity and her roots in South Africa.

Among other appreciable and considerable prominent features of the novel, the constant changing of the point of view makes the novel unique. This technique offers the audience not only an open gate to the protagonists’ minds, but also insightful views on different recurring matters, such as relocation, removal, Border War, atrocities of the government and the struggle against apartheid, throughout the novel. This struggle represents for some of the characters a lifelong endeavour against the traumatic conditions. The hopelessness reigning among the people of South Africa and the alarming state the country is in, is reinforced several times throughout the novel.

Here he was and he had worked for the Movement; he had worked for the new government of national unity. What had it brought him? The people who were conspicuously not working - they were the ones who seemed to be inheriting a lot. Or maybe, you needed to have spent a long time on Robben Island - then you could get a cushy job. He remembered a child who once asked Mandela whether he had gone to prison to learn how to be a president. Out of the mouths of babes. There were some people who found themselves in prison for reasons that had nothing to do with changing the political face of the country. Then there were some in higher councils who deserved to be in prison. (130)

The description the audience is offered through the point of view of other characters in the following chapters is very troublesome if not apocalyptic. The radical change the South African country is going through in the narrative has a very strong impact on those living in diverse South African townships and cities, particularly on the life of the black population, who did not suffer the most cruel atrocities under the apartheid regime, but have to find their place and regain identity in a country with a legacy as grim as that of apartheid.

Not only the country seeks to redefine itself in its post apartheid time, also the citizens, among them those who killed for the African National Congress movement, those who were turned into criminals and villains by the regime as such, try to redefine their identity and re-find their place in a new South Africa. In order to do so, the protagonists have to come to terms with their past – to overcome what they suffered, experienced and did to other members of the society – and ultimately overcome their trauma or at least learn to incorporate and live with it. During such a troublesome time as the one covered in the novel, Baba Joshua's sect, The Temple of the New Jerusalem in Ngoza, offers to its inhabitants a peaceful place, where no blood – not even that of the cattle – can be shed. The explanation for such a rule is very simple and straightforward:

Blood called for blood, which was why it was anathema in the settlement. The believers raised livestock, but those would be sold to the farmers and the owners of abattoirs where the way of the Other World still held sway. In Baba's sect, the Temple of the New Jerusalem, the devoted never touched meat; a law had been passed, which forbade men from sharing the bed or the table with women who were menstruating. (23)

But can there be place for all the suspicious characters in new South Africa? How can murderers and family members of the victims start a new life together when there always seem to be clouds on the horizon? What is there to be found in a new South Africa? Can South Africa move from its traditional past, in this novel represented through Johnny M and patriarchal structures, to a new South Africa led by a woman? In *The Memory of Stones* Mandla Langa seems to be very positive for the future of the rainbow nation. Despite all the suffering, atrocities, the death and mysterious disappearances of the opponents of the regime, this particular South African contemporary novel gives hope for the future: the traumatic past can be overcome, the past can be left behind and South Africa can become a home for both: perpetrators and victims.

6.1 Memory and the force of remembering

The significant role memory plays in the novel is already accentuated on the cover, i.e. the title of this novel: *The Memory of Stones*. Clearly, stones as inanimate objects do not remember happenings, sufferings, life-stories literally, the way human beings do. However, their importance should not be undervalued when it comes to surviving time and being able to tell the story of those who used to live in a particular area. For instance, the inhabitants of Ngoza firmly believe that having their family totems left back in the place they were born, will not only bring them back one day, but they present a mark, a trace of their being there. In this chapter, the importance of the process of remembering and memory as such is dealt with in detail.

Among other ways to emphasize the ‘entanglement’ of time and its dis-linearity in terms of past and present, the author makes use of private memories about one’s life and various historical happenings and their impact on the lives of the characters. Ultimately, private memories and memories on the different historical happenings cover South Africa’s past. However, as the term private memories already indicates, it implies a noticeable subjectivity and emotionality to the issue. A so-called personalization of historical happenings takes place. The dis-linearity of time and the strong impact the past has on the blacks indicates that the deep traumatizing conditions and South Africa’s past will only be put to rest when new South Africa’s present will no longer be as strongly influenced by its past. And for the time being, South Africans, both those black and white, have to learn to cope with the disturbingly non-existent borders between the past and the present of the country.

Contrarily to *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, the characters of *The Memory of Stones* are well aware of their on-going traumatization and particular traumatizing events. They all remember what they did and what was done to them. Thus, time as such is perceived as phenomenological, as lived time, where certain moments in life are more meaningful, more important than others, i.e. certain traumatic events, such as relocation, have a stronger impact on the

lives of the inhabitants of Ngoza. This observation represents an interesting state of affairs: trauma as such in *The Memory of Stones* is omnipresent: people are killed and disappear in mysterious ways, violence is pervasive, and families cope with daily survival, the population lives on the brink of extinction. However, certain traumatic experiences of the protagonists, such as for instance Jonah's killing, are experienced as events.

In terms of Ricoeur's concept of time, there is certainly a past, a present and a future for the characters and each single one of them uses these perceptions of time as means of orientation. Among other prominent features of the novel, the use of lapses in time is another narrative technique, which creates a delicate and highly complex intertwinement of the South African past and present and consequently points to the entanglement of perception of time in South Africa. To put it in other words, this intended inclusion of leaps in time, reinforces the strong bond between South Africa's past and its present.

The changing perspective of narration in each single chapter, the jumping back and forth in time, the lapses in time and the strong impact of the past in the present, confront the audience with an on-going dis-linearity of time which is persistent throughout the novel. Hence, the reader is not only told the life-stories of the different protagonists making their experiences in present South Africa and remembering their experiences of the past, but keeps jumping from one historical happening to the next. Thence, it can be argued that the novel as such mimics trauma patterns to a certain point. Again, South African bloody history and all the sufferings the black South African had to endure are included in form of memories, in order to show the strong impact these memories had and still have on the South African life.

In the first chapter of the novel, the reader finds him/herself in Ngoza, in 1964, at the birth of a baby girl, who refuses to cry until she is healed by an

*inyanga*²⁷, a traditional healer, and starts wailing “[...] when the only clock in the belfry tower of the Anglican church in the town of Ngoza chimes midnight hour.” The very first remark on Zodwa’s absolute silence foreshadows her future: Zodwa will be all but the ordinary South African black township girl. For the community of Ngoza, unable to explain the real reason for Zodwa’s refusal to cry, it is clear that “[...] Zodwa will grow into a strange child of silence.” (2) In the next instance however, the audience encounters Zodwa thirty – one years later, living in Cape Town, a law student and celebrating her 31st birthday. Thus, the first orientational information on the temporal setting, which allows the audience to locate the story in 1964 for a brief moment, is no longer valid when the reader localizes Zodwa 31 years later in 1995, a transition time in South Africa.

The use of subtle means, such as memories of the protagonists and their stories about the past, enable the reader to state that the temporal setting of the novel is provided implicitly. Thus, the audience can affirm that Zodwa’s birth is an action taking place in the past and Zodwa being a 31 year-old student in Johannesburg is consequently an action which happens in the main narrative present. As there are no implicit markers of time, the attentive reader can derive additional information from the tales about the past and the magical process, which make a literal going back in time possible. Both the spatial and temporal setting are extended continually: the audience is taken as far back as the kingdom of Shaka Zulu around 1800s and the millennialist movement of the Xhosa in 1856.

When the inhabitants of Ngoza were scattered to the four winds in the 1970s and continue dreaming about going back home, Zodwa seems to have chosen

²⁷ “Incorrectly thought of as the witch doctor, the *inyanga* is the doctor of the tribe - more correctly, the naturopath. Each *inyanga* trains his son and the information is thus passed on from generation to generation. Both plant and animal parts are used in the remedies and Zulu people will travel long distance to see an *inyanga* - in fact 80% of the Zulu population still consult *inyangas*. Remedies for unsatisfactory love lives and such things as protection against lightning are also dispensed.” (Zulu Culture Online http://zulu-culture.co.za/inyanga_zulu_culture.php)

her path: study law, finish her degree and move to Johannesburg, where she hopes to work as a lawyer. She seems to have embraced a different path from her father Joshua. Ngoza is no longer part of her future. The substantial chunks of the fate of the inhabitants of Ngoza's already presented in the first chapter of the novel, are completed in the following of the novel, as the reader becomes acquainted with the life-stories of various characters of the novel. Thus, the intended inclusion of leaps in time, reinforces the strong bond between South Africa's past and present.

Remarkably, despite the marking of *The Memory of Stones* as a black novel dealing with black trauma, the narrative depicts the fate of white victims suffering the consequences of their own brutal regime. Among other equally important issues, violence, cruelty, corruption and disloyalty – only a minimum number of the inhumanities that came along with the modern system of slavery – are depicted several times throughout the novel and brought to the audience in form of characteristics of the protagonists. Thus, Johnny M can be perceived as a personification of the old corrupted system, whereas Zodwa, the new leader of the community, can be seen as a personification of a new South Africa, still struggling to redefine itself, find its place in the new, different society and start anew.

Back to their roots, the community of Ngoza seeks to start from scratch and improve their living conditions. Joshua, Zodwa's father and the highly valued spiritual leader of the community, leads and helps the community during the harsh times. However, as the first step is always the hardest, the community has considerable difficulties to overcome. The presence of Johnny M, the self-proclaimed owner of the territory of Ngoza, terrifies the inhabitants and makes their life more difficult. He wants the inhabitants to pay taxes for the land they have come back to.

The traumatization of the protagonists is represented through flashbacks and personal memories of their life-stories. At this point, however, it is important to mention that the flashbacks included in the novel are different from those

used for instance in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*. Contrary to Faith, whose flashbacks are triggered by the smallest possible cues and which have such a strong impact on her that she loses contact with current reality and relives the traumatic experience in full force, none of the protagonists loses sense of time or finds him/herself back in the middle of a traumatic memory they cannot control. On the contrary, surely flashbacks are triggered by small cues, but the characters seem able to control those flashbacks to a certain amount.

On the narrative level, both, flashbacks and personal memories serve as a means to abduct the reader into the deepest and darkest places of a traumatized person and his/her inner struggle to overcome trauma and learn to live with what was done to them and what they did to other innocent human beings. Hence, the audience finds itself able to feel and survive the inner struggle of Mpanza, an ANC activists, who is given the task of killing his friend and colleague Jonah, Zodwa's brother.

Surely, fighting against the regime and killing opponents of the ANC movement was for Mpanza something he expected to happen, when he first enrolled in the rows of ANC. However, Mpanza's life reaches its point of no return, when he kills Jonah. Not being able to talk about his traumatization and the guilt, which seems to suffocate him, he finds his escape from reality in alcohol. Similarly to other characters of the novel, he is not only a deeply traumatized South African citizen, who certainly suffered under the apartheid regime, but he seeks to find his new identity in a new South Africa.

Benedita Venter, a further important character of the novel, finds herself looking for her lost South African father in a very troubled time of transition. The circumstances she lives in are certainly not optimal for a woman. For Benedita this time of transition represents a form of traumatization, when she attends the funeral of Stevo Biko and is nearly gang-raped by a group of angry black activists, who take her for a white Afrikaner woman. Furthermore, she finds herself as the nearly raped hostage of the corrupted chief of police Grey, who is in an on going fight with Venter.

Concerning remembering, memory is an important aspect to include at this point. The importance of being able to tell the story of one's life and be able to store the memories in the mind was already mentioned in the theoretical chapters. In *The Memory of Stones* not only the inclusion of the word memory as such in the title of the book, but also the stories included in the narrative, attest the importance of remembering one's life-story and the past; thus, the importance of time. For instance, during the time in exile, the inhabitants of Ngoza still tell stories to their children how beautiful things were back home. They want their children to remember the place they were born and hopefully, go back home one day. Memories are all the inhabitants have in exile. "Zodwa despairs for her father, knowing that he is left with nothing but his memories." (104) For Baba Joshua, remembering where they come from and where they were born is part of their daily struggle.

As aforementioned, the importance of memory and remembering is reinforced continuously throughout the narrative. The issue of remembering and being able to tell the story of one's life, the story of one's predecessors is touched upon several times throughout the narrative. Actually, all the life-stories of the characters are based on – and existing at all – only through the force of remembering and memory.

In her monograph *Memory*, Anne Whitehead traces the history of the term memory and treats it as a 'traveling concept'. (3) In chapter 4 of her monograph, Whitehead has a closer look at collective memory and sums up the different thoughts and ideas, such as Halbwachs' thoughts on collective memory – "For Halbwachs', collective memory can stretch back into the past varying distance, but it is most preoccupied with events that are within living memory." (130-131) – and Jan Assmann's distinction of history and memory in collective memory. Assmann takes Halbwachs' theory on collective memory a step further and differentiates between the so-called 'communicative memory' and 'cultural memory', arguing that the former "[...] has a very limited temporal horizon, usually extending eighty to hundred years at most, and it is based solely on

everyday communications.” (132) ‘Cultural memory’ on the other hand, is concerned with events beyond living memory; thus, events from a more distant past. (ibid.) According to Whitehead, the formalization of cultural memory through a sort of ceremony and ritual is a strong feature of this term. She argues, that commemorative ceremonies and rituals strengthen and shape the collective memory. Such rituals and ceremonies

[...] possess a characteristic of ritual re-enactment, which is central to the shaping of collective memory. An image of the past is, then, not simply conveyed and sustained by ritual performances; it is also brought to life in the present and relieved through direct embodiment and gestural repetition. (133)

For the inhabitants of Ngoza and Baba Joshua, in particular, the preservation of memory as such is a process of living and surviving. This for the reason that remembering the way the black people lived their lives before the invasion of the whites in the South African land helps the blacks to remember that they are not savages themselves and that equality between whites and blacks is mandatory. Black people are not and should not be seen as second-class citizens. Very early in the narrative, Baba Joshua turns to his people and makes them aware of the importance of the memory, of the time when they were treated and perceived as human beings:

[i]t hurts to me to my heart to see you like this, [...] *underground, like rats, homeless*. [...] [t]he white man has come and touched all the things we hold sacred and dear and has taken away our dream. In doing so, he is building a future for himself and his children and – he hopes – for his children’s children. But the future cannot be build on a lie, because the dispossession of others is a foundation of lies. *A bird that builds on the nest of others must be endlessly ready to defend itself*. [...] Our concern is the future, which is buried in the ruins of our past, in the dwellings razed to the ground and in how faithfully we preserved the memory of the time when we were human beings. We shall move and seek work and carry out orders on the terms set by those in power. We shall be cold and hungry [...] But *we shall return* to this land which was given to us by our forebears. What matters, then, is how we conserve our energy to ensure that we do return. (13; emphasis added)

Baba Joshua turns the process of preserving the memory of the inhabitants of the settlement of Ngoza, into an actual ritual of collective memory. While in

the caves where the inhabitants of Ngoza spend some time before being scattered to the four winds, Baba Joshua, with the help of Nozizwe, asks the families to produce family totems, which are left behind in the caves, as a mark for the place where they were born, the place that belongs to them by birth right.

The representatives of households file past the table, as grim as mourners viewing a confined body, and tender artefacts symbolising their birth right. 'We who are pure at heart, [...] who have not colluded with the enemy, will come back and make the claim. (14)

To Zodwa however, the importance of memory does not lie in the process of preservation solely. Therefore, in her eyes, rituals and all sorts of ceremonies are not adequate. On the contrary, she is convinced that the objects as such, the family totems left behind in the caves, can never have the same impact as the enduring power of memory because at the end of the day, the real value of the totems and all other objects left behind can never be truly estimated without the power of memory, i.e. without somebody remembering and telling the real story of those totems.

They would take long walks to the caves where discoveries of prehistoric fossils were being made, it seemed, weekly. [...] Perhaps when their graves were dug up in some future millennium, the palaeontologists would comment on their primitive state. But these experts would have had no access to the enduring power of memory." (366)

Finally, despite Zodwa's personal opinion on rituals and ceremonies, it must be reinforced once again, that in a strongly traditional society like in the South Africa, such rituals still present building stones of the communities and to the most believers, they are a pillar of strength. Surely, the force of memory and remembering as such is not and must not be underestimated, however, in Ngoza, the actual rituals which are mentioned several times throughout the narrative help the settlers in exile to look forward and hope that one day they will be able to go back to the place they were born, to the place where their umbilical cord was buried. Zodwa herself undergoes highly traditional rituals herself, when she is strengthened for the impending danger and the approaching confrontation with Johnny M and all other conservative

traditionalists. Whether she believes or not, she admits feeling more powerful and stronger after the magical and supernatural rituals organized and carried out by the ageless *inyanga*, Nozizwe.

6.2 Magical time and the traditionalist South African world

Magic and the strong belief in the supernatural forces have always been part of the South African country, particularly of the black population. Similar to the protagonist of *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, Faith, believing in the vivid world of the fairies and her being cured by a traditional healer, and to Mandisa seeking the help of a *sangoma* when her deeply traumatized son refuses stoutly to speak after witnessing the execution of his two young best friends in front of his eyes, magic and the supernatural is present in *The Memory of Stones* from the first chapter of the novel. Thus, the reader finds Zodwa being sent to Nozizwe, the ageless *inyanga*, who helps Zodwa to start crying, when she refuses to do so.

Contrary to Nozizwe “Ngoza’s premier *inyanga*, [who] has been feared by some of the strongest men” and who helps young women whenever they need her help to free themselves from the calls of their admirers, there is an opposite traditionalist character: Hodoba. The first time the reader encounters Hodoba is very early in the narrative when Zodwa meets a former inhabitant of Ngoza. Her memory, however, indicates that there is something cruel about Hodoba.

She cast around her head – mainly because she had trained herself never to remember Hodoba [...] She could recall that Hodoba had been a permanent source of uneasiness amongst the people. While Nozizwe had been a healer, it was held that Hodoba spoke to the dead and indulged in unnameable midnight rituals in his cave dwelling. (7-8)

In several references in the novel, the reader is given the impression that Hodoba is an evil sorcerer, and the so-called Vulture—Men, who live in a cave, are cannibals. However, his black magic and what the Vulture—Men do is not explicitly stated. The reader can only guess the atrocities they cause.

Hodoba and the men had run the little errand for Mbongwa, collaring that white boy, Horwitz. The plan had been that Horwitz would be taken back to the cave and the men could do with him as they pleased. [...] Mbongwa had shot him. He had also shot Khumalo, who was a good fellow, really, who happened to be digging a grave for a dead chief whose daughter was a thorn in Mbongwa's side. Now Mbongwa wanted them to be grateful for bringing their dinner so late! (334)

Later in the narrative, when Zodwa is finally chosen the new leader of the squatter camp and Mbongwa tries to run away, Nozizwe's statement sheds light upon the whereabouts of the Vulture–Men: “Don't worry about him, [...] [b]efore the beginning of tomorrow, he'll be lying heavy in the bellies of his own vultures.” (358)

Nozizwe remains present throughout the narrative. In the microcosm of the novel, as an *inyanga*, she is a guiding spirit firstly for Baba Joshua and at a later stage, for Zodwa, accompanying her through the long process of taking over after her father's death. Particularly, when Zodwa feels weak and loses her self-confidence, Nozizwe is always there for her to help overcome the difficulties. In the macrocosm – the real South Africa, Nozizwe is a personification of the highly valued traditionalist part of history of South Africa. However, contrary to other traditionalist in the novel, who stick to the old traditions and leave no room for changes, Nozizwe motivates Zodwa to take over leading the township when her father passes away because she is convinced that something has to change for the future to become promising. In the microcosm of the novel with the change starting in Ngoza, in a small South African township, the author seems to imply that such changes should take place in real South Africa in order for the country to finally start coping with its past, leave the past behind and look towards a promising future.

The various traditional processes taking place are – most of the time – unclear to the audience and difficult to follow or understand. The corpse of Baba Joshua, dead for several days and still looking the same, not smelling remains for a few chapters unclear to the reader. Unfortunately, it is only through such hideous play that Zodwa can keep her enemies away and be elected the new

leader of the township because sometimes “[...] people are willing to believe anything once it happens around death.”(357)

Confronting Johnny M at the Humiliation Tree is certainly one of the most incomprehensible magical processes of the novel. After having removed all their clothes, both Johnny M and Zodwa, in their struggle for power and taking over Baba Joshua’s place in the society, step into the river and, through a supernatural process are sent as far back in time as 200 years of South African history to meet their ancestors. Surely, with South African society being a strong patriarchal society, the ancestors do not welcome Zodwa in the way they welcome Johnny M. This certainly for the reason, that women do not have a tradition of leading in South Africa. However, despite the dissatisfaction of the ancestors, Zodwa, with the support of Nozizwe, Benedita and other women in the settlement, returns to the real world and takes over. She is finally ready to step into her father’s shoes and lead her settlement towards a better future, towards a new South Africa.

6.3 Historical accuracy as a form of traumatization in *The Memory of Stones*

Similar to *Mother to Mother* and *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, *The Memory of Stones* covers several important historical happenings and their influence on the life of the characters. Surely, all the historical happenings included in the novel, and the apartheid regime as such – as an on-going historical process – are strongly linked to the lives of the characters and have a particularly strong impact on them.

The apartheid regime is presented as an omnipresent traumatizing historical happening, which, despite its official abdication in 1990, still plays a central role in the lives of the characters. This is for the reason that four decades under the regime, destroyed and tore apart well-knitted communities, massacred and

tortured to death opponents of the regime and dictated the life of the blacks, those who were assumed to be a lower race and not equal to the whites.

The first and main traumatizing historical happening included in the novel is the relocation of the people of Ngoza in the 1970s, when the blacks were forced to leave Ngoza and move elsewhere. Interestingly, as aforementioned, the relocation of the inhabitants is perceived as a traumatizing event and not a condition. Thus, this form of traumatization has a starting point and ends the moment the inhabitants are given their land back and are allowed to go back to Ngoza. Nevertheless, the consequences and all the suffering that came with the act of relocation as such are omnipresent in the present of the narrative.

At the beginning of the novel, the audience encounters Baba Joshua and his followers back in Ngoza after such a long time, on a cold morning in June 1990, where they try to start anew. The starting point is difficult and rough because “The terrain is rough, stones and ruins jut out of the sparse bush, like jagged teeth on diseased gums.” (30-21) There is no help from the government, those responsible for the relocation. The inhabitants have to once again lay the foundations of their home, their township.

The atrocities, the traumatic experiences and the difficult life stories they had to live through are presented to the reader in retrospect. Particularly, the forced removal in the 1970s is to be found in all the life-stories of the inhabitants of the novel. While in exile, Baba Joshua for instance, “[r]emembers the moment of the first removal. The trucks. The police prodding people with *donkiepiele*, the billy clubs. The women weeping silently and the children wailing.” (31) After the death of his beloved wife Nomode, mother of his children, in exile, in KwaMashu, and with inhabitants of Ngoza, all looking to him to help them out, force Joshua to set a new goal in his life: “[...] to collect the scattered people with an aim to return to the place where his umbilical cord is buried. The strong traditional relationship between Baba Joshua’s people and the land they were born on plays a very important role in the novel, as they want to be buried where they were born. Zodwa’s mother however, despite her deathbed wishes

for her body to be taken back to Ngoza, is buried in a plot in KwaMashu. Next to her lies her son Jonah, another unfortunate and innocent victim of a ruthless regime.

For Zodwa, the resettlement as such is not as traumatizing as it is for her parents or other members of the clan. She and her brother Jonah, similarly to other children of exiles, learn to adapt to the new surroundings and do not share their parents' intense passion about going back to the place they were born. Surely, she is happy for her father and other inhabitants when they are allowed to move back to Ngoza in 1990, however, she believes to have found her place in the new South Africa and firmly believes that her future life cannot take place anywhere near Ngoza; Johannesburg seems to be her final choice.

Jonah, Joshua's son and Zodwa's brother, is only fifteen years old when he travels to Angola and joins the so-called armed wing of the African National Congress – Spear of the Nation. The killing of schoolchildren in Soweto on 16 June 1976, another historical event that is mentioned in passing in the novel is the catalyst for his action. According to Alistar Boddy-Evans, a history and science writer, in his online article "16 June 1976 Student Uprising in Soweto", the Soweto uprising was "the largest outbreak of violence South Africa had experienced." When in 1976 the Department of Education decided for Afrikaans to become the language of instruction at school, black students refused to be taught in the language of the colonizer and rose against the decree and against "[...] the education that [...] [was] designed to make [...] [them] slaves in the country of [...] [their] birth."²⁸ Officially, 23 students were killed and hundreds of people injured, when police dogs were released, teargas was fired and a policeman shot into the crowd without warning. In his closing paragraph, Boddy-Evans reinforces the importance of the Soweto Uprising for the change it brought to South Africa's history by stating that:

[a] new generation had made their voice of opposition to apartheid heard, and were determined to be listened to. Many left South Africa to

²⁸ <http://africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/a/Soweto-Uprising-Pt2.htm>

join the armies of the exiled political movements. Those who stayed behind ensured the exiled organizations could count on support from within the townships. June the 16th would never be forgotten.²⁹

In the novel, this particular historical happening stands for the turning point in Jonah's life, the day he turned his life around, left his family and went into exile, from where he hoped to do something in order to change and facilitate the life of his beloved ones. Contrarily to his father Joshua, Jonah believes that actions must be taken in order for South Africa's fate, particularly that of the black people, to change. Jonah's tragic and short life ends abruptly in early 1990, when he is shot dead by his former comrades. His personal life-story is only one tragic life-story among others included in this novel and dealt in detail in the following subchapter.

Interestingly, as opposed to other contemporary South African novels, which only deal with the heroic struggle of all those black soldiers among the rows of the ANC, *The Memory of Stones* does not only include the bright sides of the underworld war. The audience is finally acquainted with the other side of the coin and is presented the difficulties of the black South Africans who leave their families behind and join the armed wings of the ANC, hoping for a better life for themselves and for the families left behind in their motherland. The difficulties Jonah has to suffer during his training are enormous. Certainly, his young age – he is only fifteen years old – plays a significant role. His first encounter with weapons causes him nightmares.

On the first night in Viana, the transit camp in Luanda [...] Jonah wakes up after a dream and looks under the bed to find grenades, small pineapples, and an AK47 assault rifle fitted with a magazine to which is lashed another curved clip, the 7.62-mm cartridges shining in the gloom. It is the first time he has been so close to weapons. When he eventually falls asleep, he dreams that the grenades are rolling off towards him and he's warding them away. In the morning, his arms are sore, as if he spent the entire night wrestling with a phantom. (100)

However, after months of hard training, Jonah overcomes his fears and does his best in the army. He is even sent to the German Democratic Republic,

²⁹ *ibid.*

where he “ [...] studies military-combat-work (MCW), more firearms, engineering and returns to Luanda two years later a fully-fledged fighting machine.” (103) He is finally given a mission in South Africa, where he is captivated and spends more than two months in the cells of the security forces being tortured and interrogated. When the ANC invokes international law, Jonah is finally released and free to go. However, sadly enough, for Jonah, his captivation turns into his death sentence, as he is considered to be a so-called *impimpi*, a traitor, when he is finally set free.

The killing of Steve Biko in 1977, another important turning point in South African history, is briefly mentioned in the novel, and it refers to changes that came along with his killing for the political movement against the apartheid government. The killing of Chris Hani³⁰ by an illegal Polish immigrant in 1993 plays not only an important role regarding the critical point of time it took place, but also the impact it had on Benedita Venter’s life-story, who, blinded by her love for the South African population and its struggle against the white oppression, decides to attend the funeral and be nearly gang-raped by a furious group of young activists. Her respect for Chris Hani’s achievement for the South African country are stated clearly in the following quote, where she, despite the fact that she is kidnapped, wants to tell her kidnapper about the hero Chris Hani.

Benedita knew how Chris Hani had given South Africa the elections. After his assassination, which had almost plunged the whole country into an inferno, the only course that could avert the approaching explosion was the agreement of the National Party that April 1994 would be the time for elections. She felt an urge to tell them this, to explain, but instead she felt the soreness of her body and remembered that she had been kidnapped. (295)

³⁰ Martin Thembisile (Chris) Hani was a South African political activist, who was killed on 10 April 1993 by an anti-Communist illegal Polish immigrant, who had close links to the white nationalist AWB.. His killing is considered to be pivotal in the ending of apartheid, as it finally persuaded the Multi Party Negotiating Forum to set a date for South Africa’s first democratic election in 1994. (For more information see: http://africanhistory.about.com/od/chrishani/a/Bio-ChrisHani_2.htm or <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/tembisile-chris-hani>)

Finally, the apartheid regime as such is not only an inexhaustible source of traumatization, omnipresent in the life of each character during its official time of existence, but also when it is abolished, its consequences are still to be suffered by the black South Africans. The situation after the abolition of apartheid is discussed in Nerissa's shebeen. She is a victim and lover of Johnny M. To her, neither the abolition of the apartheid regime, nor the ten-year anniversary of The Congress of South African Trade Unions make a change, as to her, nothing has changed. The promised amelioration of the situation has still not taken place for the humble people of South Africa.

6.4 Life-stories of the new South Africans

The Memory of Stones does not only offer a vast myriad of historical happenings and their impact on the life of the characters of the story; the narrative tries to include as many life-stories as possible under the umbrella term New South Africa. Undoubtedly, as expected, a reconciliation, a reuniting of such a wide range of characters, seems an impossible task to achieve. However, *The Memory of Stones*, and particularly its end seems to imply in a subtle way that a living together can and is possible in a new South Africa. The intended fine interweaving of those life-stories seems to imply that a living together of the victims and the perpetrators can no longer be escaped. Thence, in the microcosm of the novel, the protagonists are forced to bury the hatchet and start anew.

Surely, reconciliation, forgiveness and overcoming trauma play an important role. However, the importance of finding one's place and re-defining one's identity in the new society, in a new South Africa should not be left unmentioned, as the largest part of the protagonists struggle with the process of the quest for identity. Clearly, given the fact that the rules of the apartheid regime no longer apply and all South Africans – regardless the colour of their skin – are all dignified South African citizens, complicates the process. The life-

stories of Mandla Langa's protagonists of *The Memory of Stones*, represent not only the difficult process of coming to terms with trauma and the traumatic experiences of the past, but also an on-going struggle about the new identity, new patterns and a living with those who once were known as the enemy. Not only in the microcosm of the novel, but also in the macrocosm called South Africa the limited number of the life-stories included in the novel stand as a symbol for the highly complex reality of a new South Africa, where both victims and perpetrators, blacks and whites should learn to live with each other and not next to each other.

To start with Zodwa, daughter of the spiritual leader and a young educated woman in a new South African society, she has to define herself and her role in the society already at an early age. Given the fact that she is the only child left when Jonah is killed, she feels the burden on her shoulders: her father wants her to become the new leader of the township and lead his followers towards a better life. The disappointment and the grief her father feels when he hears about his son's death, make Zodwa feel unwanted and insignificant. Obviously, she as a woman is not as valuable as her dead brother, who was initially supposed to continue the bloodline of her family.

She scanned her father's face and noticed that his skin had taken on a greyish tinge. Small bubbles frothed at the corners of his mouth. Seeing him in this condition, reduced from a scourge of sinners into a shell inhabiting a treacherous body, she understood that even though he loved her, he wished that his son were present to continue the bloodline. (173)

However, despite all the injustice done to her and all her rebellious actions, Zodwa seems to have finally found her way. She is away from her family at Fort Hare University, where she studies law, and hopes to move to Johannesburg after the studies. At first sight, Zodwa seems to have left her family and her homeland behind. However, on closer inspection, memories from the past about her deceased young brother, her father and other inhabitants of the township follow her. Despite the spatial distance between her and her family, she cannot stop but think about the people she left behind: about her dead brother Jonah

and her sick father Joshua. When her father falls seriously ill, Zodwa is forced to go back home and take care of him. However, taking care of her dying father is not the only problem she has to face; the settlement is constantly terrorized by Johnny M – a warlord – and the corrupted policemen. On a daily basis, the inhabitants face the terror of Johnny M, which takes different forms and shapes each day. Zodwa's uncle, Mbonga, wants to become the new leader after Joshua's death; however, his intentions for the settlement seem to be far from being honest and benevolent. Thence, Zodwa's new role in the society is predestined beforehand: she is to become the leader of the settlement and fight the evil.

As a woman and a leader of the settlement, Zodwa's life is far from being easy-going and peaceful. She seeks for coalition in order to be able to save her people and continue the peaceful tradition of her father. Supported by Nozizwe, Benedita and other women, Zodwa's life-story is a new, contemporary story. In a wider context, it is the story of a new South Africa, where dreams can come true and changes can be made. Women's place in the society of a nation with a strong patriarchal past, has to be redefined; South Africa's women, similarly to Zodwa, have to fight for their place in the new South Africa. Zodwa is told that her most dangerous enemy is not her uncle, but the traditionalists who "[...] cannot bear the idea of being ruled by a woman. Furthermore, they have allies among the women-folk, many of whom still haven't forgiven Zodwa for her dalliance with Horwitz." (221) At a later stage of the narrative, Zodwa states that "We're in the new South Africa, now. Secrets are supposed to have died with the past.' [...] 'I suppose I'm one of the most immediate examples of the past standing in the path of development.'" (323)

Zodwa's life-story is surely strongly intertwined with that of the other female protagonists, who find their way to Zodwa and support her in her struggle against old and discriminating traditions. Nozizwe, for instance, is one of the oldest protagonists in the narrative. She did not only support Joshua during his leadership, but continues to support Zodwa, when her father passes away.

When Joshua falls ill, it is Nozizwe's duty to convince Zodwa to take over once her father passes away. This is because she believes that Zodwa is the one who will follow Joshua's steps and his teachings about the way of life. Furthermore, with a leader woman, the women-folk of the townships seems to hope for better days.

'But [...] there are some of us, among the elders who wield power, who want you to take over. You also have natural allies among the more politicised women in the New River squatter camp, who are fed up to the teeth with the way men have run roughshod over them. (221)

Nozizwe herself does not have a family of her own. In a traditional South Africa, she is "[...] an ageless *inyanga*" (1), who helps Joshua and other inhabitants of the settlement with their problems. Joshua in particular seeks her advice and help every time he faces difficulties and complicated problems. Thus, Nozizwe's role in the settlement is already set at an early stage of the narrative. When Zodwa is born, Nozizwe's help is needed to make Zodwa break the silence and cry. Throughout Zodwa's journey of coming back home and taking over from her father, Nozizwe is always at her side and helps her prepare for her new role as a leader of the society. It is only through Nozizwe's help that Zodwa can overcome her fears and finally, stand up to Johnny M.

Benedita Venter, another important female protagonist of the story, becomes accidentally witness of Zodwa's promise to her father, to lead the settlement of Ngoza once he is gone. The first time the reader encounters Benedita, she seems to be in a struggle with herself. Benedita lives in London and works with different organizations supporting the South African struggle for freedom from the apartheid regime. The day she collapses outside Holborn underground railway station on Kingsway Road, her life is about to take a completely different turn. In her quest for identity in South Africa, Benedita – "(a) blessing" (74) – a South African-Scottish woman, who describes herself as a woman who is "[...] one gene short from being white; one from being black." (61), is told to go and find her father after a mysterious dream about her mother and her doctor. Similarly, to the magical process at the Tree of Humiliation, the dream Benedita

and her mother have obviously on the same night, is not understandable to the reader. After the night Benedita dreams about her mother and her South African doctor being naked, dancing and running off into the corridors, Benedita calls her. Interestingly, mother tells Benedita about her strange dream and adds: “Funny that you should call, [...] I had this crazy dream last night. [...] In my dream, I’m to tell you to go and find your father.” (71) However, before flying to South Africa, Benedita decides to seek the help of an *izangoma* and find out about the whereabouts of her father – “[...] a seaman [...] [who had] fled the country after someone had died. A white man. And he would have been hanged.” (75).

Despite all the sufferings and challenges Benedita faces in Ngoza, she finally seems to find her place in the settlement of Ngoza. She accompanies Zodwa throughout the whole process of taking and supports her whenever possible.

The life-story of Johnny M is one of the most tragic stories included in the novel. Despite the negativity surrounding Johnny M and his character throughout the narrative, the reader gets a glimpse on his sufferings and the traumatic experiences he went through. His unhealed trauma, the memories of the past and of what he experienced at a very early age, seem to have turned him into what he is throughout the narrative: a ruthless warlord, whose only interests are money and power.

When Johnny Mbazo comes to Ngoza, he is only seventeen years old and “freshly arrived from Magaliesbergstout skool, a reformatory that was as close to prison as anything.” (110) The day Johnny M and his girlfriend Mumsie are attacked and Johnny M has the chance to protect her, he is lured away from his girlfriend by the so-called Big Papa Dee. Johnny M runs errands for his boss and is showered with presents. Few days after Johnny M’s decision to deceive Big Papa Dee and “[...] starts cutting some of the dagga, finding his own customers and pocketing the change” (113), Johnny M ends in prison, after trying to sell to a customer who cooperates with the police. His days in Point

Prison, one of the harshest correctional facilities in the country, are the roughest and most disturbing days of his life, as he is gang-raped.

Johnny Mbazo fights, knowing that, if he succumbs, he is done for. But the odds are against him, the desperation of the men greater than his resolve to maintain dignity. A combined assault of the Twenty-sixes and-sevens leaves him weakened and bloody, his mouth and anus bruised in a gang rape. 'You're our woman now,' they inform him, 'and you'd better not forget that.' (114)

Johnny M is capable to escape his traumatic gang-rape and other traumatic experiences he makes in prison through literature, namely *The Collected Works* of William Shakespeare. By the time he is released, he knows Shakespeare's works by heart and uses quotes of these works in his miserable daily life.

With violence bringing violence and re-enactment of trauma taking place, Johnny M becomes the nightmare of the settlement. His brutality and ruthlessness are unheard. His humiliation, resentment, fury and hatred against the rapists increase his desire for revenge and make Johnny M devise a plot. "Much as he owes Peter something for the education, he knows, too, that if he sees that man, he will kill him, slowly, agonisingly, with joy. [...] He saw himself stuffing a stick of dynamite up Peter's wide arse, lighting the fuse..." (114) Nevertheless, Johnny M's time in prison seems to have let its mark on him, as among his numerous forced relations and sexual intercourse with women, Johnny M prefers men. His life however, resembles more and more one of Shakespeare's famous tragedies; particularly, when he shoots Colin – his boyfriend – and is found weeping like a child over Colin's lifeless body.

Colin was still trying to conjure up a pleasant idyllic image of Durban and its white beaches when Johnny M shot him at point-blank range in the face. He looked at Colin's ruined face and something choked up inside him. 'I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,' he said solemnly, 'for too much loving you.' (332)

Knowing the force of fear as a weapon, Johnny M is not afraid to use it against his enemies. After Joshua's death, when Zodwa does not make way neither for Johnny M nor for her uncle Mbongwa, Johnny M beats a man to

death in order to give a message to the spectators of the fight because “[he] knew the psychology of fear”(289)

They knew - they had to know that- Johnny M’s punishment of the man had nothing to do with Virgin. it was a message to them, to know now, and in the future, that they had to obey Johnny M, whatever it took. They knew without knowing that they were now accessories to murder. (288)

The ruthlessness of Johnny M knows no borders. He is the complete opposite of the women “ Zodwa, Nozizwe and Nerissa [who] determined that not a drop of blood of the innocent would be spilt [the night Zodwa has to finally face Johnny M].” (300) With a considerable amount of marchers “[...] who didn’t have the faintest idea why they were marching, but since *it was in their bloods*, they followed the leader, who were mostly following some thug who had another agenda. (301; emphasis added) It is only after people are burned alive that even the most ignorant marcher knows that it is fear which forces them to march because obviously, Johnny M knows no bounds. Those who do not want to join his march pay dearly for their disobedience. For instance:

Two old men who were either tired or drunk, or just contrary, defied the order to come out of their respective houses. Johnny M’s men wasted no time. They doused the shacks with petrol and set them alight. As the flames devoured the fragile cardboard and cooked the zinc walls, people stood, watched and then started chanting, egging the flames on, drowning the screams of the people, including women and children, trapped inside. *The smell of burning flesh*. (302; emphasis added)

Mpanza’s life-story reminds the reader very much of that of a tragic hero. As a soldier of the armed wing of the ANC and killer of one of his colleagues, Mpanza seeks to come to terms with his past and finally, settle down in the new South African society. However, things do not go as smoothly as planned, when he is denied his right to appear in front of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and tell his story about being given the task to execute his colleague Jonah. The lack of clarity around Jonah’s killing makes the situation not only for Mpanza, but also for his family – Baba Joshua and Zodwa - very difficult. Mpanza seeks to forget what he did to Jonah and his family, and finds consolation in drinking. Surely, his behavior has a strong impact on his wife and

children. To spare them any further disappointment and his tragic failure from a hero to an executor of his colleague, Mpanza chooses to leave his family.

I wanted to die when the truth finally came out. Through all these years of wandering, of pretending to live, I have been trying to atone for Jonah's death, exposing myself to danger, hoping to die. When I lunged at Johnny M – even though, seeing you, knowing you for that briefest moment had given me a reason for living – I still hoped to die, to make sure that I never endured this moment when all is revealed! (360)

Given the fact that he cannot tell his version of the story in the TRC, he decides to find Jonah's family and explain what happened. When finished, he hopes to finally find peace and continue with his life. However, things turn out other than expected, when Mpanza feels a strong affinity for Zodwa.

When Zodwa is finally told the truth about Jonah's death, the audience is presented the other side of the patriotic movement of the ANC:

[...] to be black and to betray was the greatest, most unforgivable sin in our eyes. It was in this spirit that we justified within ourselves why Jonah had to die. [...] Once the order had been given, we, the soldiers, had to execute it. With hindsight, now, how they must have laughed, watching our bungled attempts to follow him. [...] After shooting him, I managed to escape; Stan didn't - and he was hanged. All of us, then, were marked for death. (359-360)

Furthermore, Mpanza's confession of fault and the desperation he felt after the killing, tempt the audience to understand Mpanza and his motives. His desperate quest for peace comes finally to an end when Zodwa forgives him for killing her brother. Ultimately, Mpanza was no more than a victim of a system.

In the microcosm of the novel, the life-stories included represent only private life-stories of South Africans living in a very troubled South Africa and trying to find their place in the new South African community. However, when taking South Africa's development from a country with a political system, which gave the right to vote only to white people, to a democracy in 1994, the life-stories of the characters can be seen as symbols in the macrocosm – the changing reality of South Africa. Thus, Johnny M together with the corrupted chief of the police Grey, Mbongwa and other followers, symbolize the old regime, which still tries to hold onto power. Zodwa, Benedita and other female characters struggle,

similarly to all South African women living in such as patriarchal country, for a new, better, more respected role in the society. Mpanza is only one of the soldiers who come home and have to live with the pain the caused and the wounds they inflicted on others.

At both levels – the microcosm of the novel and the South African macrocosm – time and patience are needed for the protagonists to find their place in the society and the country to redefine itself. Among several other comparisons to the macrocosm of South Africa, the one listed below is one of the most remarkable ones, where the author does not only refer to the bitter reality of South Africa, but encourages the reader and the citizens of South Africa to consolidate and take matters into their own hands and do something for their country.

‘Why me?’ Zodwa wails. ‘I don’t know the simplest thing about this country. ‘Consider the political leadership of this country,’ Nozizwe says. ‘They are more familiar with fighting in the bush. They were thrown into a situation where they have to run a country. All of them have never voted before, not even for the village dogcatcher, but now they spread knowledge about voting, and got us the new government.[...] If anything goes wrong here, if people do not get running water and electricity, if the gangsters victimise women – can you honestly say then that you did right by not giving your father’s people – no, your people – a fighting chance? Will you hold your head high when you did not take a chance and helped build schools, so that our children’s children are also equipped to face the New World? Life [...] can only be lived when people take a chance to weave miracles out of nothing. (221-222)

Clearly, the characters of the novel similarly to the South African population, still have a very long path to follow before coming to terms with all the atrocities, traumatic experiences and finding their own place in society. However, the hopelessness reigning at the beginning of the novel is no longer omnipresent, as Zodwa dares to think about what could happen in the future, when historians and paleontologists will find and investigate the fossils found in Ngoza. Despite all the atrocities Zodwa and some protagonists of the novel, seem to have overcome the traumatization, left behind the past and seem to be looking toward a new future, a new South Africa, where apparently, dreams can

become true and changes are possible. As Mandla Langa seems to suggest with his novel, South Africa and its patterns are changing. Surely, traditions are still a very important part of the South African life, however, these traditions, similarly to Zodwa's life-story, are slightly changed in order to be compatible with new South Africa.

Despite the elapsed time, South Africa's past still has an extremely strong impact on its people and its present. Surely, it will probably influence the present strongly in the following years. However, as the author seems to imply, this process should not stop the people of South Africa from trying to overcome what they experienced and witnessed in the past and come to terms with their past in order to be able to continue with the present and the future.

Certainly, time has not healed all wounds yet because the atrocities the people had to face were of great bloody-mindedness. However, as the author implies, sometimes one cannot wait for the time to heal all the wounds, but both, victims and perpetrators, should seek for other ways of overcoming what they did and was done to them, in order to be able to face the truth and continue with life.

7 Conclusion

In a post-apartheid South Africa, the legacy of apartheid seems to be still a burdensome heritage from the past. The traumatic experiences shared among the South African people, the black population in particular, and the huge amount of losses endured under the apartheid regime, take and will probably take a long time to be healed or learnt to live with. Ultimately, after the abolition of apartheid in 1994, the racial segregation system has been revisited and dealt with in different forms and shapes. Beside historians, human rights activists and politicians, novelists, too, have contributed to overcome trauma and start anew. The vast number of contemporary novels dealing with apartheid, trauma and overcoming trauma is at the same time considerable and significant for the process of coming to terms with trauma as such. This is due to the reason that literature suggests different and new ways to live or cope with trauma.

Surely, even nowadays apartheid and its atrocities are still part and will probably continue to be of the South African life for a long time to come. The traumatic experiences caused by the regime continue to be omnipresent in the society. This for the reason that the society needs more time to overcome trauma and learn to integrate the past in the present. In the novels, the trauma takes the form of underground Border War soldiers, responsible for the killings of their comrades, coming back home and seeking to settle in the society; of traumatized black and white children escaping the place they were born in, believing to escape trauma, forced to return back home at a later point in the narrative in order to be able to face and overcome what was done to them at an early and usually innocent age; the form of a desperate black South African mother seeking sympathy for her son and trying to justify his wrongdoings by telling the sad story of her life – a life-story, which surely corresponds to a large number of black South African women. The largest part of the protagonists of the contemporary South African novels included in this thesis have at least one loss to mourn, one family member or friend killed, murdered or disappeared without a trace. The dreadful living conditions, the insufficient and partly non-

existent education, the second-class treatment complicate the already highly complex living situation of the black population in South Africa.

Concerning the sense of time and trauma, time is indeed needed for trauma victims and trauma survivors to learn to cope, face and live with the traumatic experiences. If a complete healing, as suggested by Caruth cannot be achieved, surely, trauma victims, as shown in the examples included in the preceding chapters, can learn to face and live with what was done to them; they can learn to incorporate trauma in their lives. The reintegration of both perpetrators and victims in the South African society, as suggested by the novelists included in this thesis, is possible and necessary. However, for such a huge step to take place, time is needed.

Undoubtedly, it will take a long time for the old wounds of the South African society to be closed and for the emotional scars to be healed; however South Africa has a past, a present and surely a promising future. Not only the novels included in this thesis, but a great number of contemporary South Africans novels contribute substantially to South Africa's future prospect. Similarly to Mandla Langa's *The Memory of Stones*, many others novels suggest a myriad of ways for South Africa's future. It is up to the South African society to seize the chance, finally leave history behind and start anew. As suggested by the novels, a co-living between the white and black race is necessary for the South African society to move towards a better, a more promising future: the future of the rainbow nation.

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10 Appendix

10.1 Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit „Trauma and the sense of time in contemporary South African novels“ untersucht die Rolle sowie die Bedeutung des zeitlichen Aspektes in der Aufarbeitung von Trauma und traumatischer Erlebnisse in der kontemporären südafrikanischen Literatur. Mit Ende der jahrelangen Unterdrückung und Erniedrigung durch das Apartheid Regime versuchte Südafrika seinen eigenen Weg aus der Krise, aus der tiefsten Traumatisierung des Landes zu finden. Selbstverständlich war solch eine Aufgabe weder einfach noch anspruchslos, denn die Traumatisierung des Volkes, vor allem der schwarzen SüdafrikanerInnen, die bekanntlich am meisten unter dem Apartheidregime litten, war und ist nach wie vor tief verwurzelt.

Etliche Theorien zum Konzept Trauma und Traumatisierung von Kriegsüberlebenden, Opfern und Überlebenden von Vergewaltigungen, Mordversuchen, Gewalt, Unterdrückung, Erniedrigungen und weiteren Unmenschlichkeiten, waren spätestens seit dem Vietnamkrieg, vor allem in Europa und in den Vereinigten Staaten, sehr bekannt. Hierbei sind die auftretenden posttraumatischen Belastungsstörungen bei Vietnam-Veteranen von großer Bedeutung. Unterschiedliche Autoren, die sich mit dem Begriff Trauma auseinandersetzten, stießen jedoch beim Versuch, die bereits bekannten Muster der Analyse und Aufarbeitung von Trauma an das südafrikanische Volk anzuwenden, sehr bald an ihre Grenzen. Rückblickend betrachtet, herrscht Einigkeit darüber, dass ein derartiger Prozess bereits von Anfang an zum Scheitern verurteilt ist. Die sich daraus ergebenden Ursachen sind vielfältig und zahlreich.

Heilung von Trauma, Aufarbeitung des Erlebten und anschließend das Einbauen der erschütternden Erfahrung in die eigene Lebensgeschichte, ist ein unverzichtbarer Teil der Zukunftsbewältigung. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem traumatischen Erlebnis muss stattfinden, damit man als Traumaüberlebender in der Lage ist, sich mit dem Erlebten

auseinanderzusetzen und dieses in sein/ ihr Leben zu integrieren, um überhaupt weiterleben zu können. Das Trauma des südafrikanisches Volkes ist nicht und darf nicht bloß als ein Ereignis mit einem Ausgangs- und Endzeitpunkt betrachtet werden. Die Wichtigkeit der Rolle der Zeit ist an dieser Stelle nicht zu unterschätzen. Somit geht die Grundhypothese dieser Arbeit davon aus, dass die Traumatisierung des südafrikanisches Volkes aus dem Grund anders zu betrachten ist, weil Trauma nicht als ein Ereignis mit einem Anfang und einem Ende dargestellt wird, sondern sich in Südafrika in einem Zustand verwandelt hat, der das Land in den Ruin zu treiben droht. Weitere wichtige Komponenten dürfen auch nicht außer Betracht gelassen werden und müssen in der Analyse der literarischen afrikanischen post-apartheid Werke miteinbezogen werden: Rassismus, Unterdrückung oder Ungerechtigkeit sind nur einige der vielen Gegebenheiten, die an dieser Stelle erwähnt werden können.

Die literarischen Werke *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, *Mother to Mother* und *The Memory of Stones* geben dem südafrikanischen Volk die Möglichkeit, sich mit seiner Vergangenheit und all den grausamen Erlebnissen auseinanderzusetzen, zu Recht zu kommen und zu trauern, um mit der Vergangenheit abzuschließen und in die Zukunft blicken zu können.

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