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Katharina Aigner

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

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1 INTRODUCTION

Trauma is in the blood for the people of South Africa. They can neither escape nor ignore it (Magona 2012:93)

South Africa's history is marked by centuries of violence, oppression, and suffering. Magona views "the coming of the white tribe into the continent" (2012:95) in the 17th century as "the most single violent event in the nation's history" (95). Indeed, the Whites, whose intention became to take over the continent by drawing on violence and suppression, brought a lot of suffering to those affected by this violence: the black inhabitants, who already lived on the continent many centuries before the Whites entered it. Thus, with the arrival of the Whites, a violent struggle for power began, with the Whites emerging as winners. When in 1948 the National Party became the ruling party in South Africa and apartheid became law in South Africa, the Blacks definitely lost this struggle for power. The devastating apartheid laws and the way the Blacks were treated both by the government and the police as well as by their white fellow inhabitants can indeed be regarded as traumatizing. Not only were they suppressed and disadvantaged in all spheres of life, but they were also forced to live in poverty, work for white households or farm owners or under devastating conditions in gold mines, treated like slaves without any rights. Thus, it is no wonder that South Africa is considered to be a collectively traumatized nation. The Blacks are traumatized due to years of suppression, but also the white inhabitants were and are clearly affected by the country's past conditions and racism that still prevails in the country. When the apartheid era ended in 1994 when the ANC (African National Congress) became the governing party, the Blacks got back their rights. However, getting back their rights and the sudden equality of Blacks and Whites could not make up for decades or even centuries of suppression. Naturally, the Blacks, who developed hatred and rage towards the Whites, were and are still seeking for revenge. Thus, South Africa is still a country with one of the highest crime rates. Rape, murders and other violent acts are still daily fare in South Africa – the country is still traumatized.

Hence, due to the ugly history of South Africa and the trauma the inhabitants had to face, one can say that trauma in South Africa is not only an individual

phenomenon but concerns the whole nation. There are many forms of trauma to be observed. They are partly political, go back to apartheid time: e.g. forced relocations or township violence and farm attacks; others, like bereavement and survivor guilt, partly have to do with the still prevailing violence in South Africa as losing a beloved one or having survived while another one had to die may indeed be traumatizing.

People are also traumatized by widespread beliefs and shared attitudes – homophobia is one of these shared attitudes. Child abuse and rape are both common crimes in South Africa, events doubtlessly as well being traumatizing. Moreover, South Africa's inhabitants frequently have to deal with a phenomenon called transgenerational trauma – an unsolved trauma is passed on to the next generations.

As pointed out by Mengel and Borzaga, “apartheid's traumas are also ‘in the blood’ of South African literature. Novels are replete with stories of trauma and violence” (xix) and this thesis, which examines different forms of traumatization in South Africa, analyzes how these forms are embedded in contemporary South African novels. The following novels will be dealt with: *Bitter Fruit* by Achmat Dangor, *Mother to Mother* by Sindiwe Magona, *Kings of the Water* by Mark Behr, *Quarter Tones* by Susan Mann, *It's me, Anna* by Elbie Lötter, *The Dreamcloth* by Joane Fedler and *A Blade of Grass* by Luis Desoto.

Bitter Fruit describes the story of Lydia, who is raped during the apartheid era because of her husband's involvement in the ANC. Not only does the rape traumatize Lydia, but also her whole family.

Mother to Mother illustrates the traumatizing effects of the living conditions in South African townships, of the prevailing township violence and of the forced removals of Blacks during apartheid time.

In *Kings of the Water*, the homosexual Michiel experiences the traumatizing attitudes of a homophobic nation and of his own family.

In *Quarter Tones*, Ana, whose mother died when giving birth to her, struggles with the traumatizing effects of survivor guilt and bereavement. *It's me, Anna* deals with child abuse – Anna's stepfather physically, emotionally and sexually abuses Anna for years, and she struggles with the symptoms of this traumatization.

In *The Dreamcloth*, Mia inherits the personal trauma of her grandmother Maya. Thus, the novel deals with transgenerational trauma.

In *Blade of Grass*, the traumatizing effects of farm attacks and farm murders are examined: Märit, the wife of a farmer on a remote border farm, loses her husband in a farm attack.

2 TRAUMA

2.1 TRAUMA- DEFINITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Trauma is “a violent emotional blow, especially one which has a lasting psychic effect; a neurological condition from physical or emotional injury” (The New Lexicon – Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language 1050¹).

Magona defines trauma as “a morbid condition produced by wounds or external violence” (2012:93), and according to the American Psychiatric Association a person is traumatized when he or she “experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others; [and] the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror” (qtd. in Allen 4).

But what distinguishes trauma from a stressful event or experience? According to Huber, some people experience one and the same event (e.g. car accident) as stressful, whereas for others it is a traumatic one (37). Similarly, Allen declares that “there is no clear dividing line between ‘stress’ and ‘trauma’”(4), and according to van der Kolk and McFarlane, “the critical element that makes an event traumatic is the subjective assessment by victims of how threatened and helpless they feel” (6).

When experiencing a traumatizing event, the human brain is flooded with so-called aversive stimuli, which comprise, to give some examples, being attacked, seeing a weapon, being touched hurtfully or seeing radiographs showing that you are beyond recovery– the brain experiences these stimuli as extremely life-threatening, and this leads to the above mentioned feelings of helplessness, fear and horror in the affected person. (Huber 39-40)

Fight or flight

The human brainstem is biologically equipped with two different reflexes that are usually activated when being in danger or being threatened – the fight or flight reflexes, i.e. the affected person either flees or fights when being in danger, depending on the situation (Huber 41). To put it differently, when

¹ “Trauma”. *The New Lexicon. Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language*. New York: Lexicon, 1990.

experiencing a threatening event, the human brain naturally activates the sympathetic nervous system, which leads to an adrenaline rush in the affected person, and the thereby evoked feelings of fear and anger prepare the person to either fight or flee (Herman 1997: 34).

According to Huber, these natural fight-or-flight reflexes can prevent a traumatization, provided the fighting or the fleeing has been successful (41). However, if neither the fighting nor the fleeing is successful or if there is no fight-or-flight response to a life-threatening event at all due to its severity, a trauma may develop (Huber, 43). Flight and fight become impossible as “the human system for self-defense becomes overwhelmed and disorganized [and] each component of the ordinary response to danger [...] tends to persist in an altered and exaggerated state long after the actual danger is over” (Herman 1997: 34).

2.2 TYPES OF TRAUMA

2.2.1 SINGLE-BLOW TRAUMA VS. REPEATED TRAUMA

Traumas are classified into different categories. Terr distinguishes between the so-called ‘single-blow trauma’ or ‘type I trauma’, implying that a person is traumatized due to a single event, and ‘repeated trauma’, also referred to as ‘type II trauma’ (1991:327-328). Allen cites natural disasters like earthquakes, fires and hurricanes, technological disasters like plane crashes or nuclear reactor failures, and criminal violence like burglary or rape (if they happen once) as examples of a single-blow trauma (Allen 5-6). Examples of repeated traumas are, among others, being in prison for political reasons, being in a concentration camp or repetitive abuse of sexual, physical or emotional nature (6). Single-blow traumas and repeated traumas do not cause the same reactions, as single blow traumas “do not appear to breed the massive denials, psychic numbings, self-anesthesia, or personality problems that characterize the [repeated trauma] disorders” (Terr 1991:327). Similarly, Herman declares that the symptoms of PTSD² caused by repeated trauma are more intense and persistent than the symptoms caused by a single-blow trauma – she speaks of ‘complex PTSD’ in which the hyperarousal symptoms as well as the intrusive symptoms and the

² The concept of PTSD and its symptoms are described in chapter 2.3.1.

constriction symptoms are more intense and persistent, and in general “the symptom picture in survivors of prolonged trauma often appears to be more complex, diffuse, and tenacious than in simple PTSD” (Herman 1992, 379).³

To put it briefly, the general assumption is that repeated traumatic experiences lead to more severe consequences than single traumatic experiences (Allen 6).

2.2.2 MAN-MADE TRAUMA VS. NATURAL TRAUMA

Allen distinguishes between man-made trauma (such as war and political violence, criminal violence, rape, domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse and sadistic abuse) and natural trauma, in which no human being contributes to the traumatization (6-12). Gedina refers to this very distinction as ‘facticity’ and ‘agency’, assuming that it has different impacts on the way the victim copes with the trauma, depending on whether it was ‘something’ or ‘someone’ that causes the trauma (2). She asserts that

when someone falls and breaks a leg, that is facticity; if someone intentionally breaks another person’s leg, that is agency. [...] When considering something like trauma, facticity versus agency can make a great deal of difference. It is one thing to have a leg broken [...]; it is a very different thing to have someone intentionally break one’s leg [...] That injury didn’t just happen, it was *done*. (2)

Hence, coping with a trauma is much more difficult if a human being caused the trauma and it becomes even more difficult if a person close to the victim caused the trauma.

2.2.3 INTERPERSONAL TRAUMA

Findling, Bratton and Henson call this type of trauma, in which the perpetrator is a loved one of the victim, ‘interpersonal trauma’ and define it as the loss of trust in a person close to the victim because this close person either abused the victim emotionally, physically or sexually, neglected or abandoned her (18). Thus, domestic violence can be defined as a form of interpersonal trauma (Findling 27). Interpersonal trauma is also referred to as ‘betrayal trauma’, since the victim is betrayed by a caregiver (Hulette, Kaehler and Freyd 217).

³ See Herman 1997: 86-87 & Herman 1992: 379.

2.2.4 INDIVIDUAL VS. COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

One also has to distinguish between individual trauma, affecting an individual person, and collective or societal trauma, affecting a whole group of people, respectively a society. Collective trauma can result from either natural disasters (Volkan 1) like tsunamis or earthquakes destroying homes of thousands of people, but also wars or annihilating political systems like the apartheid system in South Africa may cause a collective trauma. Hence, the whole nation suffers from feelings of helplessness and horror – typical symptoms of a traumatization. Kühner defines collective trauma as an event that concerns collective identity and is experienced as particularly relevant for the affected society (2008: 89). Similarly, Erikson defines collective trauma as “blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together” (233). To name one specific example of a collective trauma: The events of 9/11 – although most of the Americans were not inside the attacked buildings and did not even know anyone got killed by the attacks, “people across the country suffered adverse effects” (Seery et al. 657).

South Africa is considered to be a nation suffering from collective trauma, as its history of colonialization and apartheid affected and traumatized the whole nation. Further details on collective trauma and how the nation South Africa is affected by it will be discussed in chapter three.

2.3 EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

“The traumatic event has ended, but the reaction has not”. (Allen 4)

A traumatization carries numerous effects – not only on emotions, the memory, the personal development, the consciousness, but also on the development of the self and on relationships with others (Allen 169). Furthermore, several disorders may develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatizing event, such as depressive disorders (Allen 218), personality disorders (Huber 117), dissociative disorders (Allen 191), anxiety disorders (Allen 216), and eating disorders (Allen 225). Also substance abuse (219) is a typical reaction to cope with a traumatizing event. Although, according to Yehuda and McFarlane there is never only one disorder that develops in the aftermath of a traumatization, as “high rates of comorbidity – multiple psychiatric disorders in one person – are common” (qtd. in McNally 88-89), there is one type of anxiety disorder standing

out from all the above mentioned disorders, namely the posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as it is “most directly related to trauma” (Allen 170).

2.3.1 PTSD

Traumatic (catastrophic) events, in contrast with ordinary stressful experiences, have been linked etiologically to a specific syndrome, that of PTSD [...] [-] a specific syndrome that is the signature disorder in victims of trauma. (Breslau 1)

The post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is considered to be an anxiety disorder – Leys defines it as “a disorder of memory” (2), developing from a traumatic event that carries several symptoms which will be discussed below. The reason for the development of PTSD is obviously a traumatic event or experience. However, not every traumatic experience automatically causes PTSD – as a matter of fact only a small percentage of people who experienced a traumatic event develop PTSD (Van der Kolk & McFarlane 5).

Naturally, no one who experienced a traumatic event will go on with his/her life as if nothing has happened. Fear, anger, reliving the traumatizing event, avoiding thinking about it (Huber 111) and intrusive memories (Allen 5) are normal reactions to horrifying experiences. Intrusive memories, which are memories overwhelming the affected person again and again, are responsible for the alteration of unbearable emotions, which helps to cope with these painful memories (Allen 5). However, some individuals, for whatever reasons, are not able to embed these memories into their lives, and this serves as the pathway for the development of PTSD (Van der Kolk & McFarlane 6). Additionally, Huber notes that if the above-mentioned reactions/symptoms last longer than four weeks, they can be classified as chronic and one can speak of PTSD (112). However, as already mentioned, not every dreadful experience causes PTSD. Davidson and Fairbank assume that the severity of the trauma has significant influence on the development of PTSD, i.e. the more serious a traumatic event is, the more probable is the development of PTSD and consequently the more serious are the symptoms of PTSD (qtd. in Allen 184).

Besides the assumption that the severity of the traumatization determines whether PTSD develops or not, there is also the presumption that the type of trauma and what Breslau calls ‘prevention methods’ play a significant role in the development of the disorder. As examples for such prevention methods he

gives 'talking about the traumatizing event immediately after it had happened' (also referred to as 'debriefing') and consequently 'receiving support and help from the social environment' (Breslau 19). Similarly, Huber includes the missing support and the missing talk after a traumatizing event in the list of factors promoting the development of PTSD. According to her, events contributing to the development of PTSD and severe symptoms of PTSD repeat themselves regularly, last long, cause severe physical injuries, and include interpersonal violence, sexual violence or torture. Furthermore, sympathy and emotional closeness towards the perpetrator, the feeling of being co-responsible for the deed and a not yet fully developed or disturbed personality of the victim may also promote the development of PTSD. (Huber 75)

2.3.1.1 SYMPTOMS OF PTSD

Herman categorizes the symptoms of PTSD into hyperarousal, intrusion and constriction (1997:35).

HYPERAROUSAL

When confronted with specific stimuli, the bodies of people who suffer from PTSD show psychophysical reactions, meaning the victims react physically as if they were in acute danger although they actually are in complete safety (Van der Kolk & McFarlane). Thus, traumatized persons have the perpetual feeling of being in danger and constantly fear the reoccurrence of the experienced threat (Herman 35), and even a small and harmless stimulus evokes negative feelings and burdensome physical symptoms. Van der Kolk and McFarlane call this phenomenon "generalization of threat"(13).

Hyperarousal symptoms are, according to the DSM-IV, the "difficulty [of] falling or staying asleep, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty [of] concentrating, hypervigilance, and exaggerated startle response" (American Psychiatric Association qtd. in Allen 172-173). Furthermore, physical symptoms like

dizziness, blurred vision, altered consciousness [...] pounding heart and irregular or rapid heartbeat [...], tremor, various pains, headache, weakness, [...] nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, difficulty swallowing, [...] breathlessness, irregular breathing, hyperventilation, [...] urge to urinate, perspiration, [and] fever (Allen 173)

are as well considered to be typical hyperarousal symptoms.

Responsible for these reactions are “complex psychological and biological processes” (van der Kolk & McFarlane 13). Kardiner and Spiegel (qtd in Allen 36) as well as Grinker and Spiegel (219), who observed traumatized soldiers of the Second World War, ascribe the mentioned reactions to a chronically aroused autonomic nervous system.

A nervous system that is not *chronically* aroused due to traumatization, but *ordinarily* aroused due to actual danger reacts with the same symptoms as mentioned for the simple reason of warning. This important function of the nervous system is disturbed in traumatized people, as their nervous system is hyperaroused and sends warning signs *constantly*. As a consequence the victims are not able to reckon on the reactions of their bodies when actual threat occurs – they “stop serving as guides for action [and] [t]he person’s own physiology becomes a source of fear” (Van der Kolk & McFarlane 13). (see Van der Kolk & McFarlane 13)

INTRUSION

The second PTSD is ‘intrusion’, and according to Herman it includes nightmares, reliving the past, dreams and nightmares, repetition, reenactment of the trauma and flashbacks (1997: 37). All in all one can call this symptom-category ‘re-experiencing of the traumatization’, and Allen calls this re-experiencing the “hallmark of PTSD” (173). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) lists the following symptoms included in the symptom-category ‘intrusion’:

recurrent and intrusive distressful recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions; recurrent distressful dreams of the event; acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring, including a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes; intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event; and physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event. (American Psychiatric Association qtd. in Allen 174)

A flashback, which is a sudden intensive re-experiencing of parts of the traumatization (Huber 69), is, according to Allen, the “most vivid form of re-experiencing” (174) and even long after the actual traumatization the victim experiences these flashbacks as vivid as in the moment of the actual traumatization (Van der Kolk & Fisler 509). In a flashback the victim completely

avoids reality and emotions connected to the trauma return in their full intensity (Allen 176). Trigger for such a flashback is in most cases a situation or stimuli of any kind reminding the victim of the trauma.

Moreover, dreams and nightmares, including parts of the experienced traumatization, are characteristic symptoms and can be classified as 'reliving of the trauma'. Freud states that "dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his [trauma], a situation from which he wakes up in another fright" (13). Kardiner and Spiegel affirm that these nightmares can occur unaltered or in altered versions of the actual traumatic event again and again for years and are very characteristic of PTSD (201).

Furthermore, flashbacks, in the form mentioned above, may also occur during sleep as "relatively straightforward replicas of the trauma" (Allen 176). This can lead to a fear of falling asleep in the victims, as these flashbacks come with fear and intensive, nearly unbearable emotions. Additionally, dreams, even when they are not exact replicas of the actual trauma, may serve as activators for further flashbacks and intrusive recollections (Allen 167). Hence, nightmares/dreams and flashbacks are closely connected since nightmares may trigger flashbacks during the day and vice versa (Allen 91).

Another form of reliving the trauma is the reenactment of the traumatic event (McNally 117), and this form especially occurs in traumatized children – they frequently reenact their trauma in their play. According to Terr, post-traumatic play is easy to recognize since this play is, in contrast to ordinary play, grim and dreary and it is repeated again and again (1990: 238, 239, 247). However, reenactment does not only concern children - also some adults reenact their trauma. Although this reenactment may happen consciously, it is more common that victims reenact parts of their traumatization unconsciously. Thereby, the victims either reenact the traumatic event unaltered or in a modified or disguised version. (Herman 1997: 39-40)

CONSTRUCTION

The third symptom-category 'constriction', also called 'avoidance and numbing' (see Allen 178), is characterized by the victim's unconscious attempt to avoid

situations, thoughts and feelings reminding her of the trauma and the avoidance of places and people associating with the trauma. Moreover, she is unable to retell the trauma and she feels alienated and detached from other people⁴ (American Psychiatric Association 428 qtd. in Allen 178). According to Allen, “the mind quite naturally tries to shut off the overwhelming stimulation” (178). As a consequence people suffering from PTSD often have a constricted isolated life since they are constantly busy avoiding situations that may trigger fear and panic (Allen 179).

Traumatized people have the unconscious ability to block the traumatic event from their consciousness, which is a form of self-defense as the victim could not bear thinking about the traumatizing event and the pain coming with it (Herman 43). Although PTSD is categorized as an anxiety disorder, this phenomenon of blocking memory from consciousness overlaps with the symptoms of dissociative disorders (Allen 179) – dissociation is a phenomenon that will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.3.1.2 SUBSTANCE ABUSE

PTSD is frequently linked with substance abuse, such as drugs and alcohol. Several studies found that “having PTSD increases the risk of having an SUD”⁵ (Stewart & Conrod 29). Substance abuse as reaction to trauma can be classified into the PTSD symptom-category ‘avoidance and numbing’ as substances temporarily dull emotions such as rage and anxiety (Allen 179). Moreover, traumatized people have the strong wish to numb and diminish any kind of feeling and the abuse of drugs or alcohol might help them to do so (50).

2.3.2 EFFECTS ON THE SELF AND ON RELATIONSHIPS

Traumatic events may have effects both on the self and on relationships with other people. Herman constitutes the term ‘disconnection’ to describe the alterations in the relationship with oneself and with others. According to her, traumatic events may cause changes in the self in the sense that it gets damaged, i.e. the victim “loses her basic sense of self” (1997: 52). Whereas people who experienced a single-blow trauma may ‘only’ feel as if not being

⁴ In this thesis the victim is referred to as ‘she’ to avoid the constant use of plural and the disturbing use of he/she. Of course, this does not mean that male victims are excluded.

⁵ SUD= substance use disorders.

themselves anymore, chronically traumatized people, that is people who had to experience prolonged and repeated trauma, may have the feeling of not having a self anymore at all (Herman 1992: 385).

During childhood the self that is *inter alia* made up of “autonomy, self-definition, individuality, responsibility [...] [and] initiative” (Allen 128), develops. A traumatic event that overpowers the self may cause the loss of these skills, concepts and qualities, and what remains is the feeling of emptiness, effete-ness and fragmentation (Allen 134). The self-esteem and autonomy a child usually develops out of feelings of being respected and valued may shatter due to traumatization and as a consequence the victim is not any longer able to form and to state an own opinion (Herman 1997: 52). Moreover, traumatized people feeling angry and aggressive toward their perpetrators may actually turn those feelings toward themselves which may lead to self-destructiveness, self-loathing and self-hatred and even to deliberate self-harm. (Allen 138-139).

The self and the relationship with others are entangled as Allen points out that “your sense of self gives definition to your relationships with others and your ‘self’ is inconceivable apart from your surrounding context of relationships” (128). Thus, the way you see yourself has an impact on the way others see you, and consequently this has again an impact on relationships with others. According to Allen, traumatized people who lost connection to their selves, long for stability and security and hope to find them in relationships. However, due to effects of trauma on the attachment system, a traumatized person may lose trust and faith in other people and is often unable to find the safety and protectiveness she is seeking, in relationships. (Allen 146-149)

Allen also observed, among other issues, “isolation, yearning, fearfulness, [and] extreme needs for control” in relationships of traumatized people (158). As mentioned above, isolation and yearning correlate - traumatized people *yearn for* but may have difficulties to *find* stability and security in relationships because “the history of trauma abets isolation” (Allen 159). Moreover, yearning and fearfulness constitute a contradiction, since on the one hand the victim yearns for security in a relationship, but on the other hand she may distrust and fear other people (159). Additionally, due to the fear of the feeling of helplessness, traumatized people may develop an extreme need for control and the need to

exercise control over other people (161). To put it in a nutshell, building a relationship or place one's trust in someone may constitute a difficult challenge for a traumatized person since the trauma may negatively affect all areas of daily life.

2.3.3 EFFECTS ON EMOTIONS

The basic functions of emotions are to inform about the inner state of the soul, to signal that something needs to be done against certain problems, to protect, and to prepare for either fleeing or fighting. However, emotions in traumatized individuals have lost their basic functions as many of the victims have learned how to suppress feelings or at least weaken them. Nonetheless, there are feelings that cannot be cut off, and as traumatic individuals may neither understand nor classify and clarify these intense feelings overcoming them, they may, as a result, experience them as "internal chaos" (Allen 50). Thus, the basic functions of emotions may be subverted. (Allen 50)

Allen names four categories of the above mentioned intense emotions that traumatized individuals may not be able to suppress, namely anxiety/fear/panic (51), anger/rage/aggression (53), shame and guilt (59), and depression (61). These emotions are closely linked with trauma.

Anxiety/fear/panic

Traumatized people are often terrified or they might even panic without knowing why or knowing how to cope with these sudden emotions. Hence, panic is triggered by something happening in the surroundings that is unconsciously associated with a past traumatic event and this triggers fear, anxiety and at worst a panic attack. (Allen 51-53)

Depression

Depression is as well a common emotional response to trauma. As discussed above, traumatic events may have severe and negative effects on the self and on self-esteem, and according to Allen a "low self-esteem goes with depression" (Allen 63). He claims that depression and fear are closely linked, but people who are anxious are willing and ready to do something against it, whereas depressed people do not have the energy to act in any way. Anxiety triggers helplessness whereas depression triggers hopelessness. However,

helplessness that is long-lasting and persistent may result in depression, which indicates the connection between anxiety and depression. (Allen 62-63)

Seligman points out that 'learned helplessness', which refers to the giving up of trying to struggle, has similarities to depression as they both share "the belief that action is futile" (93).

Anger/rage/aggression

As already mentioned in a previous chapter, traumatized people may bear intense feelings of aggression and anger against their perpetrators or simply against the experience they had to make, and for victims it can be of great difficulty to cope with these feelings of aggression in terms of expressing them. Allen states the possibility of aggression to turn uncontrolled or even destructive and names vengefulness, sadism and cruelty as examples of uncontrolled aggression (55). Rage, hostility and hate are, according to Parens, examples of destructive aggression (117). Hostility leads to gratuitous feelings of anger and aggression; thus, traumatized people may feel aggressive and antagonistic without being provoked and given a reason to. Allen asserts that "a hostile person [...] may seem generally nasty and ill-tempered" (55).

Thus, besides the already mentioned fact that traumatized people may turn anger and aggression as well as feelings of hatred against themselves, these feelings may also destroy relationships (Allen 55, 58).

Guilt and shame

Any events or situations that have negative effects on the way someone sees herself may lead into feelings of shame, and as already mentioned traumatic events can indeed have negative effects on the self. Thus, shame and the feelings of embarrassment and humiliation it is accompanied with, is a common feeling associated with trauma, especially when systematic abuse caused the traumatization as by humiliating and attacking the victim the perpetrator arouses shame in the victim. Interestingly, shame and guilt often occur together, as victims may feel guilty of not having acted according to their principles and values during the traumatization. (Allen 60)

Allen mentions the example of "a woman who is raped [and] may feel that she has acted sinfully, even when a knife was held to her throat" (60). Other traumatized people may start feeling responsible for what has been done to

them, and this feeling of responsibility may consequently result in the feeling of guilt (60).

And again, the feeling of shame may have negative effects on the self and on relationships to others, as Nathanson determines both self-attack and attacking others as ways of avoiding the feeling of shame. He states that by humiliating others, traumatized people may feel as if shifting their own shame onto others so that *they* feel ashamed (qtd. in Allen 60-61). Thus, shame and aggression are related since shame is, according to Allen, “a common instigator of rage [and] becoming enraged can lead to a sense of being *out of control* that fuels shame” (61).

2.3.4 DISSOCIATION

The phenomenon of dissociation explains why traumatized people develop feelings of anxiety, shame, aggression and other negative feelings without knowing why they feel this way. Allen states that “many people who are overwhelmed by traumatic experience learn to cope with it by altering consciousness” (191), i.e. in order not to feel the horror a trauma carries in its full intensity, victims unconsciously suppress memories of the traumatic event. Hence, they either fully or partly suppress the event or the brain unconsciously alters parts of it.

Huber uses the terms freeze and fragment⁶ to describe the reactions happening in the very moment a traumatization takes place. She states that, when fighting or fleeing, which are normal reactions when being in danger, are no options or simply not possible, there is no other possibility for the human brain as to freeze and as a consequence, to fragment (43). In other words, “dissociation is a way to escape” (Allen 191). When it is not possible to defeat the aggressive stimulus externally, the human organism distances itself from it internally, in order to neutralize the unbearable fear (Huber 43). A raped victim describes the rape situation as follows: “I couldn’t scream. I couldn’t move. I was paralyzed.” (qtd. in Bart & O’Brian, 47). What follows is fragmentation/dissociation: the threatening event and how the affected person has experienced this event, is

⁶ Huber uses the term ‘fragmentation’ as a synonym for ‘dissociation’.

splintered. Consequently, the splinters are repressed and the victim is not able to perceive and remember the outer event coherently. (Huber 43)

However, dissociation does not mean that the traumatic event is forever forgotten and deleted from memory; it is suppressed into the unconscious and may penetrate into the conscious in a modified form or in the form of symptoms (Allen 80- 81). Hence, the victim may be overwhelmed by intense fear and other already mentioned symptoms and emotions after the event causing the trauma, without knowing the reasons, i.e. the person cannot retell the event due to gaps in memory (Herman 1997: 34). Herman states that the traumatized person “may find herself in a constant state of vigilance and irritability without knowing why” (1997: 34). Besser compares this fragmentation with a mirror:

Der Vergleich eines Spiegels, der im Augenblick des traumatischen Stressgipfels zerspringt, macht deutlich, dass die zurückgebliebenen Spiegelsplitter nicht mehr erkennen lassen, was passiert ist, sondern nur noch, dass etwas passiert ist. (Besser 180)

Van der Kolk and Kadish are convinced that “except when related to brain injury, dissociation *always* seems to be a response to traumatic life events” [emphasis added] (185). However, the wide-spread assumption is that trauma does not necessarily cause dissociation and dissociation does not *only* occur in connection with trauma (see Allen 192).

According to Terr’s theory, dissociation is more likely to occur in people who had to experience prolonged and repeated traumatization, i.e. who suffer from trauma type II, than in people who experienced single-blow traumatization (1988: 97). The reason for this might be the predictability of repeated trauma, and in order to deaden the consequences of the traumatization they ‘learn to dissociate’ (Terr qtd. in McNally 173). Moreover, according to Freyd, in people who had to experience betrayal trauma, dissociation is also more likely to occur. Agreeing with Terr’s assumption that victims of repeated traumatization are more likely to develop dissociative symptoms than those of single-blow traumas, she adds that the “perpetrator status will have a larger effect than abuse duration” (Freyd et al. 8). Especially children who are traumatized by actions committed by a caregiver they are dependent on, dissociation seems to be a way to maintain this essential relationship (Hulette et al. 217).

Dissociation displays different levels, ranging from a rather harmless form, the everyday dissociation such as daydreaming, to severe forms in which experiences such as rape are completely split off from consciousness (Allen 192). Huber defines six different forms of dissociation, namely everyday dissociation, which is a normal everyday phenomenon, amnesia, derealization, depersonalization, fugue and the dissociative identity disorder (54-57). Dissociative amnesia is “an inability to recall important personal information, usually of a traumatic or stressful nature, that is too extensive to be explained by normal forgetfulness” (American Psychiatric Association 488). In other words, victims who suffer from dissociative amnesia are not able to remember the event causing the traumatization and everything in connection with it at all. Derealization includes the blocking of reality, i.e. the victim experiences the traumatic event as unreal and she might have thoughts like ‘this is not really happening to me’ or ‘this has nothing to do with me’. The derealization-phenomenon has a protecting function when neither fleeing nor fighting are options to protect oneself (Huber 60-61). Depersonalization means the disability to perceive parts of the self during the traumatizing event. Hence, victims may not feel pain or they may feel as if stepping out of their selves and watching the traumatic scene from outside (Allen 193). Another form of dissociation is ‘fugue’. Here, the traumatized person flees physically after the traumatizing event has happened, without realizing doing so. Thus, the victim enters a trance-like state (Huber 62-63). Huber defines the fugue-phenomenon as delayed flight-reaction, i.e. as fleeing was not possible during the traumatizing event, the victim flees unconsciously after the event has happened (62-63). According to her, ‘fugue’ is a combination of amnesia, derealization and depersonalization (63). The extreme form of dissociation is the dissociative identity disorder, also known as multiple personality disorder. In this extreme form of dissociation the personality of the victim is assaulted and split (64).

Allen stresses dissociation as both being a blessing and a curse, as on the one hand it serves as a temporary protection against the pain and horror the trauma carries (191) and as a “shutoff mechanism to prevent overstimulation or flooding of consciousness by excessive incoming stimuli” (Young, 35) and as “defense for dire emergency” (Allen 303), but on the other hand the trauma, more

specifically the traumatic events that have been suppressed, may find ways to haunt the victim later in the form of posttraumatic problems (Shirley 67).

Moreover, the healing of trauma may not start as long as the events causing the traumatization are not fully available for the conscious, as Allen states that “you cannot solve a problem you have blotted out” (303).

2.4 POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH⁷

Besides the fact that trauma may have severe negative impacts on the victim, from the development of several disorders via negative effects on the self through to negative changes of relationships to others, there is the phenomenon called ‘post-traumatic growth’ (PTG), which implies that there may also be positive outcomes of a trauma. Far more literature focuses on the negative effects of trauma; however, some papers describe how traumatized individuals use trauma “as a springboard to further individual development or growth” (Tedeschi et al. 1). In other words, post-traumatic growth describes the phenomenon that people may also grow from traumatizing experiences. Tedeschi et al. define PTG as the counterpart of PTSD – whereas some people may develop the post-traumatic stress disorder, others may grow from devastating traumatizing experiences (3).

It is out of question that trauma causes pain and anxiety and that trauma may throw the life of the traumatized into turmoil and that coping with the losses, the confusion and pain trauma carries is a difficult challenge. However, according to Tedeschi et al. “in the face of these losses and the confusion [trauma] cause[s], some people rebuild a way of life that they experience as superior to their old one in important ways” (2). In other words, the victim finds new strength and uses this newly found strength to start a new and maybe even better life.

Not only may the self-perception of the victim change in a positive way, also self-reliance and vulnerability may appear and relationships with other people may be intensified. The switch of seeing oneself as a survivor rather than a victim is, according to Tedeschi et al., a significant step towards personal growth after a traumatization. Hence, this change in self-perception leaves the victim feeling strong and special (10). Moreover, survivors may develop self-

⁷ Cf. Tedeschi, Park, and Calhoun in “Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Issues” *Posttraumatic Growth: Positive Changes in the Aftermath of Crisis*.

reliance and get the feeling of being able to manage everything since they were able to sustain a traumatic event. Although only another trauma could prove this, Tedeschi et al. strongly assume that trauma may serve as “inoculation” (11) since survivors who experience PTG develop strategies of how to react to certain difficulties in life. (Tedeschi et al. 10-11)

Furthermore, some people who developed PTG “often describe a heightened awareness of their vulnerability, mortality, and the preciousness and fragility of life” (Tedeschi et al. 11), and this may lead to an increased acknowledgement of life and the effort to strengthen relationships being important to the survivor.

Additionally, Tedeschi et al. assume that emotional expressiveness may be another result of surviving trauma. Due to social support, which offers them the possibility to talk about the devastating events, survivors might learn to express themselves in a way that was never possible before. Hence, this ability to express oneself and the associated openness might again strengthen relationships with loved ones (11).

Moreover, the compulsion to help others and the development of empathy may also result from surviving a traumatizing event, as Tedeschi et al. state that when “[recognizing] their own vulnerability, [survivors] may be better able to feel compassion” (12-13).

To put it in a nutshell, although trauma carries numerous negative effects and a lot of suffering, there is the chance to benefit from it.

2.5 HEALING TRAUMA⁸

Concerning the healing of trauma different theories exist, from the assumption that the healing of trauma is not possible at all due to its latency, to the assumption that retelling the traumatizing event, i.e. turning traumatic memory into narrative memory might positively contribute to the healing of trauma (see Mengel 143-144).

The distinction between ‘traumatic memory’ which “unconsciously *repeats* the past” (Leys 105) and ‘narrative memory “which *narrates the past as past*” (105) is made by Janet, and according to him the translation of traumatic memory into narrative memory is the basic prerequisite for healing trauma (see Leys 105).

⁸ Numerous theories exist of how to heal trauma. The described process is only *one* possible way for treatment. As Allen asserts, “treatment must be tailored to each individual’s needs and situation” (235).

In order to translate this traumatic memory into narrative memory, the victim has to retell the traumatizing event(s) she experienced, which is obviously not an easy task and needs the help of an expert (e.g. a therapist).

According to Herman, there are three stages a traumatized person has to undergo in order to recover from trauma - namely the reconstruction of safety, remembrance and mourning (which includes the mentioned 'translation of memory') and "the reconnection with ordinary life" (1997: 155).⁹ She asserts that "in the course of a successful recovery, it should be possible to recognize a gradual shift from unpredictable danger to reliable safety, from dissociated trauma to acknowledged memory, and from stigmatized isolation to restored social connection" (Herman 1997: 155).

In the first stage victims learn how to deal with their PTSD-symptoms, how to listen to their own body, how to control their bodily functions and furthermore, they learn how to handle eventual destructive actions (Herman 1997: 160). Moreover, a safe surrounding, such as trusting relationships with other people, also plays a significant role when it comes to the establishment of safety - "the acutely traumatized person needs a safe refuge" (Herman 1997: 162). To sum up, the focus in this first stage is on the control of body functions and on the establishment of trusting relationships – with the overall goal of establishing safety.

The goal in the second stage of recovery is the transformation of the above mentioned 'traumatic memory' into 'narrative memory'. Thus, the victim is encouraged to retell the traumatizing event. Due to the wordlessness of traumatic memory this might be challenging for the victim and her "initial account of the event may be repetitious, stereotyped, and emotionless" (Herman 1997: 175). Dissociation may hinder the victim to retell the traumatizing event in a chronological and logical way, i.e. gaps in the narration are likely to occur. It is out of question that it is a long and difficult process to translate 'traumatic memory' into 'narrative memory' and it certainly needs the help of a therapist. Especially if the victim had to experience repeated trauma, dissociative symptoms and numerous and crucial gaps in memory may hinder

⁹ Herman's recovery-theory is based on Janet's theory that the recovery from trauma is divided into different stages.

the victim to reconstruct the trauma story, and usually more than twenty therapy sessions are needed to fully rebuild it (Herman 1997: 184). Herman asserts that “out of the fragmented components of frozen imagery and sensation, patient and therapist slowly reassemble an organized, detailed, verbal account, oriented in time and historical context” (1997: 177).

However, the transformation into narrative memory is only effective if the victim also reconstructs the emotions associated with the trauma. Thus, the transformation is only fully successful when the victim is able not only to retell the traumatic experience but also to explain the emotions the traumatic experience carried – “[t]he description of emotional states must be as painstakingly detailed as the description of facts” (Herman 1997: 177). However, a plain description of the emotions is not enough, the victim has to feel these emotions in the present in the same intensity as she felt them in the past (178). Seemingly, with the ability to retell the traumatizing events comes the disappearance of burdensome PTSD-symptoms (Herman 1997: 183).

Another important aspect in this second stage of recovery from trauma is grieving, i.e. patients need to grieve in order to complete this second stage of recovery. Herman designates ‘mourning’ as the most essential part of the second stage and asserts that “[o]nly through mourning everything that she has lost can the patient discover her indestructible inner life” (188).

Since trauma may have severe effects on the self and on relationships¹⁰ the victims’ task in the third stage of recovery is to reconnect with herself and with others. After establishing general safety, reconstructing the story of her trauma and the work of mourning the victim may now be ready to create a new self and to establish new relationships – “[s]he has mourned the old self that the trauma destroyed; now she must develop a new self” (Herman 1997: 196). Already in the first stage the establishment of trusting relationships played a role – with the goal to feel safe. However, in the third stage the victims’ task is to “deepen her alliances with those whom she has learned to trust” (197) and she also learns to be prepared for possible dangers occurring in the future.

¹⁰ See chapter 2.3.2.

To sum up, the recovery from trauma is a difficult and hard process in which the victim has to go through difficult and painful stages, and Herman even goes so far to assume that “recovery is never complete” (1997: 211).

3 SOUTH AFRICA – A NATION TRAUMATIZED

We are a deeply wounded people. We carry the recent scars of apartheid and the ingrained hurt of centuries of colonialism before that. Some of us feel superior to others, and some feel inferior. For generations, instead of [...] to love one another as ourselves, we have been trained to be mistrustful, to dislike – even to hate. (Tutu)¹¹

In order to understand South African trauma and this quote by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who views the population of South Africa as being traumatized, one has to look at South Africa’s history, which is marked by centuries of violence, torture and suppression. Both the colonization of South Africa and in particular the apartheid era, which carried the aforementioned violence, horror and suppression, are considered to be the conditions which have traumatized the whole nation. There seems to be no doubt about the collective traumatization of South Africa’s population as Magona points out that “[t]rauma is in the blood for the people of South Africa. They can neither escape nor ignore it” (2012:93).

3.1 COLONIALISM

In South Africa perhaps the most single violent event in the nation’s history was the coming of the white tribe into the continent (Magona 2012:95)

It goes without saying that colonialism never occurred without violence, suppression and suffering. Colonialism in South Africa is considered, besides apartheid¹², to be one trigger for South Africa’s collective traumatization as it led to a complete subjection of the colonized to the colonizers. The white colonizers won the struggle over land and other resources, marginalizing the black and colored native people. This “clash of cultures” (Magona 2012:95) and the oppression of the natives of South Africa by the European colonizers resulted in traumatization and the “effects [of this trauma] will be felt for generations to come” (Magona 2012:95).

¹¹ [Http://www.gansbaai-academia.com/archives/1208](http://www.gansbaai-academia.com/archives/1208).

¹² Apartheid: discussed in chapter 3.2.

The colonial conquest of South Africa began in the seventeenth century, when in 1652 the Dutchman Jan van Riebeeck together with a group of other Dutchmen came to South Africa, or more precisely, to today's Cape of Good Hope. They came to set up a colony, and in doing so they invaded the territory of the Khoisan, the earliest known human beings of South Africa. In order to take possession of the land on which these native people lived, the Dutchmen had to use force. Thus, many natives not only got enslaved by the invaders but also killed, and, from 1680 onwards, the expansion of the colony began. The immigration of free citizens from Europe, as well as of those who went to the colony involuntarily, such as slaves, enabled the growing colony to establish a social order, which constitutes the precondition for a functioning community. (Ross 21-23)

From 1700, the settlements of white farmers, the so-called trekboers, started to expand north and east as they started to "move across the mountains to take control of the interior of the Cape" (Ross 25). Yet again the Khoisan lost their land to these settler farmers and furthermore they were often enslaved and forced to work for them (Ross 25). By the end of the century, the Xhosa, a tribe living in the east started to confront the trekboers, which in turn led to violent wars between the Xhosa and the trekboers in 1779. Furthermore, struggles for power began between citizens and the colonial administration; this, however, abruptly came to an end with the arrival of the British in South Africa who later took over the colony in 1795, abolished slavery and demanded equal rights for blacks and whites. (Anonymus 1)¹³

From 1835 the great trek started, which resulted in an enormous extension "of that proportion of modern South Africa dominated by people of European descent [...] [and] was one of the crucial events in the formation of the country" (Ross 39). Because of dissatisfaction with the British colonial power and economic problems, more than 10 000 Afrikaner¹⁴ farmers, the so-called Boers, left the Cape colony to move to the North and North-East. Their goal was to live independently and to conquer a new area of land for pasture. This process generated several armed conflicts with the British as well as with the native

¹³ <http://www.suedafrika.net/suedafrika/geschichte/>.

¹⁴ Afrikaner= Dutch speaking inhabitants.

African tribes, including 'the battle of blood river' – a bloody battle between the Voortrekkers and the Zulu tribe in 1838 (Ross 39-43). In the end, the Voortrekkers succeeded in establishing two states, namely the Orange Free State and the South African Republic, also known as the Transvaal (Ross 49).

The ongoing conflicts between the British and the Dutch led to the Anglo-Boer war from 1899-1902 in which a tenth of the whole population lost their lives. Farms and crops were looted and set on fire by the British and the British were assaulted by the Boers. (Ross 72-74)

To put it in a nutshell: wars, invasions, slavery, inequality, death and power struggles were events and conditions which definitely triggered the nation's collective traumatization. Not only were the black native people exploited, killed, suppressed and forced into slavery, but also the Dutch settlers were marginalized and fought by the British settlers and vice versa. Hence, suppression inevitably leads to feelings of helplessness, fear, anger and depression, all of which are clear symptoms of traumatization.

3.2 APARTHEID

Borzaga states that "apartheid resembled a trauma-machine" (81) and according to Magona "[p]sychological trauma is one of the legacies of apartheid and has resulted in the social neurosis daily witnessed in the country" (2012:94). Apartheid was a system that caused trauma by tearing families apart, by causing millions of deaths, by suppressing millions of people, by taking away the homes of millions of people and by many other devastating and horrible laws and actions. To put it briefly and in the words of Tutu, "the apartheid regime created conditions that traumatized everyone" (Tutu qtd. in Meyer 351).

The suppression of the black population in South Africa began with the first step of the white Europeans on South African soil (Krog et al. 40). Later, with the political power of the National Party who achieved election victory in 1948, apartheid, that is the segregation of races, became law in South Africa. Due to its political goal, namely purity regarding race, politics and culture, the National party enforced racial segregation through legislation (Gobodo-Madikizela 175-176). According to Krog et al. "[e]very aspect of political, economic, cultural,

sporting and social life was segregated” (41) and within this segregation the black population was the disadvantaged and discriminated group to suffer from the system (Gobodo-Madikizela 175-176). The laws of apartheid gave the state the possibility to keep the black population on a short leash (Krog et al. 41). Furthermore, as black South Africans lost their citizenship (Magona qtd. in Mengel et al. 2010: 32), only white people in South Africa had the right to vote as they were the only ones to benefit from the apartheid system, i.e. they were on top of the racial hierarchy, created by the government (Anonymus 2)¹⁵. With the loss of citizenship, black South Africans lost every right a citizen of a country usually enjoys, namely, amongst others, the right to vote, the right to choose a place to live, the right to enjoy the same level of education that white South African’s enjoyed and the right to choose their place of work. Moreover, apartheid deprived black and colored South Africans of “the protection of the government” (Magona qtd. in Mengel et al. 2010: 32).

Apartheid introduced several laws, indeed quite traumatizing laws for those affected. One of these laws was the Population Registration Act, whereby the population was divided into three different racial groups (White, Black and Colored) (Christopher 101). The Group Areas Act had the intention of dividing the aforementioned groups spatially (Christopher 103), thus forcing three and a half million people to leave their homes (Ross 136). As a consequence of this Act, many black inhabitants were forced to move to rural areas – where so-called ‘townships’ developed, also referred to as “‘non-white’ neighborhoods” (Jürgens et al. 1).

As its name implies ‘The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act’ forbade black and white people to marry each other (Christopher 102), and ‘The Immorality Act’ prohibited sexual intercourse between Blacks and Whites, in order to freeze “[racial] categories for all time” (Ross 116). The consequences of these laws were huge as well as traumatizing, as it tore apart not only lovers but also whole families (116). The ‘Separate Amenities Act’ constituted the racial division of public and social facilities – i.e. among other facilities “buses, restaurants, park benches and public toilets” were segregated in white- and non-white facilities (Cameron 30).

¹⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/apartheid/>, 05.03.2013.

The 'Bantu Education Act' allowed the government to control the education of Non-Whites, with the aim of denying black and colored people a proper education and consequently denying them the chance of ever being able to hold job positions that were supposed to be held by Whites. Their education was customized to the requirements of the work they were supposed to do, namely serving other people or working in labor-intensive jobs, which were in many cases controlled by Whites (Anonymus 3)¹⁶.

To conclude, apartheid and the conditions it created, traumatized the whole nation, both black and white South Africans¹⁷. According to Nuttall the apartheid era "was a time of deadness" (151) as it brought not only millions of actual deaths, it also "implied a deadness in life for others, confined to townships, smothered by poverty, condemned to material and psychic dispossession" (151).

3.2.1 STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Over 20 years' worth of studies shows that people of color who arrive at a hospital while having a heart attack are significantly less likely to receive aspirin, beta-blocking drugs, clot-dissolving drugs, [...]. Race, class, and gender clearly make a difference in how patients are diagnosed and treated (Kivel 207-208).

This quote by Kivel shows well how structural violence works: certain people are treated differently due to their skin color, their sex and their class. Thus, racism, classism and sexism turn out to be classic examples of structural violence. One can speak of structural violence when "social structures harm or [...] disadvantage individuals" (Burtle par. 1). Structural violence is described as being invisible since there is no-one specific to blame for, i.e. there is no subject (=no person) committing the violence (Galtung 170). In contrast to personal violence, in which, according to Galtung, one can clearly identify both victim and perpetrator, structural violence lacks this "clear object-subject relation" (171). Gilman gives two central examples of structural violence: hunger and poverty – conditions victims have to bear due to "unjust, social, political and economic systems" (8). Similarly, Galtung puts structural violence on a level with "social injustice" (171). Moreover, Galtung generally views violence as "avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally, to life" (292) and this is

¹⁶ [Http://www.sahistory.org.za/bantu-education-act-no-47-1953](http://www.sahistory.org.za/bantu-education-act-no-47-1953).

¹⁷ For more and detailed information to collective trauma see chapter 3.4.

particularly applicable to structural violence.

Without a doubt, structural violence was prevalent in South Africa during the apartheid era. Among other conditions and laws, general discrimination, forced relocations, pass laws, prohibition of mixed marriages, denied education, poverty and the dehumanization (see Magona 2012: 98 ff) definitely restricted people's liberty and reduced their quality of life and thus can doubtlessly be referred to as structural violence. According to Mengel and Borzaga "for most black and coloured South Africans, the structural violence created by apartheid laws became the existential condition under which they had to lead their lives" (xi).

3.3 THE PROBLEM WITH THE ADAPTION OF WESTERN TRAUMA THEORIES TO THE SOUTH-AFRICAN CONTEXT

In chapter two, the Western concept of trauma has been discussed, presenting the triggers of trauma as single events, such as rape, child abuse or accidents with the consequence of the development of disorders such as PTSD. This chapter discusses the differences between the Western and the South African concept of trauma and why Western trauma theories are "insufficient instruments with which to analyze the more complex situation in a post-colony such as South Africa" (Mengel & Borzaga xi).

In the Western concept of trauma, the focus lies on the one hand on individuality, i.e. collective traumatization is rarely spoken of, and on the other hand on the claim that trauma is always triggered by certain events – events causing disorders like PTSD (Mengel & Borzaga xi). Moreover, trauma is considered to be an illness "that can be described in medical terms" (Mengel & Borzaga xi). Colvin, who states that trauma is much more than an illness, criticizes this Western concept of trauma. He claims that "traumatic events are never only medical problems faced by individuals" (230), they may as well carry social, moral, political, economic and even spiritual" (230) issues and can affect both individual persons and whole societies (230). Hence, in the context of South Africa, one cannot necessarily speak of events¹⁸ triggering trauma, but rather of conditions, which are, in South Africa's case, colonialism and apartheid

¹⁸ That does not exclude individual traumata affecting South Africans due to specific events such as rape, torture or murder.

(Mengel & Borzaga xi), carrying structural violence that suppressed and traumatized millions of people. Another critique of the Western concept of trauma comes from Beneduce. He criticizes the adaption of Western trauma theories to South African trauma in so far as that these trauma theories ignore the cultural and historical background of the nation (qtd. in Borzaga 69).

Borzaga tries to show the problem of applying the Western concept of trauma to the South African context by analyzing the case of Mrs. Konile, described in the book *There was this Goat* by Krog, Mpolweni and Ratele. The apartheid security forces killed Mrs Konile's black son, who was an anti-apartheid activist. Mrs. Konile gave a testimony about this incident before the TRC¹⁹ and Krog, who witnessed Mrs. Konile's testimony, described her testimony as "awkward, unintelligible, and incoherent" and she was "making unclear [...] statements" (qtd. in Borzaga 66) – indeed signs for a traumatization. In their book *There was this Goat*, Krog et al. included a chapter in which the case of Mrs. Konile is analyzed and explained with the usage of Western trauma theories by two white academics.²⁰ According to Borzaga the two academics set the 'murder of her son' as the trigger for Mrs. Konile's traumatization (68). Thus, "trauma becomes a supplement for the killing of her son" (Borzaga 68). What Borzaga criticizes about this western view is, that trauma is only spoken of having arisen because of an event, disregarding the "subjectivities and their shaping relationship with the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded" (68) and other components contributing to her traumatization – components that can be considered to be conditions rather than single events. In other words, in the case of Mrs. Konile one cannot speak of one event causing her trauma, it is the political situation and the conditions of this political system she is forced to live in which caused her trauma. After all, apartheid forced her to live in poverty, which cannot be seen as an event but as a condition that is traumatizing. Moreover, as Krog et al. point out, not only the death of her son, but also the deaths of her other family members, her forced relocation, and the poverty she is living in "formed part of a succession of different layers of trauma" (123). These layered traumas suffered by Mrs. Konile let Borzaga think of trauma as

¹⁹ TRC=Truth and Reconciliation Commission, see chapter 3.4.3.

²⁰ Chapter 2 "A possible white conversation" p. 19- 37 in *There was this Goat* (Krog, Mpolweni and Ratele): The authors only imagine two academics trying to interpret Mrs. Konile's behavior by using current trauma theories.

“stratification”, as “a significant move away from current mechanistic, ‘serial’ conceptualizations of trauma” (Borzaga 80) - in other words, a step away from Western trauma theories.

A further critique of Western trauma theories is the neglect of the role of the body in connection with trauma (Beneduce qtd. in Borzaga 86). The body does in fact play an important role in South African trauma as Mbembe rightly points out that “in the context of poverty, of extreme racialization and of the omnipresence of death, the body is the first to be affected, the first to be hurt” (8). As poverty, racialization and the omnipresence of death are all applicable to the situation in South Africa, the role of the body cannot be ignored in the context of trauma. According to Borzaga, when it comes to the theorization of trauma in South Africa it is necessary to visualize the “hunger, homelessness, cold and heat, captivity, fatigue, exhaustion [and] migration” (87) the body is susceptible to. Fanon argues that the constant state of stress due to traumatic living conditions that a black person living in South Africa is subjected to, injures not only the mind but also the body, in other words “the traumatic living conditions [...] are lived in and through the body” (Fanon qtd. in Borzaga 84). Furthermore, Fanon equates the blackness of a black man with his body and compares a black man living in South Africa with a “living bodily wound that is re-opened each time the black man is confronted with the white racist gaze” (qtd. in Borzaga 81). Thus, simply existing in a black body may be traumatizing in South Africa and this, again, shows that the body plays a significant role in the context of South African trauma – an aspect that is missing in Western trauma theories.

In Western trauma theories, PTSD is inevitably connected with trauma. In the context of South African trauma, PTSD is also regarded critically. For example, Beneduce views PTSD as a “prêt-à-porter concept” (qtd. in Borzaga 69), and according to him, it is more and more used to “refer to any kind of traumatic event, without differentiating between intentional, accidental or natural causes” (qtd. in Borzaga 69). In their introduction to the book *Trauma, Memory, and Narrative in South Africa: Interviews*, Mengel, Borzaga and Orantes who interviewed psychologists, academics, historians, politicians and writers, state that all of the interviewed psychologists agree that PTSD is “a construction with limitations” (x). However, the psychologists also suggest that, nevertheless, it

cannot be completely discounted in the context of South African trauma. Ashraf Kagee for example points out that many traumatized South Africans do suffer from PTSD-symptoms (qtd. in Mengel et al. 2008: 128). However, he claims that if the event causing PTSD is missing, one cannot really speak of PTSD. In the case of South Africa, as already discussed, many people are traumatized due to conditions rather than due to single events (qtd. in Mengel et al. 2008: 129). According to Kagee (qtd in Mengel et al. 2008: 129), Gill Straker came up with the term 'continuous traumatic stress disorder', which refers to a disorder caused from ongoing traumatization, such as being "being permanently in the hands of your oppressors" (Foster qtd. in Mengel et al. 2008: 106) or being persistently humiliated and suppressed.

3.3.1 POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Although deeply traumatized by both the events they experienced and the conditions in which they are living in, many South Africans manage to cope successfully with their traumas (Mengel & Borzaga xiv). According to Colvin, many traumatized individuals find ways to cope with their suffering; they develop strategies helping them to ease symptoms deriving from their traumas, without medical support (231). This is due to post-traumatic growth – the attempt to come to terms with their trauma "gives many people additional strength" (Mengel & Borzaga xiv). In the case of South Africa, many people do not have access to medical help, and developing their own coping strategies helps them to get on with their lives. Western trauma theories rarely mention the possibility of growth after traumatization, they "neglect the agency, resistance, resilience and creativity of [...] individuals and communities as they work to improve their lives" (Colvin 231).

3.4 COLLECTIVE TRAUMA IN SOUTH AFRICA

As discussed in chapter 2.2.4. collective trauma is trauma that affects a whole society. Triggers for a collective trauma can either be natural disasters, for example tsunamis, and also accidental disasters (Volkan gives the example of the Chernobyl accident in 1986), wars, and political systems. Both natural/accidental disasters and devastating political systems may result in grief and anxiety on the part of society. According to Volkan however, there is a crucial difference in the effects on the community between societal trauma

derived from natural/accidental disasters and trauma derived from a disastrous political system. The difference is that whereas for natural disasters there is no one to blame and accidental disasters happen accidentally, in a devastating political system there are people to be made responsible for collective grief – people who harm others intentionally (Volkan 1) and “such trauma affects the victimized society in ways that are entirely different from those of natural or accidental disasters” (Vokan 1). The latter is the case in South Africa – the political system, namely the apartheid system (Volkan 1), created conditions causing suffering, pain and powerlessness, which were seen to traumatize the nation. In other words, due to humiliating and oppressive conditions and the structural violence during the apartheid era, many individuals were and still are traumatized – they share pain, suffering, anxiety, helplessness and humiliation. To put it differently, when a large group of people suffers from the same conditions – they are collectively traumatized. According to Attwell, South Africa can be defined as a nation “in which trauma has become a cultural condition” (287).

3.4.1 BLACK VS. WHITE COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

When writing about traumatized South Africans, literature focuses on the black population suffering from the political system. However, one cannot exclude the white population when thematizing South African trauma. Indeed, it is not only the black population being traumatized due to the political system, as there is also what Mengel and Borzaga call ‘white trauma’ (xi) – trauma concerning the white population of South Africa. Whereas the causes for the black populations’ trauma were the structural violence they had to bear during the apartheid era and the associated “living conditions in the townships, pass laws, relocation, and racial segregation”, (Mengel & Borzaga xi) being witnesses “of what [white South Africans] believed to be the shame of their nation also resulted in trauma” (xi) on the part of the white population.

By stating “we are deeply wounded people”²¹ Archbishop Tutu refers to all South Africans, including the white as well as the black population (cf. Mengel & Borzaga vii), which is, according to Mengel and Borzaga a problematic and bold generalization since black trauma is, according to them, not necessarily the

²¹ <http://www.gansbaai-academia.com/archives/1208> (11.03.2013).

same as white trauma. They state that apartheid laws and the South African past, traumatized black people in a different way than white people who “stood on the sidelines” (viii) and may have had to ‘only’ bear shame and guilt of living in a nation where the apartheid regime reigned with all its crucial laws (Mengel & Borzaga vii-viii). To put it in different words, many black people in South Africa are traumatized due to the discriminating and cruel apartheid system in which they were the ones to directly experience the tremendous cruelty of the system, and white people may also be traumatized due to long-lasting feelings of guilt and shame. Obviously, as has already been mentioned, due to its past the South African nation suffers from a collective trauma, but Mengel and Borzaga question whether one can speak of “one collective trauma, or [whether one has] to differentiate between the ethnicities that make up the South African nation as a whole” (vii-viii).

3.4.2 LEGACY OF APARTHEID AND VIOLENCE AND CRIME AS EFFECTS OF COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

[...]South Africans entered their freedom, their post-apartheid space, dehumanized. Who told us we would (automatically) re-humanized? Who waved that magic wand to get us what we had lost, what we had been robbed of? What made us think that just because we could vote this meant we were well, whole, and mended? (Magona 2012: 100-101)

Apartheid and the accompanying collective trauma of the nation inevitably have effects on today’s situation in South Africa (Magona 2012: 101). According to Magona it “bear[s] highly poisonous fruit” (2012: 94). Sindiwe Magona, a black South African writer who herself grew up in South Africa during the apartheid regime (Anonymus 4)²², rightly points out that apartheid not only “dehumanized human beings” (2012: 100) but it also harmed them both in a spiritual way and in a physical way (100). What Magona tries to express with the quote above, is that only because apartheid is over, it does not automatically imply that South Africa’s inhabitants are healed from their trauma. They were deeply wounded by the apartheid system and they have carried these wounds into the present, into post-apartheid time, obviously affecting the nation at large. According to Colvin, trauma that affects a group of people, “may continue for decades” (2), depending on the duration and on the intensity of the events causing the trauma. Hence, as South Africa boasts centuries of oppression, humiliation and

²² See <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/sindiwe-magona>.

violence, it is no wonder that people in South Africa are still traumatized, almost twenty years after the fall of apartheid. This traumatization shows itself in the violence which still prevails in South Africa as Foster states that South Africa has “the highest murder rate, [...] the highest child rape rate, [...] the highest murder rate [and the] highest assault rate (qtd. in Mengel et al. 108).

There are several explanations for the violence and crimes still happening in South Africa. One explanation asserted by many trauma specialists is that a collectively traumatized population share (due to the trauma) an altered collective consciousness, which is responsible for certain behavior such as natural behavior, although they are perhaps anything but natural. Simply put, they consider violence as something natural (see Famula 9). Famula gives the example of people who have been abused as children and then later abuse their own children as well. The same happens with traumatized societies – as they consider it natural, they treat others in the same violent way as others treated them (Famula 9). Levine clearly views violence as a result of disintegrated trauma, and that after being traumatized by certain events or conditions it is very likely to develop violent behavior (Levine qtd. in Famula 9). In this context, Mann views the acceptance of violence on the part of the South Africans as unusual and she assumes that this “in itself could be a symptom of a traumatized nation” (qtd. in Mengel et al. 2010:54). She also states that South Africans “normalize crime and [...] violence [...] in a way that [she doesn’t] think is normal at all” (qtd. ibd. 2010:54).

Another explanation for why there is still so much violence in present South Africa is the following: Denham points out that historical trauma ²³ has considerable effects on the future generations and that, according to researchers and psychiatrists, these future generations show “higher levels of depression, withdrawal, various forms of anxiety, suicidal ideation and behavior, substance abuse, anger, violence and guilt behavior” (Denham 396-397) which are, according to Raditlhalo, characteristics explaining the numerous crimes happening in present South Africa (247-248). Another legacy of apartheid is the poverty in which many black South Africans still have to live. The living

²³ Historical trauma is, according to Yellow Horse Brave Heart the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences” (7).

conditions and the helplessness created by poverty may trigger feelings of jealousy and hatred towards people who do not have to live in poverty, which in turn may lead to violent actions and crimes (Volkan 6).

3.4.3 HEALING THE NATION

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

For the purpose of going back and re-examining “what happened really, and what it meant for people, and what it has done to them” (Magona qtd. in Mengel et al. 2010: 44), which are, according to Magona, the necessary preconditions for successful healing of the nation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up. The TRC was a political institution giving both traumatized victims of apartheid and their perpetrators from 1996 to 1998 the chance to tell their stories. The aim of this institution was on the one hand to heal the nation, and on the other hand to find out the whole truth about the crimes which occurred during the apartheid-era and the traumatizing living conditions of its victims, in order to achieve reconciliation. (Anonymus 5)²⁴

The idea of telling one’s story in order to heal trauma has already been discussed in a previous chapter: the transformation of traumatic memory into narrative memory by putting the trauma-story into words, is assumed to be a way to heal people from their traumas (see chapter 2.5.). Thus, in South Africa the TRC was set up in the hope that “by giving victims the opportunity to tell their stories, healing might be found, as telling one’s story has cathartic potential” (Mann 2012:344). Similarly, Colvin suggests that the idea of the TRC was giving people the opportunity to look back on and reappraise their traumatic past in order to “achieve some kind of ‘catharsis’ and ‘closure’ in the process” (226).

As discussed in the previous chapter, many South Africans are still traumatized and the legacy of apartheid (which is amongst others, violence, crime and poverty) is still evident in the present day. This poses the question of whether

²⁴ For further information to the TRC see: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/607421/Truth-and-Reconciliation-Commission-South-Africa-TRC>.

the TRC has been successful or not. Indeed, there exists a lot of criticism about the TRC. Firstly, it ought to be said, that not every traumatized South African had the chance to give testimony before the TRC (see Borzaga in Mengel et al. 2008: 122). Thus, a considerable number of people have never put their story into words and hence may still be traumatized. The result of a study conducted by Kaminer et al. says that giving testimony to the TRC did not considerably change the mental health of those testifying and they state that any relief after giving testimony is short-lived as it “is unlikely to be sustained in the face of chronically high levels of community trauma” (375). Additionally, according to them, the chance for healing may be blocked due to missing justice – many victims expected the perpetrators to get punished for their deeds (375), which was, however, not the aim of the TRC (see Tutu qtd. in Minow 127). Kagee, an African psychologist, claims that the TRC testimonies were unsuccessful because they were lacking in regularity, insufficient in duration, and missing therapeutic support. In other words, any comparison of the TRC hearings with therapeutic sessions would clearly be a misinterpretation (Kagee qtd. in Mengel et al. 130). Although, as Colvin states, psychologists assisted in the planning and the creation of the commission, and although people got the opportunity to make use of counseling after giving their testimonies (27), Kagee strongly believes that the healing of the nation has not been achieved, at least not “in the way that it was envisaged” (qtd. in Mengel et al. 130).

Colvin claims that giving testimonies before the TRC can even be “damaging” as “[p]utting your own traumatic memories on display in front of the nation, with little follow-up support in the process, is not a good recipe for individual recovery” (232). Similarly, Foster and Borzaga agree that talking about one’s traumas can be “re-traumatizing” (qtd. in Mengel et al. 122).

In present-day South Africa, there still exist so-called trauma-centers, offering support to traumatized individuals and a “trauma counselling telephone hotline” (Colvin 228), offering a 24-hour service has also been set up. Obviously, South Africa puts a lot of effort in offering their traumatized inhabitants support. However, as Colvin points out, this offer of counseling is usually to be found in cities and very rarely in rural areas (227). Hence, most people living in rural areas have never been offered psychological help. Furthermore, for them “trauma therapy’s approach to healing [...] is culturally foreign” (Colvin 227). To

put it in a nutshell, in the words of Mengel, “it seems clear that reconciliation cannot be so easily achieved, and that it might take several generations to really reconcile the country and come to terms with the atrocities that happened on all sides” (146).

4 FORMS OF TRAUMATIZATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

This chapter deals with the various forms of traumatization South Africa has to deal with and the chapters five to twelve analyze how these forms are represented in contemporary South African novels. The choice of novels is indeed subjective - there exist many other novels representing these forms. Moreover, South Africa surely has to deal with many other forms of traumatization and not only the ones this thesis will discuss.

4.1 RAPE

Sexual violence has been and still is a great problem in South Africa – in present-day South Africa about 3600 women are raped every day (Nicholson & Jones, no page).

Several reasons have been pointed out for this high rape rate in South Africa. One reason has to do with masculinity; due to repression, disenfranchisement and discrimination during apartheid, black men could not act out their masculinity in society and consequently found themselves emasculated (Campbell qtd. in Petersen et al. 1243-1244). Due to study results, researchers have interpreted rape as being a way for ‘emasculated men’ to re-establish their masculinity and also to gain power over women and “put [them] in their place” (Petersen et al. 1244). Moreover, a common belief widespread in South Africa implies that men should have sexual intercourse in order to mark their masculinity. This belief is seen to be a reason for single men raping others (see Petersen et al. 1244). Another reason for rape in South Africa might be the inequality regarding wealth, in other words poverty (a widespread condition during apartheid-era and still today), being a possible trigger for feelings of anger, which in turn might be expressed in the act of raping (see Petersen et al. 1244). Furthermore, studies show that children who have been neglected and left alone over longer periods of time (which happened quite often, since poverty forced parents to work hard in order to ensure enough income for the family), are more likely to be involved in sexual violence as adults, i.e. there is a

connection between boys being neglected as children or even being victims of abuse themselves, and the probability that these boys will become sexual abusers and rapists themselves in the course of their lives. (see Petersen et al. 1244-1245)

4.2 RELOCATION AND TOWNSHIP VIOLENCE

The forced removals [...] are still etched in our memories. The resulting dislocation lost us the graves of our loved ones. The distance was too huge to negotiate – physically, financially, and above all, emotionally. We bled. We are still bleeding. The memory of those wounds festers still (Magona 2012: 99).

The forced relocations, conducted in order to spatially segregate the black and colored population from the white population (inter alia in the course of the Group Areas Act) as well as living in townships, in which violence was and still is daily fare, can indeed be viewed as traumatic. Black South Africans were made to move under violent force – the police used guns and brutal violence to expel them from their homes, and bulldozers were used to destroy their houses (see Henrard, no p.). Two examples in which many thousands were forced to leave their homes are the forced removals in Sophiatown (1955-1963) and District Six (from 1968) – bulldozers destroyed these areas, as they were designated as being ‘white areas’ only. Basically, people had no other choice than to accept these removals, as the example of 1985 shows: people demonstrated against the relocations, which resulted in murders and injuries (Anonymus 6)²⁵. Beyond question, these removals were traumatizing for those affected and according to Concilio “[t]he major [...] trauma involved in mass removals is caused by the disappearance of a community” (276). In the course of these relocations, black people were forced to move to townships, which were often many kilometers away from their place of employment and urban areas. Living conditions in these townships were doubtlessly traumatizing, as violence as well as poverty were and still are prevailing. Here are just a few examples of township violence out of many: Due to a riot in 1985 erupting in Crossroads, a township near Cape Town, eight inhabitants lost their lives and many hundreds got injured in the fights between the police and the revolvers. Moreover, in 1986 about 60 000 people living in Crossroads and neighboring

²⁵ <http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia.php?id=5>.

townships, lost their homes due to destruction and fighting. (Boddy-Evans par. 1)

In 1986 another incident occurred in the township Gugulethu, in which the police killed seven anti-apartheid activists. This incident is referred to as the 'Gugulethu Seven killings' (Krog et al. 5). Krog et al. point out that "[t]he Gugulethu Seven killings 'showcased' like few others the fatal mix in the township of poverty, anger, unemployment, dreams of taking up arms, change and liberation – all fuelled and manipulated by operations of the police and security forces" (5).

4.3 HOMOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

They tell me that they will kill me, they will rape me and after raping me I will become a girl. I will become a straight girl (Zakhe, a lesbian woman qtd. in Martin et al. 5).

Homophobia was and still is a great issue in South Africa and can be defined as "the irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of people who are or presumed to be GLB²⁶" (Pharr qtd. in Francis & Msibi 159-160). This fear and hatred may lead to homophobic behavior like insults, provocation, threat and even violent acts (160), including rape, as the example above illustrates. Such rape incidents which are referred to as 'corrective rapes', curing lesbians "of their [unnatural] lesbianism", (Martin et al. 3) are not rare in South Africa. Only recently (in 2008) the famous soccer-star Eudy Simelane was battered, gang-raped and killed by twenty-five stabs with a knife in a South African township, because she was a lesbian (Kelly, par. 1). Still, many South Africans share the belief that being homosexual is 'un-African', including African leaders like Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe, who declares homosexuality to be a disease, "coming from so-called developed nations" (qtd. in Human Rights Watch & International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 1). The very same President has asserted other such discriminating statements repeatedly since 2005 – statements like: "It cannot be right for human rights groups to dehumanize us to the status of beasts" (qtd. in Human Rights Watch & International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 1). De Vos, an academic at the University of Cape Town views such statements coming from African leaders as having influence on prejudices and hate against homosexuals within South African

²⁶ GLB: gay, lesbian or bisexual.

society (qtd. in De Waal, no page). Beyond doubt, homosexual people living in South Africa had and still have to live a life in fear, which the following quote of a lesbian woman from Johannesburg illustrates well:

Every day you feel like it's a time-bomb waiting to go off. You don't have freedom of movement, you don't have your space to do as you please, you are always scared and your life always feels restricted (Phumla, a lesbian woman qtd. in Martin et al. 8).

It goes without saying that living with such fear, being discriminated against and being hated by homophobes, hiding one's sexual orientation and thereby denying one's true identity, is all doubtlessly traumatizing.

4.4 SURVIVOR GUILT

The dictionary defines survivor guilt as

a deep feeling of guilt often experienced by those who have survived some catastrophe that took the lives of [...] others; derives in part from a feeling that they did not do enough to save the others who perished and in part from feelings of being unworthy relative to those who died²⁷.

The feelings of guilt are often to be found in survivors of "war, natural disaster, or nuclear holocaust" (Lifton qtd. in Herman 1997: 53), but also in those who had to watch other people die or suffer – they are also plagued by feelings of guilt "for not risking their lives to save others, or for failing to fulfill the request of a dying person" (Herman 54). Thus, survivor guilt may affect black South Africans surviving or finding security, while seeing others die or being tortured (Volkan 2). However, white people may also suffer from survivor guilt for not preventing crucial deeds committed by the government and white people, causing a vast number of deaths and suffering during the apartheid era (Slovo no p.). Slovo asserts that many white South Africans deny having witnessed what happened during the apartheid era, as well as deny the fact of having benefitted from the system, and the fact of being complicit (Slovo, no page). This denial indicates that, according to Petzold, these Whites developed 'survivor guilt' or as he calls it 'communal guilt' (324), which can indeed be viewed as 'traumatic' guilt.

²⁷ "Survivor guilt": https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/survivor_guilt#word=survivor%20guilt.

4.5 BEREAVEMENT

Due to the devastating and brutal situation during apartheid as well as after the fall of apartheid, many people were killed and died because of AIDS or other reasons often caused by the unjust political situation. The survivors, who may even have witnessed the (often brutal) deaths of their loved ones, are left to deal with these losses, which may indeed result in traumatic bereavement which in turn may carry common trauma symptoms and according to Rubin et al., may even lead to “persistent or permanent changes in personality” (Rubin et al. 670). Obviously, all deaths are to some extent traumatic for the survivors and both sadness and anger are normal responses to bereavements. However, if these feelings are long-lasting and progressively energy-sapping, one can speak of traumatic bereavement or ‘complicated grief’, a disorder showing manifested symptoms of PTSD. If the death was very sudden or if the death involved violence it is more likely for the survivors to develop ‘complicated grief’. Moreover, people who already suffered from depression or anxiety disorders such as PTSD in the course of their lives, are more endangered to develop ‘complicated grief’ after the death of a beloved one (Anonymus 7)²⁸.

4.6 CHILD ABUSE

South Africa shows a significantly high rate of child abuse.

Although the government set a lot of action to protect children after the fall of apartheid, child abuse still seems to be daily fare in South Africa (Richter & Dawes 80-81). The abuse ranges from societal abuse such as child labor or child marriage, physical maltreatment such as physical abuse or refusing children medicine, cleanliness or food, sexual abuse, and maltreatment not of a physical nature, such as having parents who use drugs or educational and emotional neglect (Pierce & Bozalek 821). These abuses take place at home as well as in the children’s schools, but also on the streets (Richter & Dawes 81). In most of the cases the abusers are parents and teachers, but also teenagers living near the children or being close to them become abusers (87).

There are different reasons for the high rate of child abuse in South Africa. Richter and Dawes see “poverty, patriarchy, gender violence, as well as the

²⁸ See <http://www.health.harvard.edu/fhg/updates/Complicated-grief.shtml>.

socialized obedience, dependency and silence of women and children” (79) as preconditions for the occurrence of child abuse. Since South Africa is a nation in which men are the ones assuming to be the stronger sex, (i.e. South Africa is a patriarchal nation), men believe to have the right to abuse both women and children (85). Also, Pelton sees poverty as the main reason for child abuse by stating that “after years of study and research, there is no single fact about child abuse and neglect that has been better documented and established than their strong relationship to poverty and low income” (131). Moreover, unemployment seems to be another factor influencing the rate of child abuse. As unemployment may result in dissatisfaction and stress within the family it is likely to vent one’s frustration on helpless children by abusing them (Richter qtd. in Richter & Dawes 86). Furthermore, many South Africans share the popular belief that physical punishment cannot harm children, which consequently increases the rate of child abuse (84, 86).

Moreover, alcohol and drug abuse may result in a decrease in inhibition levels and greater loss of self-control. Consequently this may encourage alcohol and drug users into abusive behavior (86-87). Social workers explain sexual abuse on children, a problem often occurring in rural areas, with the popular belief shared by many South Africans that having sexual intercourse with virgins might heal AIDS-patients from their disease (Pierce and Bozalek 829).

4.7 TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

These offspring, the ‘second generation’ from the trauma, may [...] bear ‘the scar without the wound’ (Albeck 248)

The phenomenon of ‘transgenerational trauma’ often affects the offspring of a collectively traumatized generation, like, for example, the offspring of Holocaust-survivors. Thereby, children, grandchildren and even further generations are indirectly traumatized by the (unresolved) traumas of their ancestors. In other words, trauma and its effects are passed on to future generations. (see Volkan 12)

Hammerich et al. see the inability to be empathic, belonging to the symptom-category ‘avoidance and numbing’ as one of the reasons for this transmission, i.e. a person being traumatized may lose the ability to be empathic from the

moment of traumatization due to survival reasons and may not be able to 're-learn' this ability again (Hammerich et al. 30). A parent who is unable to be empathic and therefore is unable to reflect feelings appropriately, confuses his/her child (the next generation) and this consequently leads to the development of a "false sense of self" (Hammerich et al. 30) on the part of the child. To put it differently, the more traumatized victims avoid dealing with their traumas and the more they suppress feelings associated with their trauma, "the more burdensome will be the task passed on as a legacy to the next generation" (Hammerich et al. 30). Volkan also mentions these 'tasks' being unconsciously assigned to the children of traumatized individuals or societies (13). Such tasks can be "to reverse humiliation, [...] or to do the work of mourning for parental losses" (Volkan 14). Besides coping with unconsciously assigned burdensome tasks, children of traumatized parents may also have to deal with feelings of anxiety, depression and worries - all feelings their traumatized parents unconsciously projected on them (Volkan 13). As already mentioned, transgenerational trauma is a very typical phenomenon occurring in Holocaust traumas. Grünberg states that the preoccupation with the victims' own trauma leads on the one hand to an emotional neglect of their children and on the other hand they unconsciously demand their children to compensate their losses (25 ff). Transgenerational trauma is an issue in South Africa – since the nation is collectively traumatized and many traumas remained unresolved due to missing awareness and help, the transmission of traumas to next generations seems natural. Moreover, as many Jews immigrated/fled to South Africa due to the situation during the Second World War, the passing on of Holocaust traumas to next generations is also common in South Africa.

4.8 FARM MURDERS AND FARM ATTACKS

From 1990 to 2012 there have been an estimated number of 3000 farm murders in South Africa (Conway-Smith no p.). It is important to note that the owners of most farms in South Africa are white Afrikaners (Conway-Smith no p.), thus, most of the victims of farm attacks and murders are white. Additionally, most attackers are black. South Africa is a country with a very high rate of violence and murder and according to Reuters "being a white farmer makes a violent death an even higher risk" (par.1) and Ghosh states that the probability to get killed is four to six times higher compared to the rest of the

population if you are a white farmer in South Africa (no p.). What are the reasons for this high rate of farm murders in South Africa? A study conducted about ten years ago shows that the common aim for farm murders is robbery (Reuters, no p.). However, many farmers are convinced that the real motives for the attacks and murders are hate crimes and racism and some of them even speak of genocide (Reuters, no p.). This makes perfect sense if one looks at the brutality involved in these murders as farmers assert that “these murders are marked by a unique level of brutality – often worse than that found in terrorist attacks. The argument that farm murders are 'only murder' does not hold water” (qtd. in Ghosh). Additionally, there are cases in which the attackers did not even steal something (Criminal Justice Monitor 4) – another fact leading to the assumption that the motive may not be robbery, but rather hatred and a desire to expel the whites from the land (Criminal Justice Monitor 4), as they feel the need to take revenge. Similarly, Prof. Burger asserts that some attackers may “take out their hatred for all those past wrongs, and show who's in control now” (qtd. in Conway-Smith, no p.).

Doubtlessly, being a survivor of such a farm attack or watching family members being attacked or even killed, may lead to severe traumatization, leaving lasting symptoms which the survivors may have to live with for their whole lives.

5 RAPE IN BITTER FRUIT²⁹

Bitter fruit by Achmat Dangor tells the story of a colored family living in a suburb called Berea a few years after the fall of apartheid. The story opens with Silas Ali meeting the policeman Du Boise, the white rapist of his wife Lydia, in a shopping center nineteen years after the rape has happened. Meeting Du Boise triggers the reliving of the past both in Silas and Lydia, who are traumatized by the rape and have not spoken about it for nineteen years.

5.1 HOW THE RAPE TRAUMATIZES LYDIA

‘I saw Du Boise today’. ‘Who?’ ‘Du Boise, Lieutenant Du Boise’. Lydia said nothing. Her fingers gripped the steering wheel more tightly (9).

Lydia’s first reaction to Silas’ telling her about meeting her rapist is avoidance. His words make her speechless. She has avoided thinking about the event for

²⁹ All quotes in this chapter are from Dangor 2001.

years, and the sudden mention of her rapist's name makes her feel paralyzed. For nineteen years she has not spoken about the rape. Suppressing the rape for so many years, avoiding to think and talk about it are clear signs of Lydia still being deeply traumatized of what has happened almost twenty years ago.

However, from the day Silas brings home the past again, it is unavoidable for her to flee from it any longer – the moment Silas speaks out loud her rapist's name, the past catches up with Lydia and sets a stone rolling. She is forced to relive the past she has so desperately tried to repress.

Thus, after her immediate reaction of ignorance and running away (her usual way of dealing with her trauma) the past suddenly overwhelms her:

She raised her legs onto the chair and hugged her knees to her chest. 'Silas, I'd forgotten...' (13).

As the past hits her with its full intensity and overwhelms her with unpleasant feelings, she blames Silas for bringing home the rape, for reopening old wounds: "You chose to remember, you *chose* to come home and tell me" (13). She wishes Silas would not have told her as it disrupts her life completely; the *nu* (a symptom of traumatization) ruling her life since the rape has happened suddenly turns into a wave of bitter feelings, almost impossible to bear.

Talking about the rape for the first time triggers a flashback in Lydia, i.e. she relives the rape in all its intensity, feels the horror of the night as if happening again in the present, almost twenty years after the actual event. In her unbearable helplessness about what to do about this painful memory, she drinks Silas' beer in order to "taste like a man, all sour" (16). This can be viewed as an attempt of denying her femininity, as the flashback makes her feel helpless and powerless. She associates being strong and powerful with masculinity, and in her trancelike state she desperately tries to be 'male and strong' by drinking beer, which should give her "a man's breath" (17).

The flashback with its accompanied emotional pain hits her so hard that the only way to escape from this pain is to defeat it with physical pain: she drops the beer glass to dance on the pieces of the broken glass while weeping on Silas' chest. Experiencing this flashback, transporting her into a trancelike state in which she severely injures herself (self-mutilation) shows that she still has not come to terms with her trauma.

Not only the rape itself does constitute a severe traumatization for Lydia; additionally the rape bears a 'bitter fruit', namely her son Mikey, the result of the rape.

He had hurt her, Du Boise, yes, but more than in the mere brutalizing of her vagina, he had violated her womb with the horror of his seed. [...] She knew instinctively, the moment he rose and pulled up his trousers, that she was pregnant, and that she would thereafter refuse her body its right to bear more children. (199-120)

The decision of not bearing children anymore can as well be seen as a sign of traumatization, as for her, being pregnant will always be associated with being raped, and as her way to deal with the trauma is avoidance, she consequently avoids everything associated with the rape – therefore also pregnancy.

She remembered smelling Du Boise's scent on the baby, a faint stench. [...] And she continued to sniff at Mikey, until he was old enough to say no with his eyes and his demeanour. (120)

After Mikey's birth she associates the baby with her rapist, but soon suppresses this association as part of her symptom of avoidance and develops deep love for him, love even going beyond motherly love, namely towards incestuous love.

In hospital, where her injuries are treated, the pain she has tried to defeat with physical pain by dancing on broken glass is back in her heart and her mind. "Now, in that hospital ward, those agonies, physical and metaphysical, fused together into a blend of fury and grief. She wept silently, without trembling lips or blinking eyes"(48). She starts dreaming of Du Boise, she recalls his face, details of the rape come to her mind as soon as she closes her eyes. Since the day Silas mentions Du Boise's name almost twenty years after the rape, her trauma symptoms of 'avoidance and numbing' change into 'intrusion' (symptom-category of PTSD, see chapter 2.3.1.1.), i.e. she re-experiences the trauma by experiencing flashbacks and remembering details of the rape.

Effects on her sexuality

After the rape Lydia develops a disturbed relationship to sex. In a way she splits her body and her mind when having sex with Silas by imagining the face of Cathy, an imagined Chinese girl: "Cathy became the phantasm projected before

her each time she had sex with a man [...] Cathy helped her wrench some pleasure for herself from encounters with Silas” (118-119).

Because she associates men with violence and rape, Lydia chooses a female person to think of while having sex, taking away the disgust sex and penises arouse in her. Again it is avoidance helping her through her trauma, i.e. she avoids thinking of having sex with a *man* by splitting body and mind and diverts herself with imagining the picture of a *woman* when having sex.

Dad’s face showed satiation, Mama’s emptiness. She flung herself into a flurry of physical activity, scrubbing floors, cleaning, cooking, as if that emptiness would suck her in if she did not fill it with the most mundane and tedious of achievements. (141)

This is how Mikey experiences his mother after she has had sex with Silas. Despite her attempt of ‘beaming her away’ during sex, the act makes her feel empty inside, which again is an indication of her traumatization.

Her disturbed relationship to sex is also shown in the following quote:

The difference is he’ll [= the Desmond Tutu] never understand what it’s like to be raped, to be mocked while he’s being raped, to feel inside of him the hot knife – that piece of useless flesh you call a cock – turning into a torture instrument” (16)

For her, from the moment of her rape, a penis no longer represents an instrument of pleasure, it becomes an “instrument of torture”, something that hurts her, steals her power, makes her feel helpless. Sex, associated with pain, horror, violence and male power, has become a duty for her – the duty of a married woman whose husband has the right to sleep with his wife.

5.1.1 LYDIA’S POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

[...] At that moment, in Smith Street, Noordgesig, I crossed over into a zone of silence” (129)

The day Silas bumps into Lydia’s rapist breaks the silence about the rape. This breaking of silence, triggering flashbacks and the recollection of the past in her, set a ball rolling. She starts to change.

She realizes that she cannot live with Silas anymore, the man she associates with her rapist, the man being responsible for her suffering, the man who views her as a victim instead of a woman.

Her exhaustive preoccupation with her trauma helps her deal with it and get stronger. She starts writing in her diary after many years of silence, which serves as her empathic listener, her therapist, helping her to come to terms with her past.

She gives up her old job, finds a new one, buys herself a car, and tries to become independent.

Silas, realizing that Lydia no longer needs him, sees her change and her growth as well: "She had her own car now, was free to do things independently. [...] She no longer needed him, not even for the mundane purpose of having him drive her to her appointments" (255).

At Silas' birthday party Lydia sleeps with Joao, and for the first time after her rape she enjoys sexual intercourse. This event (sleeping with Joao) can be viewed as *the* event finally liberating her from her past. She re-discovers her sexuality. For the first time after the rape it is she *herself* who chooses to have sex, not her rapist or Silas whom she only sleeps with because it is his right to have sex with her. Now, it is *her* who has the power, who is in charge. Sex loses its association with violence, force and pain.

Silas himself, being aware of his wife leaving him, recognizes that "[h]is wife had found release at last from both her captive demons: from Du Boise and from himself. Now not every man would be a rapist to her" (267). The event of having sex with a young *black* man (who represents the opposite of her *white* rapist) can be viewed as *the* event relieving her from her past/her trauma. Subsequently she leaves Silas and moves away in order to start a new life:

Time and distance, even this paltry distance, will help to free her. Burden of the mother. Mother, wife, lover, lover-mother, lover-wife, unloved mother. Unloved, in sum, except for those wonderful, unguarded moments, Mikey, Silas, and, of course, black Joao, beautiful as jet. Even Du Boise does not matter any more (281).

5.2 HOW THE RAPE TRAUMATIZES MIKEY

He reasserts control, smothers a cry, the need to weep that rises primitively inside him. (127)

He is calm, detached now from the full import of his mother's words: 'Mikey is a child of rape'. During the night, when he had first read this sentence, he had been overcome with horror. (129)

Reading his mother's diary and learning he was a child of rape deeply traumatizes Mikey and turns his whole world up side down.

I am the child of some murderous white man [...] a boer, someone who worked for the old system, in fact. (131)

He feels 'infected' with the 'old system', is disgusted with himself being a descendant of a white murderous man and being the result of cruel violence. The discovery of him not being the person he thought to be his whole life leads him to the question of 'Who am I?' Calling his own identity into question, the search for his 'true identity' inevitably begins. As a result of his identity crisis, Mikey starts to change, both his behavior and his outer appearance. Thus, he withdraws from his family and starts sleeping with older women. Moreover, Mikey changes his name to Michael, which as well clearly represents his search for his identity and his desperate try to 'wash away' his old identity, namely the identity his mother and his biological violent monster of a father have given to him.

Silas experiences him as "a moody and reclusive stranger" (44) and Lydia saying "Michael belongs to someone else. *Mikey* is my son" clearly indicates that for her, the 'new Mikey', who now insists to be called Michael, is not the son she knows, but rather a *stranger*.

In his attempt of finding his identity he makes friends with his father's family, who turn out to be austerely religious Muslims. He gets highly influenced by these people and their beliefs. Imam Ismail justifies the murder of rapists by saying that "there are certain things people do not forget or forgive. Rape is one of them" (204) and that he would clearly "help a helpless man in his quest for justice [and] vengeance" (204). Encouraged by this statement and by the story of his grandfather Ali Ali, Silas' father, who killed the rapist of his sister, Mikey steals a gun with the aim of killing his biological father. Mikey killing Du Boise can, on the one hand, be interpreted as an imitation of Silas' father who also killed a rapist, as a desperate attempt of bringing himself closer to the family he *wants* to belong to. On the other hand, the murder can be viewed as an attempt

of undoing what has happened, namely the rape itself and him being the child of this rape – facts being almost impossible to bear for him.

Moreover, the murder can as well be seen as the turn of Mikey's rage and aggression he in fact harbors against his mother for not loving him out of motherly love but out of pain and guilt, against Du Boise.

Before shooting Du Boise he shoots Vinu's father and rapist, regarding this as "practice for a more important mission" (242), namely the mission of killing Du Boise. Without batting an eyelid he first kills Vinu's father and finally Du Boise:

He wants to obliterate Du Boise's face, wipe away that triumphant, almost kindly expression, leave behind nothing but splintered bone and shattered skin. (276)

Mikey's deeds can clearly be viewed as a severe reaction to his trauma.

5.3 HOW THE RAPE TRAUMATIZES SILAS

Silas works for the ANC at the time the rape happens, an organization fighting against the apartheid system. Lydia has to pay the price for Silas being an underground worker for the ANC – the price of rape. While the white policeman Du Boise rapes Lydia, he himself gets beaten up in a van and is forced to listen to Lydia's rape, her helplessness and the rapist calling her "a nice wild half-kaffir cunt" (17). Hearing his own wife being raped, viewing himself as the one to be blamed for this rape, and being unable to help her, deeply traumatizes Silas and changes his own life, but also the relationship to Lydia, which turns out to never become the same as before the rape happened.

The rage he felt was in his stomach, an acidity that made him fart sourly, out loud, oblivious to the head-shaking group of shoppers who had gathered to witness a potential scene. [...] Silas's rage moved disconsolately in his heart. (5)

Seeing his wife's rapist, the man being responsible for his disturbed marriage, for the missing intimacy between him and his wife and for so much pain and suffering both in his and in Lydia's life, triggers feelings of rage and aggression as well as bodily reactions in him.

Silas' way to cope with his trauma is to drown it in alcohol, which shows his immediate reaction after he met Du Boise in the shopping center: Coming home, without saying a word to Lydia, he immediately heads for the refrigerator,

takes out the beer and drinks until he feels drunk and drowsy – momentarily the alcohol helps him to cope with the unpleasant feelings triggered by meeting Du Boise.

After this first reaction he tells Lydia about the meeting, whose reaction is blaming Silas for being too egoistic to see *her* pain:

‘Its’s a memory to you, a wound to your ego, a theory.’ ‘Ja, I suppose imagined pain isn’t the real thing. But I’ve lived with it for so long, it’s become real. Nearly twenty years. The pain of your screams, his laugh, his fucken cold eyes when he brought you back to the van’. ‘What else do you remember?’ ‘The Sergeant Seun’s face, our black brother, the black brutal shame in his face’. ‘You don’t remember my face, my tears...’ (14)

It is possible that, as a symptom of a traumatization, Silas’ consciousness has suppressed the clear memory of his wife’s pain, the horror in her face and her tears, as these memories would be unbearable for him.

Thus, Silas’ way to cope with his trauma, besides drinking alcohol, is avoidance. All these years after the rape he avoids thinking and talking about the event that empowered him, emasculated him by “screaming like a madman” (14) while listening to his wife’s rape. The day he meets Du Boise, Lydia tries to talk about it for the first time after nineteen years, and hearing details about this night even nineteen years after the incident seems to be unbearable for Silas and avoidance still his way to cope with it. He wants her to stop talking: “Lydia, stop it.’ [...] ‘For fuck’s sake, Lydia!’”

In hospital, visiting Lydia, something triggers an emotional breakdown in Silas:

It was Jackson who saw an equally immense anguish on Silas’s face, his clenched jaw and rigid eyes. He was at Silas’s side when he started sagging down as if his legs had suddenly lost their strength. (48)

These physical reactions are a clear indication of Silas’ deep traumatization – something in his friend’s (Alec) voice (who he later assumes has been present at the day of the rape), seems to have triggered these bodily reactions (see ‘hyperarousal’ as a symptom-category of PTSD chapter 2.3.1.1).

5.4 HOW THE RAPE EFFECTS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE FAMILY MEMBERS

Lydia's rape constitutes the reason for the slow destruction and separation of the family. Mikey, knowing the truth of him being a child of rape and traumatized by this knowledge, loses the connection to his mother, sees her with different eyes, becomes a complete stranger to his parents. The relationship between Silas and Lydia, who have never spoken about the rape until the day Silas meets Du Boise, becomes even more alien than it already was before *that day*. Thus, the rape clearly affects the relationships between the family members, as "they live truly secret – and secretive – lives. They are as concealed from each other as they are from the world" (162).

Tragically, in the end, the rape, traumatizing all of the family members, breaks the family apart: Lydia, encouraged by her newly obtained strength, leaves her husband, and Mikey flees to India after he shot Du Boise.

5.4.1 SILAS AND LYDIA

It struck him that he and Lydia spoke very little these days, and when they did, it was about something practical [...]. (7)

Although all these years after the rape, Silas and Lydia avoid talking about it, the unspoken memory of the incident lies constantly between them, like a veil over their lives. They become strangers to each other.

The first conversation about the rape shows Lydia's feelings and attitude towards her husband. In fact, she blames him for not helping her, for being too egoistic to see her pain, for his underground work at the ANC being the reason for her rape, for letting her suffer in silence and for not killing her rapist: "If you were a real man, you would have killed him on the spot, right there in the mall, splatter his brains against a window, watch his blood running all over the floor" (17).

The silence lingering over Silas and Lydia, who silently and individually suffer alone from their personal traumas, separates them more and more. Silas seems to still love his wife, but is unable to show it to her, numbed by his own trauma:

He heard her crying, and wanted to go in there and embrace her, touch her intelligent face, try to recapture the warmth they had lost between them a long time ago. And then he remembered that Lydia, too, had never

been the same since the night she was raped. Somewhere inside of her that *other* Lydia was hiding, shielding herself from the memory of being raped and from his response to it. (60)

Silas' suspicion

A distant fear came back to Silas, one that he rarely allowed to take shape in his mind – Mikey is not my son, not physically – and he struggled to rouse himself before the dream of death flowed into his life. (91)

Although Lydia has never told him, Silas silently suspects Mikey of not being his biological son, and this suspicion, silently lingering between the couple, is another reason for the growing distance between them.

Lydia's association of Silas with her rapist

You should have left Du Boise alone when you saw him, Silas, you should not have brought my rapist home. I can't rest peacefully with both of you around, your bodies, your smells, even your sounds have become all mixed up. It's like he raped me on your behalf, so that one day I would live with him through you. When you are inside me, and around me, it feels like Du Boise"(123)

Lydia unavoidably feels a connection between Du Boise and Silas. Hearing him scream and hammer against the van while she was being raped, she unavoidably associates Silas with her rape, leading to the development of rage against him. Her trauma blurs her perception and makes it difficult for her to see her rapist and her husband – whom she, deep inside her, – blames for being raped, as two independent individuals.

5.4.2 MIKEY AND LYDIA

When Mikey thinks of his mother, the word 'Mama' no longer comes to mind. Gone is the softness, the warmth of that word. (139)

The discovery of him being a child of rape completely changes his attitude towards his mother, he starts seeing her with different eyes and his whole life appears to be a big and bitter lie to him.

Suddenly, every tender touch, or kiss on the forehead she had offered him no longer seemed like a spontaneous, simple, motherly gesture. [...] Lydia had loved him out of pain and guilt. (129-130)

He cannot see his mother as caring and loving mother anymore – he questions every hug, every kiss and every look his mother has ever given to him of being

truly loving and caring motherly gestures. From the moment he reads Lydia's diary, he knows that his mother will never be the same to him and that he will never be the same to his mother.

5.5 VINU'S RAPE

Vinu, Mikey's friend, tells him that she has been sleeping with her own father "since I was fourteen years old" (207). At first she insists that sleeping with him was always truly enjoyable and happened as result of love: "It was beautiful. We slept with each other often. [...] I loved my father, loved him in an unbelievable way. It was beautiful" (208). Mikey, thinking about this 'special relationship' between Vinu and her father "is filled with a quick, seething irritation" (210), and realizes that it must have been rape: "Vinu, listen. Don't fool yourself. There was nothing beautiful about it. It was rape, Vinu, simple, crude rape" (210). After all these years, betraying herself in order to protect herself from horrible feelings, Vinu realizes that it was indeed rape. "She pulls her legs close to her body, leans her head on her knees, weeps, the way he imagines she wept as a child, bewildered, unsure of herself" (210). She was only a child, a helpless child not being able to run away from her father, as being dependent on him. What other choice did she have than betray herself in order to ease the pain and the horror the realization of this horrible fact (her being the rape-victim of her own father) would have brought to her life. Thus, her reaction to her trauma was denying, dissociating the unpleasant parts of sleeping with her father persuading herself that it happened out of love and voluntarily.

6 RELOCATION AND TOWNSHIP VIOLENCE IN *MOTHER TO MOTHER*³⁰

In *Mother to Mother*, written by Sindiwe Magona, the first person narrator Mandisa, whose son is co-responsible for the murder of a white girl murdered in Guguletu, tries to explain and justify the reasons for her son's behavior, addressing the victim's mother. The novel takes place during the time of apartheid and covers forced relocation, township violence as well as the living conditions in townships and the effects on the people affected by these traumatizing conditions and events. The novel is based on a true story, namely

³⁰ If not otherwise declared, the quotes in this chapter are from Magona 1998.

the story of Amy Biel, a white woman killed in 1993 in Guguletu by some of its black inhabitants (v).

6.1 TOWNSHIP VIOLENCE IN *MOTHER TO MOTHER*

Guguletu is a violent place. Every day one hears of someone who was killed ... or nearly killed. Every day – rape, robbery, armed assault and other, more subtle forms of violence. Every day. (44)

Living in Guguletu definitely means living in fear – fear of children, husbands/wives or friends not coming home again after leaving the house, or fear of getting killed by the police or aggressive black inhabitants for no specific reasons. Mandisa's narration not only clearly shows the constant fear, but also the violence and the associated helplessness and horror prevailing in Guguletu. Violent acts like for example the police breaking into houses, shooting or torturing people on the streets or black inhabitants burning buildings and houses, stoning and burning both cars and people, are daily fare in Guguletu.

6.2 REASONS FOR VIOLENCE IN GUGULETU

The structural violence the black inhabitants of Guguletu are forced to bear can be regarded as one reason for the prevailing township violence in Guguletu described in *Mother to Mother* – the sense of injustice and the associated helplessness deriving from structural violence can definitely be triggers for violent behavior. Also hate songs and hate slogans may lead to the development of feelings of hatred and aggression towards white people, which in turn are likely to lead to violent actions.

Magona, the author of the novel, writes in her essay *It Is In the Blood – Trauma and Memory in the South African Novel*, that “trauma is in the blood for the people of South Africa; they can neither escape nor ignore it” (93). This is what Mxolisi's mother tries to explain to the white girl's mother. Since trauma is in Mxolisi's blood (due to experiencing both structural violence and township violence, growing up under devastating circumstances and many more cruelties the apartheid system carries), he, and this is what his mother tries to make clear, in a way has no other choice as to be violent. Trauma is in his blood and violence is his way to deal with this trauma.

6.2.1 STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE IN *MOTHER TO MOTHER*

Imagine that: to go through life, slaving but never free from poverty and then, as though that were not insult enough, enough injury, enough trauma – to be legally forbidden to own a home of one's own! Never to mother one's children – working 'sleepin' at a white family's home, minding that family's white children – day and night, while the parents work, study, or party/entertain. (Magona 2012:96)

This quote by Magona shows the structural violence black South Africans had to bear during apartheid. In *Mother to Mother* the inhabitants of Guguletu indeed have to bear the mentioned conditions: poverty, denial of an own home and minding white family's children while being forced to neglect their own children.

Denied education

Several times Mandisa compares the life of a white person to the life of a black person in order to make it clear to the murdered white girl's mother how difficult living in a black body in South Africa can be. She compares the life of the white girl, having the opportunity of going to university, to the life of her son, who never got nor will get this opportunity, who will never receive proper education and instead spends his days wandering through the streets with no specific goal in mind.

"[T]hose ramshackle, barren things were not schools. No learning took place there" (75). This is how Mandisa describes schools in Guguletu. Many Blacks were even denied access to education, as the government did not build enough schools in Guguletu. Many mothers desperately try to find a school for their children in Guguletu after the relocation, go from school to school "only to be given the same unwelcome news: kugcwele kwesi sikolo – It is full in this school" (31) – the government does not bother to open more schools in the township. Denying people proper school education and thus, ruining their future, can clearly be referred to as structural violence.

Killing a white person vs. killing a black person

[y]ou don't see big words on every page of the newspapers because one of us kills somebody, here in the townships. But this case of Boyboy's, [...]The story was all over the place. Pictures too. (3)

Obviously, for the government and for the police, killing a black person is not a crime. However, if it is a white person who gets killed, the murderers have to be prepared to get punishment – like Mxolisi, who probably will have to spend his whole life in jail for killing the white girl. If Mxolisi had been responsible for the death of his black neighbor, it definitely would not have aroused the police's interest – they would not have lifted a finger.

Poverty

Where was the government the day my son stole my neighbor's hen; wrung its neck and cooked it – feathers and all, because there was not food in the house and I was away, minding the children of the white family I worked for. (3)

As parents of black children are forced to work hard in order to provide their family with food and a roof over the head, children are on their own the whole day. Poverty, created by the government, forces black mothers to work in white households, babysit their white employers' children instead of being with their *own* children, giving them the love and attention they would love to give them. Mandisa develops feelings of guilt and expresses her desperateness of not being able to take care of her own children as she is forced to work hard for little money and therefore forced to neglect her own children.

I swallow my guilt. What would happen if I stayed home doing the things a mother's supposed to do? We couldn't survive just on what Dwadwa makes. We hardly make it as it is, with me working full time. (8)

This quote shows that she has no other choice: Either she works hard, leading to the neglect of her own children, or she stays at home and consequently her family will starve because of lack of money. This can clearly be called structural violence, creating traumatizing conditions for both the children, who grow up without parental care and education, and for the parents, who have to live with the guilt of not being there for their children.

Living conditions in Guguletu

The general living conditions in Guguletu can also be viewed as structural violence and as conditions traumatizing Guguletu's inhabitants.

Sad small houses crowned with gray and flat unsmiling roofs. Low as though trained never to dream high dreams. [...] The streets are narrow, debris-filled, full of gullies alive with flies, mosquitoes, and sundry vermin thriving in the pools of stagnant water that are about the only thing that

never dries up and never vanishes in Guguletu. [...] the toys of the children of the streets: bottles, cans, the pits and peels of fruits and vegetables, scraps of food [...]. For most, this is their only school, their playground. [...] unfriendly sand told us nothing would ever grow in such a place [...] [b]y day, it whipped sand till it bit into skin on face, arms and legs, get into hair, into eyes, into food [...]. (27-30)

People are forced to live a life in devastating living conditions with no opportunity to flee.

Structural violence and its traumatizing effects on the people affected by it can be viewed as one reason for the township violence described by Mandisa. Neglect and the missing of rules and behavioral boundaries (as there is no-one there to teach them) may indeed be reasons for the development of aggression and hatred against people who are responsible for this. Additionally, as many of these children do not go to school (either because there is no opportunity or they do not want to go to school because “no learning took place there” (5)), this missing education may also lead to aggression, and in turn, to violence. They get bored, wandering through the streets the whole day, being aware of the fact that without proper education there will be no proper future, and the fact that breaking out of this life is practically impossible. Knowing these facts may consequently lead to helplessness, aggression, desperation and anger. As many of them have never learnt how to deal with these feelings, they have no other ways as to release these feelings in the form of violence.

6.2.2 HATE SONGS AND HATE SLOGANS

There is knowledge with which I was born [...]. We sucked it from our mother's breasts, at the very least; inhaled it from the very air, for most. [...] Long before I went to school I knew when Tata had had a hard day at work. He would grumble, 'Those dogs I work for'. (173)

Mxolisi and the other children in Guguletu grow up with songs like 'Whites are dogs' (75) and slogans like 'One settler, one bullet'. Hearing from all directions that white people are bad people, people who need to be killed severely, influences children. Nobody, neither parents nor teachers, tells them that killing white people or being violent against them are wrong things to do:

Sang the song when not one of the teachers had taken the trouble of explaining to us that the people of East London should not have done that [=killing a white nun]. (74)

Thus, it is no wonder that these children develop hatred against white people; it is no wonder that they stone white people's cars. And it is clearly an explanation for the killing of the white girl in which Mxolisi has been involved. These slogans are branded into the children's brains from childhood on. Mxolisi has been involved in boycotts and strikes against the apartheid system, hate songs and hate slogans were repeated again and again throughout his life:

[A]nd the song in my son's ears. A song he had heard since he could walk. Even before he could walk. Song of hate, of despair, of rage. Song of impotent loathing. (209)

Seeing a white girl in Guguletu automatically triggers feelings of hatred in her murderers, and while screaming 'one settler, one bullet' over and over again, the only thing they have in mind is to kill this girl. Encouraged by this hate slogan they almost trance-like kill the white girl without thinking about the consequences.

6.3 RELOCATION AS TRAUMATIZATION IN *MOTHER TO MOTHER*

"With eyes bright with suppressed tears, our parents pulled down their homes" (66).

Mandisa is a young girl when the police/the government forces her and her family and all the black inhabitants of Blouville to leave their home and move to Guguletu. The inhabitants' first reaction to the rumor of being forcibly relocated is laughing about it. They refuse to believe it. Blouville has already been the home of their forefathers; they have their jobs in Blouville, their family, their friends, their schools – Blouville is their beloved home. Making jokes about the forthcoming relocation clearly constitutes a defense mechanism, as to think of this rumor as being true would be inconceivable as well as unbearable for them.

But the government was not laughing. The government never showed its smiling teeth when dealing with any matter in connection with Africans. (55)

Thus, the police come with bulldozers and force the black population to leave their home. Forced relocation, as already the name implies, never proceeds peacefully: "[O]ut of each the army and police vehicles and bulldozers sprang form-clad white men. Hundreds of them. [...] The white men set upon tin shacks

like unruly children destroying a colony of anthills” (65). This is how Mandisa describes the relocation, comparing black people with ants – as much worth and as easy to destroy as ants.

The relocation is indeed traumatizing for Mandisa:

I had lost all my friends. [...] I was completely bewildered. Lost. [...] I did not belong. [...] For years, I mourned the loss of my friends [...] My heart bled for myself and what I'd lost, and for all those millions that had lost their homes. All those lives rudely disrupted, mercilessly plucked from hearth and the familiar. That sea of shacks forever silenced (33).

Not only does she lose all her friends through the relocation, but also her love of life. Moreover, as her mother does not want to hear her mourning, she has no one to talk to about her sadness and her desperation: “Mama’s lack of sympathy only added to my misery” (32). Feeling helpless and being traumatized herself, her mother is simply not able to give her daughter comfort. This helplessness and the guilt of not being able to offer her children a better life leaves her embittered and cold inside.

“[E]verything and everybody changed, especially Mama” (66). This is how Mandisa describes her mother’s negative change after the relocation. Hence, Mandisa feels alone with her sorrows, her pain, and her lack of understanding of why this is happening to her family. She hates the new school, she misses her friends and her home, and to make matters worse, she cannot cope with things and people around her changing. The feeling of being alone clearly contributes to her traumatization. She even compares her feelings and the effects of the relocation and the associated living conditions in the township, with death:

Guguletu killed us ... killed the thing that held us together ... made us human. [...] [T]he loss of our friends, the distances our parents had to travel to and from work, [...] The very houses – an unrelieved monotony of drabness; harsh and uncaring in the manner of allocation, administration and maintenance – could not but kill the soul of those who inhabited them (33).

Something inside her has died forever.

6.4 TOWNSHIP VIOLENCE AS TRAUMATIZATION IN *MOTHER TO MOTHER*

6.4.1 MXOLISI'S TRAUMA

Mandisa gives birth to Mxolisi when she is fifteen. He is an unwanted child and throughout the novel the reader learns that Mandisa harbors ambivalent feelings towards her child. Although it seems as if she is having a close relationship to her firstborn, she unconsciously hates him for ruining her life, as she says that “his [Mxolisi’s] implanting himself inside [her] [was] unreasonably and totally destroying the me I was” (88). She could have a better life, could have gone to school, could have gone to East London with her aunt; her life could be so much better if Mxolisi had not been born. She could even have gone to university. By being born Mxolisi damned her to live a life in poverty, a life being full of sorrows:

Once more it was brought home to me what turmoil the coming of this child has brought to my life. Were it not for him, of course, I would still be in school. Instead, I was forced into being a wife, forever abandoning my dreams, hopes, aspirations. For ever. (132-133)

Mxolisi unconsciously feels the trauma his birth has brought to his mother; he unconsciously knows his existence has ruined his mother’s life – he feels responsible for his mother’s sorrows, her pain, her trauma – he has no other options as to live with this blame from childhood on.

Moreover, another traumatizing incident happens when he is four years old – an incident for which he also feels responsible and blames himself: Two of his friends, both in their teens and both being involved in boycotts, run into their parents’ house to hide from the police in the wardrobe. Looking for the boys, the police storm into the house, and Mxolisi, too young to understand the seriousness of the situation, shows the police the hiding place of the two boys. As a consequence, Mxolisi witnesses the police shooting his two friends. On that day Mxolisi stops talking for two years – a clear symptom of a severe traumatization. He loses his voice – the part of his body being responsible for his friends’ deaths. Already as a four-year old, he has to live with enormous feelings of guilt.

[Mxolisi] trashed about and screamed in his sleep since that episode. By day, he was a walking zombie; went about wide-eyed, staring into nowhere and never said a word (148).

Being plagued by nightmares, 'walking like a zombie' and 'staring into nowhere' may be seen as signs for a serious depression, which is one effect of traumatization. "Clearly, he was not with us", Mandisa says, showing Mxolisi dissociative behavior. He suppresses parts of reality in order to forget the pain his life brings about. Dissociation and avoidance is also shown in the fact that Mxolisi never again mentions neither the name of his two murdered friends nor the incident, itself – he simply 'forgets' this incident, as having this horrible event in memory would be unbearable for him. However, the memory is hidden in his unconsciousness, which, in Mxolisi's case, leads to feelings of depression and later to feelings of aggression.

As Magona points out, "the cards were stacked against him" (2012:104). Feeling guilty about ruining his mother's life, feeling responsible for and guilty of his two friends' death and being witness of their deaths constitute Mxolisi's traumatization and may be explanations for his violent behavior as a young adult. Both the feeling of being a burden for his mother and the circumstances under which his friends' had to die may be the reasons for the development of feelings of helplessness, rage and aggression in Mxolisi. Violent behavior seems to be his personal way of dealing with these feelings. Apartheid dehumanized, (see Magona 2012:100) and this is what happens to Mxolisi: he is dehumanized by apartheid laws and what these laws carry and mean for him personally (denied education, violence, poverty).

6.4.2 MANDISA'S AND HER FAMILY'S TRAUMA

C-R-R-AA-A-CK! The sound of wood connection with bone. [...] Footsteps. A horde of feet, marching, trampling over the wooden floor of the kitchen. Bold and angry footsteps enter the dining-room. 'They're going to kill us! Mama, they're going to kill us!' [...] The nearer the footsteps come, the louder Siziwe screams. Her eyes are wild with fear. (83)

Looking for Mxolisi after the white girl has been killed, the police breaks into the house of his family in the middle of the night. This house-breaking constitutes a traumatizing event for the family – they fear for their safety. Anything could happen to them. They know how ruthless the police can be and that they might

kill them without batting an eye. Mandisa helplessly has to watch the police beat up her son Lunga, not knowing whether they are going to kill him.

“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” (87). This quote, again, clearly shows the family’s traumatization.

Her sons’ violence traumatizes Mandisa in a personal way. She feels ashamed and guilty for Mxolisi’s deed. In a way Mandisa feels responsible, as she could not prevent this horrible deed; she blames herself for not being a good mother to her child, who as a consequence has become a “monster” (2).

“I have not slept since. Food turns to sawdust in my mouth. All joy has fled my house and my heart bleeds [...] It is heavy and knows no rest. [...] I am a leper in my community” (199). Sleeplessness, loss of appetite and loss of joy are all clear symptoms of a traumatization.

“Shame and anger fill me day and night. Shame at what my son has done. Anger at what has been done to him” (199). Mandisa has to bear feelings of shame, guilt, anger and helplessness – feelings finally leading to a depression as the following quote shows: “Why was I so loath to face the day? A heavy rock sat in the pit of my stomach” (183).

7 HOMOPHOBIA IN KINGS OF THE WATER³¹

Kings of the Water, written by Mark Behr, is set in 2001 and tells the story of the gay Afrikaner man Michiel, who returns to his home farm in South Africa for his mother’s funeral, after having lived fifteen years abroad. He left his home South Africa in the eighties, during apartheid, after he had been demoted in the army because of sleeping with an Indian officer. This incident and the fact of his homosexuality, which is seen as a sin and as abnormal, brings shame over his family. Consequently, he first flees to London, then moves from London to Australia and finally settles in San Francisco to live with his gay partner Kamil. Having been humiliated by his homophobic father and the South African homophobic society, he starts denying his origins and breaks contact with his family.

³¹ The quotes in this chapter are from Behr 2009.

7.1 OUBAAS BEING HOMOPHOBIC

Michiel's father, referred to as Oubaas, is a highly patriarchal and dominant Afrikaner farmer. Being the head of the family, he makes all decisions when it comes to family concerns. As in his opinion being 'a real man' is clearly connected with heterosexuality, homosexuality clearly does not fit into his personal view of the world, which corresponds with the general South African worldview. Like many of the South Africans, he views homosexuality as an abnormality, a disgusting disease, being unacceptable and despicable.

Thus, he shows no acceptance when learning about his son's sexual orientation: "I will not acknowledge this thing and what you are. Be a man, for once. Go back for your national service and face yourself" (58). Convinced that Michiel's homosexuality is something temporary, Oubaas believes that the army will make a 'real man' out of him and cure him of 'this thing'.

When Michiel tries to explain that going back to the army will not change the way he is, Oubaas bans him from the farm:

Then you will not set foot on this farm again. That's life, Michiel. You play by the rules or else you don't play at all. (58)

In a situation when Michiel would need his family the most, he is abandoned by his father, who is not able to accept the disgrace his son has brought to his family – by being gay.

Although fifteen years later the government has set up laws to protect homosexuals in South Africa, and although Oubaas tries to be reconciled with his son for the sake of his dead wife, he still cannot fully accept his son for what he is when Michiel comes back to the farm fifteen years after he has banned him. When Oubaas, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, insists on Michiel bathing him before Ounooi's funeral, Michiel can still see contempt in his father's eyes. Oubaas blames Michiel for the death of his wife: "Heartbreak killed her, you know. You have a way with women, don't you?" (27)

"If you must be this thing you are, can't you at least pretend to have balls? I have nothing to say to you" (35). This quote clearly shows his continuing homophobic attitude towards his son, and he still uses the derogatory term 'this

thing' to refer to Michiel's sexual orientation. He still is not able to view his son as a 'real man'.

7.2 HOMOPHOBIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON MICHIEL

Michiel's homosexuality changes his life completely. He is clearly traumatized by the homophobia of his country and, more painfully, by the homophobic attitude of his own family. His own parents do not accept him for what he is: his mother forces him to see a priest in order to get rid of 'this thing', and his father bans him from the farm. They expect him to hide his true self, to hide his own identity in order not to disgrace the family. Not only does he bring shame over the family by sleeping with a person of his own sex, this person is additionally a colored person. Thus, in addition to 'the crime' of being gay, he breaks the immorality law, which forbids sexual intercourse between Blacks/Coloreds and Whites.

When I hiked back to the farm in disgrace I came because there was not other place to go. Never, even as a child, had I known such loneliness". (35)

In humiliation he comes home from the army, hoping for the support of his family, but he faces incomprehension and rage instead, which clearly contributes to Michiel's traumatization. For Michiel it seems as if the whole world is disgusted by him and his true self. The priest his mother forces him to see in order to confess his 'sin' shares his family's view:

The church is clear on these issues. The World tells us it is an abomination. [...] I suggest you return to the army and ask them to refer you to someone; in the army with me were men who were cured of such urges by psychologists". (73)

Thus, also the church, being an important issue in the Afrikaner society, does not accept homosexuality, and the priest, referring to Michiel's sexual orientation as 'such urges', clearly indicates his homophobic attitude through his opinion that something needs to be done against 'this urge'.

Michiel's first reaction to his experience of homophobia and incomprehension from all directions is denial:

They set us up. We weren't doing anything. He was a friend from the officer's mess and I shouldn't have taken him to a whites-only beach. I made a simple mistake. (88)

In the hope of getting away with his 'simple mistake' like his brother Peet did with his 'simple drowning', Michiel denies his homosexuality in order to prevent experiencing homophobia and the associated humiliation and shame. Thus, Michiel makes use of his brother's 'simplification' method: as Peet has denied his homosexuality by committing suicide and making it look like 'simple drowning', Michiel tries to hide his homosexuality by denying and lying.

Denying one's sexual orientation and therefore denying one's own self can indeed be traumatizing and, in Michiel's case, be seen as another contribution to his trauma.

Ostracized by his father, and abandoned by his beloved mother and not accepted by the South African society (including the church), he begins to search for a place where his sexual orientation is accepted. He first moves to London, where he, in his search of belonging joins an African movement. When a discussion about homosexuality comes up, Michiel learns about the member's opinion:

Gay men and lesbians are jumping on the back of the democratic movement and exploiting the struggle for their own ends. [...] We haven't heard of this problem in Africa until recently. In a liberated South Africa people will be normal. (132)

From the moment of learning about the member's homophobic attitude (viewing homosexuality as 'a problem' and as 'abnormal'), he starts denying his origin, as he again feels betrayed and humiliated by his own people. This incident with the African movement in London can be viewed as the final straw for the development of hatred towards his country and the people living in it: "May that country burn with all of you in it" (132).

Thus, Michiel's traumatization is shown by his desperate attempt to hide his South African origin by trying hard to lose his accent, by moving from continent to continent and by being promiscuous. He is clearly in search of a place of belonging. He avoids thinking about his past, thinking about the place and the people traumatizing him by giving him the feeling of being an 'abnormal criminal' only for being himself.

In the course of this avoidance, being a clear sign of a traumatization, he severs all contact with his family.

After experiencing homophobia in London, Michiel moves to Australia and finally settles in San Francisco, which is known to be a gay-friendly city to live with his gay partner Kamil.

Another clear sign of his deep traumatization is his unfaithfulness and his inability to relate to his partners – in fear of being left he rather chooses to be the first to leave. As he knows the feeling of being abandoned too well (his own family abandoned him and also his brother Peet left him by committing suicide), he desperately tries to avoid the recurrence of this feeling by being the first to leave. Every time a relationship seems to become serious, he develops “an instinct to flee while wishing the core of it to continue” (137).

Exactly this problem of being unable to relate to others leads Michiel to the decision of visiting a psychotherapist in order to save his relationship with Kamil.

7.2.1 MICHIEL'S HEALING

Psychotherapy

The work with Glassman forces him to come to terms with his past, which he has tried to avoid desperately after his flight from South Africa. Recollecting scenes of his past is a giant stride towards healing his trauma.

Reconciliation with Ounooi

Unable to face his past and not ready to forgive his mother for not accepting him for what he is by sending him to a priest, he returns every letter of his mother for ten years. After many sessions with his therapist, Glassman suggests to “[reconnect] through more than memory”, and Michiel decides to reconnect with his mother after ten years of silence. He invites her to San Francisco, where they spend a few days together. For the first time, Michiel feels accepted by his mother for what he is; she accepts his relationship with Kamil and shows him her motherly love, understanding and concern:

I have loved you, child of my heart, through everything. [...] A mother understands. And I know you do too. Love takes a thousand and one shapes. (9)

Hearing his mother say these words makes him feel loved, and he instinctively knows that his mother never meant to harm him – that she always wanted to protect him. He forgives her.

Reconciliation with Oubaas

Although Oubaas has difficulties to show it, he wishes a reconciliation with his son, even if his motivation derives from the knowledge that his dead wife would have been pleased to see this reconciliation. Thus, although not being able to stop making digs at Michiel while being bathed by him, he tries to be friendly and tries to create some closeness between him and his son. The reader clearly can feel some kind of intimacy between father and son:

‘Next unexpected place you’ll be is my dick’ He guffaws and Michiel chuckles, unable to stop himself from laughing. Oubaas’s laughter comes from his belly, his head thrown back. [...] Still smiling, Michiel returns his eyes to Oubaas’s face”. (32)

During the same bathing scene, Michiel expresses his forgiveness to his father: “There were times, Pa, I wished you a taste of your own medicine. [...] Some kind of revenge. But that desire went, with time, Pa” (34).

Both father and son seem to be ready for reconciliation and try their best to show this to each other. Oubaas’ mentioning of Kamil and referring to him as ‘your friend’ can be viewed as a way to show his son that he finally accepts his homosexuality, which is of great importance for Michiel’s healing. “Your friend. This, then, is how Kamil is to be acknowledged. It is, in fact, more than good enough” (143).

Psychotherapy, the reconciliation with his mother, going back to the place of traumatization and the reconciliation with his father and his ex-girlfriend Karien can be viewed as the events healing him from his trauma. He no longer has to deny his origin, as South Africa is no longer linked with humiliation, pain and dark memories. He starts feeling alive – clearly a sign of relief and healing:

He feels tears coming off his cheeks and in the thrill of speed and fear he feels utterly alive, in his flesh an exhilaration that in a very long time – even without his feeling the absence – has not been there. (205)

Michiel’s search of belonging has come to an end. He knows where he belongs.

7.3 HOMOPHOBIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON OUNOOI

Clearly, the decisions of her patriarchal and homophobic husband have traumatizing effects on Ounooi. She seems to be under the control of her husband, and as she is female in a patriarchal society/family, she does not have the right to make decisions and is expected always to have the same opinion as her husband.

When Michiel turns out to be homosexual, she has no other choice as to accept Oubaas' decision of banning him from the farm. She stays in the background: "Ounooi has not spoken of what her youngest son has done or what she knows [...] from the paper" (72). It seems as if it is not her son's homosexuality that bothers her, it is the fear of losing her son, as she knows that Oubaas will not accept his son's sexual orientation. She sends her son to the priest, not because she is disgusted by his homosexuality; she simply does not want Oubaas to tear the family apart by banning Michiel from the farm. Thus, her only hope is the priest, who she hopes will do something about Michiel's sexual orientation, as she knows that his homosexuality in combination with her homophobic husband will destroy the family. Thus, Ounooi cannot be viewed as homophobic; her only interest is holding the family together and preventing another loss – she already lost her eldest son and losing her youngest, too, would be unbearable for her.

However, her fear turns out to be true; Michiel leaves home and severs all contact with her – he returns her letters unopened for ten years. Obviously, Ounooi is traumatized, namely by the consequences of Oubaas' homophobic attitude and by her inability to stand up to Oubaas. Living with the knowledge that this inability is the reason for the loss of her son's trust and love fills her with feelings of guilt, shame, helplessness and sadness. After Ounooi's death, Karien tells Michiel that "[i]t wasn't your leaving or your lifestyle that bothered her. She was ashamed of not standing up to Oubaas" (174).

Ounooi's way to cope with these feelings/her trauma is avoidance: "Ounooi and I hardly spoke about how she dealt with you" (149) Karien tells Michiel after Ounooi's death. Not only does she avoid talking about Michiel, but also about her eldest son Peet, in order not to feel the pain associated with the death of her eldest and the homosexuality of her youngest son. Karien may be right with

her assumption that “to block it out may be the only way some can get out of bed in the morning” (149).

The symptom of avoidance is also shown in Ounooi’s reaction to Michiel’s telling her the truth about Peet’s death. “Michiel, please. Stop.” (86) When hearing the truth about her eldest son, Michiel describes her reaction the following way: “Her gaze is disoriented, her look unfocused. She shakes her head, turns, seems to half-stumble, her cheek squashed and distorted against the window” (89). Unable to bear the truth about Peet, she clearly dissociates this truth from her consciousness in order to cope with the pain that is overwhelming her. Thus, after these bodily reactions, she ignores further attempts of Michiel to talk about it: “Her eyes found his and she brushed aside his apology as though it were uncalled for, as if she were mystified at what he was referring to” (91). She clearly avoids and dissociates the new knowledge from her consciousness, as she would not be able to endure the thought of the fact that she has lost two of her sons because of homophobia and the fact that she, as their mother, has not been able to protect her sons, to help them, to provide them with understanding and love.

7.3.1 OUUNOI’S HEALING AND GROWTH

Overshadowed by her patriarchal husband for many years, she is able to grow and be herself when Oubaas becomes ill.

For Ounooi the reconciliation with Michiel is, as well as for Michiel, important for her healing. Being ashamed of her behavior and her inability to support Michiel when he needed her the most, she then, ten years later, offers him her help: “I would like to know whether you have this disease. And, if you do, what can I do to help?” (91).

The fact that she has not been able to support both Peet and Michiel in the crises of their lives traumatizes her. Moreover, the fact of not being there for her sick son Peet pains her. After her first reaction of blocking out Peet’s existence, which can be viewed as a symptom of her trauma (avoidance and dissociation), she starts putting herself out for the help of people suffering from AIDS a few weeks before her death. This can be seen as an attempt to make up for her mistakes and may indeed be important for coming to terms with her trauma.

7.4 HOMOPHOBIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON PEET

Peet, the eldest son of Ounooi and Oubaas, has always been the pride of the family. Being aware of the country's homophobia, he does not want to bring shame over his family and hides his homosexuality. When living with this lie and the fact of his being ill (Aids) become unbearable for him and living a life in shame and humiliation is no option for him, he decides to rather be dead and commits suicide by drowning himself. His country's homophobia leads him to suicide, the only way for him to flee from devastating humiliation, the only way to flee from his own trauma, triggered by a homophobic society.

8 SURVIVOR GUILT IN *QUARTER TONES*³²

Quarter Tones, written by Susan Mann, tells the story of Ana, who, after the death of her father, returns to South Africa, her home country, after ten years living in London with her husband Michael. The novel deals, among other themes, with survivor guilt (Ana survives while her mother dies when giving birth to her) and bereavement (both the loss of her mother and her father constitute traumatizing events for Ana). Traumatized by both survivor guilt and bereavement, Ana tries to find happiness and recovery in South Africa, the country she rediscovers as being her true home. Not only does the novel deal with Ana's traumas, also Daniel struggles both with his wife's death and Tapiwa's death, an orphan baby-girl he cares for after her mother's death. Moreover, Franz, responsible for the death of Daniel's wife, also struggles with feelings of guilt.

8.1 ANA'S SURVIVOR GUILT

Ana's mother died when giving birth to Ana – a fact haunting Ana throughout her life. Inevitably, she blames herself for the death of her mother: if she had not been born, her mother would still be alive and her father would still be happy. Although her father never blames her and never says a word which would cause Ana to feel guilty of his wife's death, already as a child she feels responsible for her mother's death:

She knows exactly what it costs her father for her to be alive (16)

³² The quotes in this chapter are from Mann 2007.

The price her father had to pay for her life was his wife's death – a thought almost unbearable to live with for Ana.

Due to the guilt she is feeling, she tries to be as inconspicuous and unobtrusive as possible in order to facilitate her father's life:

She tiptoes downstairs to the bathroom. She wants to be invisible. To slip into the cracks in the floorboards. She never wants to be a destructive, noisy child, never a nuisance. (16)

She has the feeling of owing her father something and tries to make reparations for what she has ruined by being born, but simultaneously she knows that this is simply impossible. She will never be able to make her father happy, as she is not able to bring her mother back, no matter how hard she tries to be 'invisible' – she is still alive while her mother is not.

As mentioned, she carries this feeling of guilt throughout her life, thus, even as a grown-up, living thousands of kilometers away from her father, she continues trying to be as unobtrusive as possible:

And somehow it had stuck. Even in crowds she moved like the wind, like a secret, between people, buildings. Often she had to exhale consciously. Even when a shopkeeper overcharged her, or someone was rude to her, it was she who would apologize. Not because she thought she was in the wrong, but to avoid the smallest threat of being noticed or seen. To avoid the threat, the embarrassment, of leaving a stain on the universe.

Obviously, she is deeply traumatized by her survivor guilt. When apologizing even for things she has not done and is not responsible for, only to avoid conflict and in hope not to attract attention, she apologizes for being alive, i.e. she tries to compensate for her existence. One can say that she thinks she is not worth being alive.

She feels comfortable in hiding, and that is why she loves Paris so much:

Or maybe it was simply that in Paris, where she did not know French, she could hide. Without expectations, a fixed address, recognisable words that identified her world, there were not mirrors to reflect her. She could freefall between the lines of languages, unaccountable to any linear arrangement of thought, free to vibrate with the city's pulse and breath" (43).

In 'freefalling between the lines of language', in hiding and in floating with the current, she feels comfortable. This also explains her uneasy feelings when

going to auditions. In auditions she is, for a moment, central to the jury, for a moment she is important, she is in the center of attention, which she usually tries to avoid so desperately. Being on the stage, watched by so many people, simply does not fit into her hiding pattern. Already as a child, playing the flute for someone means something special for her – it means trust. Playing the flute for someone is an act of faith for her (“If she thought a friend was important enough, she’d finally pluck up the courage to put on her reading glasses, take out her flute, and play a song for her” (108).

However, she explains her failures at auditions with missing talent: “But secretly, she suspected that even the buskers, their upturned hats on street corners were better than she” (51). This belief shows her low self-esteem. She views herself as a failure, since she is not able to make her father happy by playing the flute: “After all if she had been any good at it, she might have brought her father back to life” (51).

Ana never has the chance to build up her own identity, as she desperately tries to be like her mother, again because of her feeling of guilt. Hence, in order to please her father, she tries to replace her mother. Although it is surely not Sam’s intention to rear another version of his dead wife, unconsciously he does, and giving his daughter his wife’s name makes Ana feel the need to be like her mother. She believes that this is her father’s wish, and due to her feeling of guilt she wants to comply with his every wish. This is also shown in Ana’s learning to play the flute. “She loved the flute, your mother” (51), Sam tells Ana, a sentence engraved in Ana’s memory. In her attempt to be like her mother, it is no wonder that Ana starts learning to play the flute – not because it is her wish to play this instrument, but because she knows that her father would appreciate it, as it would remind him of his wife. Her greatest goal is to see her father happy, as only his happiness would release her from her guilt.

For many years, it seemed to her that it was only music that was truly dependable. Especially when she started winning competitions, passing each grade with distinction. It was then, in those brief moments of victory, that a light would flare up in her father’s eyes. (108)

It seems as if Ana is dependent on her father’s happiness. That is why she tries so hard to be ‘a good daughter’ to him, to replace her mother and to play the flute perfectly. However, she never finds release from her guilt as she learns

that it is only 'brief moments' in which the light flares up in Sam's eyes. She views herself as not good enough to make her father happy:

But she couldn't sustain it. Couldn't keep the joy from slipping away from him again, try as she might. (108)

As she does not have an identity of her own, she is dependent on the people who give her an identity. Hence, as a child she is dependent on her father, who unconsciously gives her the feeling of the necessity of being like her mother, and later she is dependent on her husband Michael. From the beginning of their relationship, it is he who is in charge, it is he who decides about everything. In order not to bother him, in order not to be conspicuous, she accepts every decision. Even when it comes to the decision to leave the country, and therefore her father, she gives in to Michael, who avoids the military draft by leaving the country. Due to the long lasting feeling of guilt in her, it is her intention to make everybody around her happy, disregarding her own feelings and her own desires and wishes and therefore her own happiness. Thus, as a child she tries to satisfy her father by all means, and as a grown-up it is Michael she wants to be satisfied: "Michael is patient, but she fears she embarrasses him. She lies awake at night, thinking, going over each event. She so wants him to be proud of her" (110).

Because she is dependent on people who give her an identity (Sam and Michael), she does not feel comfortable with other people. She does not have friends, neither as a child nor as a grown up: "And even though she tries her best, it is very clear to all that she simply has nothing to say" (110). She can only be someone with people around her giving her an identity. She knows how to behave and what to say to keep both Sam and Michael satisfied, she behaves the way that she thinks she is expected to. Thus, she cannot be herself, as she does not even know who that is without Sam or Michael being around.

Once she tries to talk to her father and make it clear to Sam that she wants to be an individual person – that she does not want to be compared to her mother.

I want to change my name too, she says.
But it's a beautiful name, Ana, he says. He whispers it slowly, as though savouring every syllable. A-na Lu-i-sa. It's your mother's name, dear. The most beautiful name in the world.

That's why I want to change it, she says. It's *her* name. Not mine.
She remembered him standing up quickly and walking out. The room was dark. (67)

Her father's reaction to her wish to be an individual and not a copy of her mother (he leaves the room and leaves the feeling of darkness and loneliness in her) encourages her in trying harder to replace her mother in order to be accepted by Sam.

Leaving her father means a relief for her in the first place. She thinks that not seeing her unhappy father anymore will release her from her guilt. However, leaving for London contributes to her guilt, makes the feeling even more intense: "Yet the relief was short-lived, the first guilt only to be replaced by the second; she had cost her father his bride, and then abandoned him too" (108).

In order to avoid these feelings of guilt, which are becoming gradually harder for her, she stops calling her father, as hearing him on the phone makes the feeling of guilt only worse. However, avoiding talking to her father does obviously not solve the problem and does not stop the feelings of guilt. Her guilt expresses itself in losing weight (she no longer has her period) and in obeying her husband (eventually an attempt to compensate the guilt she feels for abandoning her father). Ana does not feel at home in London, but as Michael does, there is no other choice for her as to stay in order to please her husband.

8.1.1 ANA'S HEALING AND GROWTH

Learning about Sam's death additionally strengthens her massive feelings of guilt. Not being there for her dying father and the grief about him being dead, leads to such an intense feeling that going back to South Africa becomes inevitable for her. This time it is *her* who makes a decision, for the first time she disregards her husband's feelings. She leaves without consulting him. This decision constitutes the first step towards independence and the development of an own identity.

Indeed, going back to South Africa triggers a lot of memories, being important for her healing and for her personal growth, despite their intensity and painfulness. Being back in the country of her childhood/youth is not only important for her coping with bereavement, but also for overcoming her feelings of guilt and for her process of self-discovery.

When she arrives at the farm she cuts her hair, which shows her feeling of confusion on the one hand but on the other hand her willingness to change something. Hence, she starts with her outer appearance.

For the first time in her life she is on her own, which gives her the time and the opportunity to discover her own self – there is no-one anymore she has to please and satisfy (as her father is dead and Michael is far away from her). She stays in the house of her father for several months, without having the urge to go back to London and to Michael again. Thus, she slowly grows stronger and becomes independent. She starts feeling alive. The building of the stone-wall can be compared with her growing stability. The wall she and Daniel are building in her garden slowly grows – as her confidence, self-esteem and identity do.

Entering her father's bedroom (her grief keeps her away from it for a while) means another step towards growing and healing. In his bedroom she finds a whistle, and playing it triggers a stream of memories:

She leaned into it, as different memories and sensations flooded each texture, each tone. Her father and the loneliness she failed to fill. [...] Her mother, whose ghost had wound itself around a void that had been the heaviest weight she had ever carried. Whose absence was a wound without healing. A guilt from which she could never be absolved. (136)

For the first time she makes music for herself, not for her father, not out of guilt and not to convince a jury, and for the first time she does not play music someone else composed; she creates her own song, a song she loads with her feelings, her pain and her memories. Composing her own music, playing it only for herself, make her feel alive and free.

For the sake of Michael, who wants her to come back, she follows his suggestion to go to an audition in Paris, which could secure her a place for a study program. Studying and living in Paris has always been her dream. However, although she is offered a place to study, she refuses it, leaves Michael and goes back to South Africa. As mentioned, she only loves Paris because she can hide in this city. But the need to hide is gone. She now knows that South Africa is her home, she knows that she belongs there and she is

neither dependent on her father nor on Michael. Leaving Michael shows her growth and her evolved independency.

To put it in a nutshell, going to South Africa, being on her own, coming to terms with the death of her father, reliving her past and discovering music as a healing instrument are all factors that help Ana to find her own identity, to heal from her trauma and relieving her from the guilt she had to live with for a long time.

8.2 FRANZ'S SURVIVOR GUILT

I mean it's very noble. But why so many? What's behind it?

You mean, some kind of white guilt? he suggested.

Yes, she said. Any colour. I don't mind.

Aren't we all? he asked. Aren't we all guilty?

She remembered Angelina's comment, All this helping people. It's not bring her back. (119)

Ana learns that Franz caused a car accident in which Daniel's wife died. When speaking to Ana, Franz does not mention this accident, indicating that this event has traumatized him. Obviously he suffers from survivor guilt, which is shown by his silence about the accident, and by his involvement in committees and organizations helping black people in townships. As it is impossible for him to bring back Daniel's wife and to recall having made a move on Daniel's wife before she died, he tries to compensate for his deeds, for which he feels terribly guilty, by helping other people. This involvement helps him to bear his feelings of guilt.

Another reaction to his trauma is his putting the blame for Daniel's behavior after his wife's death onto Daniel himself. He refuses to believe that Daniel's strangeness, elusiveness and misogyny derive from the death of his wife. He could not bear the blame of ruining Daniel's life in addition to the blame of killing his wife, and therefore persuades himself that Daniel has always been that strange, in order to place the blame elsewhere: "But even before he became a complete misogynist, he was strange. Odd. You know, every family has one" (33).

9 BEREAVEMENT IN *QUARTER TONES*³³

9.1 SAM AND BEREAVEMENT – EFFECT OF MOTHER’S DEATH ON SAM

[...] the man whose soul had flown away with that woman when she died. That woman whose silence pervaded his every thought. Whose fatal fragility had sliced to the very quick of his breath. (51)

Sam is clearly traumatized by his wife’s death. Until the end of his life he is not able to overcome this loss. This traumatization is shown by several of Ana’s memories about her father. His regular visits to the jewelry shop in which he and his wife had met for the first time, for example, hint at his unsuccessful grieving process. Moreover, Ana remembers that she has rarely seen her father happy: “Her father’s soul is not happy often [...]” (57), she realizes even as a child, a realization, that is one reason for her own traumatization (survivor guilt). Even years after Ana Luisa’s death, Sam does not feel ready for a new relationship – another sign of his traumatic and insurmountable grief. Shanti, who showed interest in Sam when Ana was a child, tells Ana after Sam’s death:

Sweetheart, beautiful as your father was, in every way, there was just no getting near that man. He operated in another reality. [...] He only had eyes for a ghost. Only one woman for him in this lifetime. (163)

Sam unconsciously tries to reconstruct his dead wife through the education of his daughter. He sees in her a small version of his dead wife, which is already shown by giving his daughter the name of his dead wife. Treating his daughter as a substitute for his wife and not as an individual person and unconsciously using her as consolation, is part of Sam’s grieving process, but for Ana this has disastrous consequences, as already discussed in the previous chapter. Telling Ana that her mother loved the flute puts enormous pressure on Ana, but in his grief Sam is unable to realize that.

Furthermore, Sam is so concerned with mourning his wife that he does not realize his daughter’s feelings and her enormous guilt; i.e. although he loves his daughter, he is not able to fully concentrate on educating her and on responding to her needs and feelings. Ana describes his father as “too distracted to think about it” (107-108), referring to her problems with establishing and developing friendships.

³³ The quotes in this chapter are from Mann 2007.

Moreover, when Ana shatters the portrait of her mother, which in a way is a cry for help and a sign that there is something that concerns and bothers her, Sam's only reaction is: "Oh, and one other thing. He bends down again and squints into the black. Try not to take it out on your mother, dear. She can't fight back, you know" (126). He does not even ask why she did it and what makes her so angry; he leaves her alone with her feelings of anger, desperation and guilt. It seems as if Sam does not have enough energy left for worrying about his daughter's psychic life and feelings, as he needs too much energy for mourning his wife.

Clearly his wife's death has severe consequences on Sam's life. His grief restricts his life in several ways: neither is he able to build and establish new relationships, nor can he cannot fully concentrate on parenting; and, more dramatically, he loses the joy of being alive.

9.2 ANA AND BEREAVEMENT – MOTHER'S AND FATHER'S DEATH AND THE EFFECTS ON ANA

As Ana grows up without her mother, she uses the flute (an instrument her mother loved) as some kind of mother-'Ersatz'. Thus, the flute not only functions as an object to make her father happy and therefore as an object helping her to cope with her survivor guilt, but it also connects her with the mother she never got to know.

That Ana is also traumatized by her mother's death is shown in the scene in which she shatters the portrait of her mother:

Speak, she says, grabbing the picture with both hands. Speak! Her eyes blazing with uncried tears, she shakes the frame from its hook and flings it on the ground. At the sound of glass shattering she gives an exultant *There!*

She grieves for her mother, not necessarily because she misses her (she did not even know her), but for the sake of her father. One can even say that she is angry with her mother for leaving them, for leaving her behind and burdening her with feelings of guilt. If she had not left her and her father, Ana would not have had to try so hard in replacing her, and her father would have been happy. Thus, Ana's grief about her mother's death can be viewed as grief for the sake of her father – she grieves with him and for him. Ana also suffers from

transgenerational trauma – the effects of her father’s traumatization also affect and traumatize Ana herself.

Her father’s death concerns Ana in a completely different way than her mother’s death. She loved her father, who devoted himself to her in order to offer her a good childhood. When she comes to South Africa, she leaves his bedroom untouched at first. In fear of being overwhelmed by grief when entering the private room of her father, she avoids entering it.

By keeping the door closed, she felt that some part of him still lived. She sometimes touched the door handle, as she was passing. Not to open it, but as some kind of acknowledgement. He was still there. She had not been left behind. (56)

Avoiding the bedroom shows that Ana is not ready yet to accept her father’s death; i.e. she refuses to believe the fact that she has lost her father forever. Moreover, the avoidance of the bedroom shows that she restrains from facing her trauma.

9.3 DANIEL AND BEREAVEMENT

“Not a good idea. To meet this one. Daniel...doesn’t like women”, (33) Franz says to Ana even before Daniel arrives.

Daniel loses his wife in an accident his brother caused. His misogyny, as Franz calls it, is a clear sign of his traumatic grief. This misogyny is clearly a protective mechanism. He is afraid of trusting a woman again in fear of losing her, as losing another beloved person would be unbearable for him. Thus, one can speak of the trauma-symptom ‘avoidance’, as he avoids falling in love again by avoiding talking to women, by being ‘misogynistic’.

When Ana tries to introduce herself to Daniel, he only looks at her for a brief moment and carries on with his work without saying a word; he ignores her, does not respond to Ana’s further attempts of starting up a conversation.

Only slowly does Daniel start to trust Ana, who spends many hours joining him in building the border wall. From time to time he asks her to look after Tapiwa, the black girl he adopted after the death of the mother’s child, but the rest of the time they work in silence.

Tapiwa's death, the only woman to whom he established love and trust, constitutes as well a traumatizing event for Daniel.

He does not waste a word about Tapiwa and chooses to suffer silently, which does not create ideal conditions for coming to terms with his loss.

However, Daniel finds his way for coming to terms with Tapiwa's and also his wife's decease through music. Definitely, playing the drums together with Ana means healing for him:

The night Ana discovers the healing effect of music, she hears someone play the drums:

Yes, someone was playing the drums. She waited a while, then lifted the whistle and started again, softly, so that she could still hear it. [...] She waited to feel the beat move into her body, so that she could weave the music thought the thud, thud, thud. It's primal, this sound, she thought, *elemental*, each note rising and falling, fluid then forgotten, pulsing with the rhythm and fire of the earth, before dissolving like salt into the gusts and twists of the sea. She never knew how long they played that night. Only that at the end of it all, she thought she heard, but she wasn't sure, the heave and choke of a man who wept. (138)

Thus, not only for Ana does music have healing effects, but also for Daniel. The music triggers hidden emotions in him. These overwhelming emotions make him weep, and weeping is regarded to be important for the healing process of a trauma.

After this night, Daniel seems to change. He offers Ana help with her landscape gardening. The music and the weeping seem to have had effects on Daniel; he is open-minded and interested in making conversation. Finally, he talks about Tapiwa's death to Ana.

Even if there is still a lot of grief in him, the musical experience with Ana and the attempt to talk about his feelings are indeed important steps towards healing.

9.3.1 ANA'S HEALING PROCESS

Opening her father's room constitutes a first step in Ana's healing process. With entering his room, she slowly starts accepting Sam's death. She is ready to move on.

Letting her father go simultaneously means letting her mother go, as throughout her lifetime she always saw a deep connection between her mother and her father. With accepting her father's death she gets rid of her feelings of guilt, she had to live with ever since she was a child. As this guilt was inevitably

connected with her mother (she died while Ana survived), she is now able to also deal with the early loss of her mother.

After her visit in Paris, Ana comes back to South Africa, ready to forge a new identity. Redecorating her father's room, changing it into a music room again shows that she is finally over her father's death:

It's time, Sam, she thought. Time to put some of your things away. [...] It's time to look up. That room where you slept has so much of you, so much light. I thought about making it a music room. I can make a special thing to hang my flute and my whistles on the wall. I can use the desk for composing. (186)

Finally she can accept the loss of both her mother and her father and feels ready to move on with her life and live her life according to her own goals – free from feelings of guilt, dependency and grief.

10 CHILD ABUSE IN *IT'S ME, ANNA*³⁴

The novel *It's me, Anna*, written by Elbie Lötter, is based on a true story, namely the lifestory of the author herself. The novel is set in South Africa during apartheid time and the protagonist is Anna, who experiences physical as well as psychological and most dramatically, sexual abuse during her childhood. The abusers are her stepfather and, as far as the physical and psychological abuse are concerned, also her own mother. It is out of question that the abuse as well as the reactions to it from people she entrusts herself to, severely traumatize Anna and that the effects of her trauma haunt her all her life.

That her stepfather is not brought to justice before the court for abusing his stepdaughter and biological daughter shows the typical handling of child abuse in South Africa during apartheid time. To put it provocatively, the government and the court give Uncle Danie 'green light' for abusing and raping his daughters.

10.1 PHYSICAL ABUSE

Her stepfather abuses Anna sexually as well as physically. He hits her to threaten her and to punish her for denying him her body for example. Hence, Anna never feels safe at home; either Uncle Danie follows her to the bathroom to rape or touch her, or he beats her out of the blue – not to forget the horrible

³⁴ If not otherwise declared, the quotes in this chapter are from Lötter 2005.

deeds at night. Her mother is not helping matters by defending her husband in every department: “Stop crying, it wasn’t so bad. You’ll have to get used to it. Uncle Danie is going to be your father and he believes in giving hidings” (43).

10.2 SEXUAL ABUSE

On her tenth birthday the horror of Anna’s life begins:

At first I thought I was dreaming, but it was all too real. When I really became aware of it I realised that he’d slipped his left hand – the hand closest to me – under my panties. He was rubbing me – there, between my legs. I was numb with shock. I couldn’t move. (24)

This is how Anna describes the first sexual assault by her stepfather, which turns out to be only one of many that will follow. When Anna is thirteen he starts raping her regularly.

Anna’s inability to move when her stepfather touches her is a clear symptom of a traumatization – she freezes (see chapter 2.3.4. ‘freeze and fragment’). She experiences this freezing in any other situation in which she finds herself afraid: “That was my problem when I was afraid – I froze up, couldn’t get a word out” (61). Her body is conditioned to freeze whenever something or someone is threatening her. Moreover, the numbness she feels every time he touches her constitutes a clear symptom – in order to bear the horrible feelings the sexual abuse triggers in Anna, her body switches to an ‘emergency program’, making her feel numb. The numbness reduces the feelings of horror at the moment of the abuse.

Furthermore, Anna frequently starts to shake after her stepfather abuses her (“My heart thumped in my chest. My whole body shook” (55)), which is also an obvious symptom of a traumatization (see ‘hyperarousal’ in chapter 2.3.1.1).

Anna also describes a typical phenomenon occurring frequently in victims of sexual abuse: “He squeezed my nipples painfully between his thumb and index finger. ‘You are so beautiful.’ I stood there, petrified. My body seemed cut off from my brain” (44). The body that is cut off from her brain is a clear example of dissociation. Again, the splitting of body and mind is a reaction in order to bear the painful, humiliating and horrible abuse.

10.2.1 ANNA'S TRAUMA SYMPTOMS AND HER REACTIONS TO THE TRAUMA

“Later that night I woke up, suddenly aware of a strange wetness between my legs” (25)

Anna starts bedwetting at the age of ten, which can be regarded as a bodily reaction to her trauma caused by the sexual abuse. Regression is a typical phenomenon frequently observed in victims of sexual abuse (ZISSG, no page). Additionally, Anna has psychosomatic symptoms – as a reaction to the psychological pain she bears silently, her stomach swells: “Lately my stomach had begun to swell for no apparent reason. Sometimes it only lasted a day, sometimes longer, and then it just disappeared” (84). As Anna does not dare to tell anybody about the abuse and the pain she is feeling, her body does by swelling. Although the doctor assumes that psychological stress causes the swelling and tries to find out what is bothering Anna, the truth does not come out – she is too afraid to break her silence. The doctor prescribes her tranquillizers and hence, for her mother, the problem is solved.

Anna is also plagued by nightmares regularly, which falls into the symptom-category ‘intrusion’: “Nightmares about him, leaning over me with his revolting Old Spice smell, his grinning face” (169). Even when she is finally in safety, the nightmares are haunting her: “At night I felt him hovering over me in my dreams. [...] I couldn’t get away from him” (176).

Moreover, Anna frequently has problems with falling asleep: “You try to sleep. Sometimes you can. But mostly you can’t” (146).

Another typical symptom occurring in victims³⁵ of sexual abuse is Anna’s scrubbing her body: “[...] I don’t wash myself – I scrub. I scrub myself bit by bit so that I’m as red as a lobster by the time I’ve finishes. Glowing from the pain. It doesn’t matter how long I bath or how well I scrub, I never feel clean enough” (166). By scrubbing her body, Anna desperately (but unsuccessfully) attempts to ‘scrub away’ the traces of her perpetrator on it. She constantly has the feeling of being stained and damaged (she frequently says that she has the feeling of not being whole anymore).

³⁵ see ZISSG, <http://www.zissg.de/einzseit/folgsymp.htm>.

When Anna is fifteen years old, she starts having sex with random men/boys. According to the ZISSG³⁶, promiscuity is a typical behavior of children who are continuously sexually abused. In Anna's case, this promiscuous behavior could have to do with power: When her stepfather rapes her, it is *him* having the power over her. However, when she has sex with random men/boys, it is *her* who chooses to have sex and she chooses *herself* who she has sex with. Hence, *she* has the power and *she* is the one in charge of the situation.

Hiding her body and her femininity is another reaction to her trauma. She chooses to wear loose clothing in order to hide her female body: "I do it so no man, young or old, will ever look at me with lust in his eyes again" (27). Anna shaves her head in order to feel invisible for men: "From tomorrow I'm going to be invisible. I want to create my own space: no entry. Then I'll be safe" (187). Thus, she only feels safe when hiding herself under loose clothing and when looking as unfeminine as possible, and as make-up and long hair would emphasize her femininity, she gets rid of them. If she could, she would also get rid of her breasts: "I hated them. I would have liked to cut them off" (181).

Probably the severest reaction to her trauma is her attempted suicide.

"Twenty pills. Twenty pills to get out of the situation. Twenty pills so that he would never, ever be able to touch me again" (128). The suicide attempt can be regarded as a cry for help. However, neither the psychotherapist nor her mother are able to find out the real reason for Anna's wish to die, and for Uncle Danie the suicide attempt is no reason to stop abusing his stepdaughter. Thus, Anna's cry for help remains unheard.

10.2.2 REASONS FOR ANNA'S SILENCE

The reasons for Anna's silence are closely linked with emotional abuse (discussed below).

Uncle Danie threatens and blackmails Anna, which is typical of abusers; they threaten their victims in order to withhold them from telling anybody about the abuse: "I don't give you hidings, girl. You mustn't be so naughty. Don't talk back. To me or your mother. Do what I tell you and everything will be okay"

³⁶ <http://www.zissg.de/einzseit/folgsymp.htm>.

(44). Moreover, he threatens her by telling her to kick her family out of the house:

Where would we go? My mother had no relatives. [...] He would keep Carli, he told me. My mother would pine away. 'Remember, she doesn't work any more – and who's going to employ her? Work is scarce.' We'd have to live on the street...And his trump card: 'Remember, you don't have a father any more.' (75)

For Anna there is no other choice as to bear the sexual abuse, as there is no way out of this mess. She is forced to live "in hell with the devil" (59).

Another reason for Anna's silence is her stepfather giving her the feeling of being complicit in the abuse by using the pronoun 'we': "Don't tell your mother or your father. This is our secret. Mine and yours" (38). Consequently, Anna develops feelings of guilt and shame, preventing her from telling anyone: "I wouldn't tell. I was too ashamed, too afraid. My mother wouldn't understand. And my dad might not take it seriously. [...] No, I wouldn't tell. I'd keep quiet. I'd be silent" (38). Moreover, the fact that her stepfather occasionally pays her after 'his deeds' makes Anna feel even more complicit. It makes her feel like a prostitute: "I'm a slut. A whore" (160).

Her mother's dependence on her stepfather is another factor why Anna waits so long to tell her about the sexual abuse. She defends him in every department, she praises him to the skies, and accepts his violent educational methods: "She behaved as if he were the alpha and omega of her existence" (71). Thus, for fear of her mother's dependence on uncle Danie, which she is not ready and willing to free herself from, Anna keeps silent as she knows that the consequences of telling the truth without anybody believing her would be humiliating for her.

Being silent about the abuse, keeping it a secret makes a major contribution to her traumatization; there is no one to talk to and no one who can help her out of this hell.

10.3 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Anna experiences multiple psychological abuses throughout her life. Her mother unconsciously abuses her mentally again and again by being passive as well as by refusing to believe her and help her. Already before Uncle Danie

enters their lives, her mother never gives Anna the chance to speak about her feelings and the reasons for her actions, and leaves her alone with dark and devastating feelings. As a young child, when Anna is already confused and left alone with feelings the divorce of her parents evoke, her mother shows no sensibility. She punishes Anna for irrelevant things and childlike curiosity (e.g. she shows her private parts to a boy) by ignoring her and refusing to speak to her for weeks. This leaves the feeling of being 'a bad girl' who is not worthy to talk to, as well as feelings of guilt in Anna: "I'll never forget the disappointment and disgust in her eyes as she ordered me to my room. I couldn't forgive myself for doing this to her" (13). Anna is deeply hurt by the way her mother punishes her: "A hiding doesn't hurt as much as a mute mother" (36). When she steals tapes in a shop she gets physically punished by her stepfather (physical abuse), but she also gets emotionally abused by her mother, who watches her husband beating her daughter without intervening, and furthermore, she stops speaking to and looking at her for weeks.

When her father commits suicide, Anna's mother passively abuses her child by not mentioning her father anymore, by referring to her new husband as Anna's new daddy and by forbidding her to adopt the dog that lived with her father. In short, by being very insensitive she unconsciously but severely abuses her daughter on an emotional level.

Telling her father about the physical abuse (she is not ready yet to tell him about the sexual abuse) can be regarded as a cry for help – Anna hopes and reckons that her father will take action when he hears about how her stepfather treats her: "You deserve it, you bastard, I thought to myself as we pulled up outside the town house and saw Uncle Danie's car in the driveway. Today you'll be sorry, my father's here!" (47). But her father neither says a word, nor does he take action. His refusal to help her and stand up for his daughter can be regarded as psychological abuse – Anna gathers all her courage and meets with disappointment, and as a consequence she again becomes 'silent Anna' – that is what she calls herself.

Probably the worst emotional abuse is her mother's reaction to 'the truth'. Anna, who gathers all her courage, tells her about the abuse after many years

suffering in silence. A mother not believing her own daughter when it comes to rape and abuse is probably even worse for the victim than the abuse itself. The disappointment of being left alone by one's own mother is doubtlessly an indescribable feeling. Anna's mother does not even believe her when Anna tells her that Uncle Danie not only abuses her, but also Carli. After beaten up by both her stepfather and her mother for her 'lies' and for her pregnancy, she is kicked out of the house. Her mother leaves her alone, tells her to never show up and never call again. This can be regarded as the worst emotional abuse Anna ever had to bear:

"My body ached but my heart hurt even more. She hadn't believed me" (139).

10.4 UNCLE DANIE'S TRAUMA AND ITS EFFECTS

As a child, Uncle Danie becomes witness of his mother's death – his father stabs her. Additionally, his violent father beats him up regularly and his brother rapes him repeatedly. Hence, he is deeply traumatized, and his traumatization becomes apparent in re-enacting what he has experienced – he becomes an abuser and rapist himself. As already pointed out in chapter 4.1., reenactment in the case of physical and sexual abuse is not rare – that people who experience abuse as a child become abusers themselves in the course of their lives, is indeed a typical phenomenon (see Petersen et al. 1244-1245).

10.5 HEALING EVER POSSIBLE?

Anna finds help and love in Miriam and Retief, Marnus' parents, who give her protection as well as support when she decides to offer her baby for adoption. For the first time she feels the love of a caring family, who make it clear to her that she is not in the least to blame for what has happened to her. Retief convinces her to go to court, but the Attorney General refuses prosecution, which means humiliation and great disappointment for Anna. Trying it again makes no sense for Anna (she thinks that nobody will believe her anyway); thus, she forbears to test her baby's blood, which could prove that the baby is also her stepfather's child. To put it in a nutshell, as Anna meets incomprehension and disbelief from so many sides (also the priest accuses her to be complicit), she gives up fighting for justice.

Enjoying the love and understanding from Miriam and Retief and the recognition that the only one to blame for the abuse is her stepfather, constitute a – if only a tiny – step towards healing. Years later, when she manages to buy a house as well as a whole company, she feels her wounds healing: “There’d always be scars, but I was starting to feel better. [...] The nightmares became less frequent. I learnt to be happier with myself, to live more contentedly” (193). However, it is questionable whether it is really *healing* she experiences or whether it is *avoidance* helping her to cope with the trauma as the following quote shows: “I learnt to shut my ears to the reports of child rape and sexual assault that I heard on the radio. To blind myself to the news on TV, and not to read those stories in the newspapers. [...]” (193). Moreover, she distracts herself from her painful memories by working hard.

After her traumatized sister Carli commits suicide and Anna is again overwhelmed by her past, the hatred against her stepfather becomes so intense that she decides to finally bring an end to her suffering. Anna feels that the only way to stop the suffering and pain and to finally feel free is to kill her and Carli’s tormenter. After many years of her actual relief from her stepfather’s abuse, she has managed to live a more or less normal life, but nevertheless, she still feels chained to her stepfather. Only killing him will, as she thinks, break these chains: “As long as he’s alive, as long as he’s somewhere on this earth, I’ll never be whole, I’ll never be able to forget what happened to me, what happened to Carli” (201).

She would even accept going to jail – it does not matter, because all that matters is *him* being dead and her being happy and free – free from him:

Before the sun comes up, I’ll be reborn. I’ll look him in the eye and make him pay. My rebirth is only a few hours away, and then I’ll be alone. That’s the way it’ll be. Me, Anna, alone. Alone and happy. (86)

The novel ends with Anna shooting her stepfather, finding relief in this deed. However, whether shooting her perpetrator will completely heal her from her trauma, is questionable.

The author, Elbie Löttler, who experienced sexual abuse by her stepfather herself, points out that “it is something you never forget. That’s why I still sleep with a light on somewhere in the house. That’s why it’s still difficult for me to

befriend older men. It'll always be a part of me. You just learn to handle it better (206).

11 TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA IN *THE DREAMCLOTH*³⁷

The Dreamcloth, a family saga by Joanne Fedler, is about a Jewish family that flees from the anti-Semitism in Lithuania to South Africa in the 1920's. The novel deals with three generations of this Jewish family, namely with Maya and her husband Yankel (first generation), their son Issey and his wife Fran (second generation) and their daughter Mia (third generation). The book covers the years 1920 to 1994 and clearly represents the phenomenon of transgenerational trauma. Not only does Issey suffer from transgenerational trauma, in addition to his unresolved trauma of having lost his mother as a child (he inherits his ancestors' trauma triggered by the anti-Semitism in Europe), but also Mia inherits trauma, namely her grandmother's personal trauma. The author uses symbolism to represent Mia's transgenerational trauma: the ghost of the meanwhile deceased Maya moves into her granddaughter's body and mind, i.e. Mia suffers from her grandmother's trauma, without even knowing about Maya's dramatic and traumatic life. Obviously, the author makes use of the concept of the 'phantom', which seems, according to Abraham, to "be omnipresent (whether overtly expressed or disguised) on the fringes of religions and, failing that, in rational systems" (287). Of course one cannot take the sliding of such 'phantoms' or ghosts (as it is used in *The Dreamcloth*) in bodies of those alive, literally:

[...] the 'phantom,' whatever its form, is nothing but an invention of the living. Yes, an invention in the sense that the phantom is meant to objectify, even if under the guise of individual or collective hallucinations, the gap that the concealment of some part of a loved one's life produced in us. The phantom is, therefore, also a metapsychological fact. Consequently, what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others. (Abraham 287)

The title *The Dreamcloth* is derived from a cloth that is sewn by Rochel, Maya's secret female lover, and is of specific importance for several characters in the novel. Rochel gives it to her before Maya leaves her for South Africa. Thus, for

³⁷ If not otherwise declared, the quotes in this chapter are from Fedler 2005.

Maya, the dreamcloth serves as an object reminding her of Rochel when she is separated from her. Before Maya dies, she gives the dreamcloth to Issey, her youngest son, for whom the cloth becomes a transitional object, connecting him to his dead mother. For Asher, who steals the dreamcloth from Issey, it serves as well as a transitional object, and for Mia, the cloth is meaningful for rather complex reasons: The dreamcloth takes away her nightmares, namely nightmares deriving from her transgenerational trauma. Since the dreamcloth already meant a lot to Maya, whose ghost occupies Mia, it consequently has effects on her as well.

Indeed, the novel is fraught with different forms of trauma (rape, child abuse, bereavement, miscarriage, homophobia, anti-Semitism). However, this analysis of *The Dreamcloth* focuses on Maya's personal trauma and on Mia's transgenerational trauma.

11.1 MAYA'S TRAUMA

Maya marries Yankel "for survival and not for love" (138). She is truly unhappy in her marriage and feels lonely and empty inside. In addition to this unhappiness, she and her husband are forced to live in poverty and to bear devastating living conditions in Kovno (Lithuania). Her way to release her painful feelings and thoughts is writing poems – poetry is her only way to express her unhappiness:

And so she wrote. To make a place of gratitude, loneliness, longing, and all the stuff not solid enough to eat, nor useful for warmth or physical comfort. In her writing, pain was more than the rat gnawing in the cavern of her empty belly, harsher than the biting agony of split skin, axed by the blade of the cold. Her pain had knocked at her heart for long years and finally she broke down those doors to let it out. (138-139)

When she gets to know Rochel, Maya experiences love and passion for a person for the first time in her life. The widowed seamstress awakes hitherto unknown feelings in her: "Maya's heart trembled for her" (139).

Since living as Jews in Kovno in the 1920ies makes Maya's and Yankel's life increasingly difficult, Yankel takes the opportunity to emigrate to South Africa, leaving his wife behind in Kovno, as well as Rochel, who meanwhile lives in his house with her son since her own house burnt down. He promises to do his utmost to bring Maya to him as soon as he can, wishing to be reunited with her.

However, for Maya the three years apart from Yankel and being able to love Rochel without the need to hide this secret love in the house she now shares with Rochel, turn out to be the best time of her life: “And when he left for South Africa, finally they had their own paradise” (139). She and Rochel develop an intensive and intimate relationship and experience feelings and passion for each other that both have never experienced before. Thus, when Yankel, who has no idea of Maya’s homosexuality and assumes Rochel’s and Maya’s relationship to be a deep friendship, finally sends her a ticket to South Africa with the promise to arrange Rochel’s and her son’s emigration as soon as possible too, Maya heavy-heartedly leaves the love of her life. For remembrance, Maya gives Rochel her poems and Rochel presents her with a cloth, into which she has symbolically sewn all her dreams and wishes. Both this ‘dreamcloth’, as Rochel calls it, and the poems turn out to become objects of great importance; objects connecting them with each other when they are separated by thousands of kilometers.

As soon as Maya enters the ship that brings her to South Africa, the painful longing for Rochel begins, which should not end until the end of her days:

[...] an illness rose up from her heart, like the rise of stomach acid or the expulsion of a meal eaten several days too late for freshness. [...] That day, her heart split open like the belly of an ox under *shochet’s* blade, as the full bodied image of her Rochel diminished to the body and then the dot of an ‘i’ on the horizon, before vanishing from her sight. (193-194)

In South Africa the years pass by and the hope to see Rochel ever again shrinks every year – and with the hope, her lust of living. One can call her suffering ‘traumatic mourning’: for her it feels like having lost the love of her life forever. Consequently, Maya develops severe depression and she even loses her love for poetry and writing. It seems as if it is impossible for her to put the incredible emotional pain she experiences into words – poetry loses its function of easing her emotional pain: “Words could not hold such memories. She, who had fallen in love with words, turned away from language. For even *it* failed her, unable to hold the heart still” (284-285). Her deep traumatization reflects itself inter alia by feelings of numbness and self-mutilation. She cuts herself with a razor between her legs, which temporarily releases her from her feelings of numbness (“And then the welcome sting between her legs, sweeter than the numbness of feeling nothing” (285-286)). Besides, she believes that the

bleeding would keep Yankel away from her, since for Jews sexual intercourse during the 'unclean days' is prohibited. However, when withholding his sexual lust becomes unbearable for Yankel, the 'uncleanliness' is not an obstacle for him anymore – he, although unconsciously (he thinks that he is only phantasizing and dreaming about sleeping with Maya), rapes her regularly. As a reaction to the trauma of being raped, Maya sews her private parts together after the birth of her second child in order to permanently keep Yankel away from her.

Due to her trauma and the associated depression, Maya is unable to develop motherly love for her children. Moreover, the fact that her children are results of forced sexual intercourse can be viewed as another reason for Maya's inability to develop maternal feelings.

Learning about Rochel's suicide can be regarded as the straw that breaks the camel's back, and Maya seems to give herself up – she dies (of a broken heart). Before her death, Maya gives the dreamcloth to her youngest son Issey, for whom it becomes a transitional object. Traumatized by his mother's death, the dreamcloth constitutes some sort of mother-'Ersatz', giving him comfort, and even in his adulthood the dreamcloth seems to be of vital importance for him. Thus, the disappearance of the cloth (Asher steals it before he leaves forever) clearly plays a part in contributing to Issey's nervous breakdown and his suicide. He has the feeling of not only having lost his wife and his daughter to Asher, in addition he feels that he has lost his mother by losing the dreamcloth. For him, the 'loss' of his wife, his daughter *and* his mother leaves nothing behind worthy to live for – he commits suicide.

After Maya dies in the hope of finding Rochel in death again, but does not, her ghost decides to slide into her granddaughter's life/body twenty-five years after her own death. As even leaving her life cannot release her from her suffering, the only way for her to act out her feelings is to use her granddaughter as a 'host'. In other words, she uses Mia's body (her hands to write) for acting out the painful feelings even death could not stop:

And there was still so much that had to be written" (330). [...] Not made of that which returns to dust, it travels with the soul passed on, unshared, unvoiced. The wordache became, you could say, unbearable. Swirling in

the eye of the storm that longs to break onto white page, she was dizzy with the need to touch the living. This is why she had to haunt her. (330)

Mia's birthmark, a white strand of hair, is a symbol for the ghost/the trauma she inherits: "Some ghosts leave black traces in fingernails, freckles in unexpected places, red patches – what the living call 'birthmarks'. She chose to leave a shaft of moonlight in her hair" (330).

11.2 MIA'S TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Not only does the white strand of hair symbolically indicate that Mia has inherited her grandmother's trauma, but also the name she shares with her grandmother. Silence and untold secrets lie like a veil over the family – silence about personal traumas, communal traumas (anti-Semitism) and the associated feelings. *Maya* never speaks openly about her homosexuality and her deep love to Rochel and keeps silent about the true reasons for her severe depression. *Yankel* is severely traumatized by anti-Semitism and never speaks about his feelings openly, *Fran* is mute about the rape she experiences as a child and about the feelings her miscarriage triggers in her, and *Issey* keeps silent about the feelings his mother's death has triggered in him. Silence is, according to Schwab, "the most common way in which traumatic legacies are transmitted to the next generation" (34). Thus, due to the silence of Maya's unsolved trauma, Issey inherits his mother's trauma and as it remains unsolved in the second generation it is consequently passed on to Mia, the third generation. Although the focus of this analysis lies on the trauma Mia inherits from her grandmother, it is important to mention that the silence about her parents' personal unsolved traumas surely has effects on Mia's life as well. Fran, who is severely traumatized by both the sexual abuse in her childhood and her miscarriage, is not able to provide Mia with motherly love in fear of the pain that comes with losing a beloved child. Thus, Mia is indeed multiply traumatized, i.e. she not only inherits her grandmother's trauma, she is additionally traumatized by her parents' personal traumas.

In chapter 4.6., it is mentioned that traumatized individuals may unconsciously provide their offspring with certain 'tasks' they are expected to fulfill. Hence, from the moment Mia is born she is expected to fulfill such 'tasks': "And then – at last – there was Mia. She was going to make it all right. For Issey, for Fran, for his father, Zaide Yankel – she was his offering" (41). Not only should she

replace Fran's firstborn, unconsciously both Issey and Yankel expect her to 'replace' Maya (she is the first girl born into the family after Maya's death). Issey expects Mia to be the one to "fill the cavern in their lives" (63). Doubtlessly, such 'tasks' do affect the ones they are imposed on – in this particular case it affects Mia.

Throughout the novel several indications of Mia's transgenerational trauma can be found. As a baby she cannot stop crying, as she is tormented by her grandmother's pain. Only poetry calms her. Thus, poetry has the same effect on Mia as it had on Maya. Moreover, the moon has as well calming effects on Mia, which can be explained with Maya's and Rochel's special relationship to the moon: "[t]he moon is our only witness. It shall hold us together. The moon I see from Africa is the same as you see from Kovno (160).

Mia's transgenerational trauma is also shown by Mia's aversion to her grandfather Yankel, which she already shows as a baby: "From the moment she was placed in Zaide Yankel's arms, Mia began to howl [...]" (42). Hence, Maya's hatred towards her husband is manifest in Mia's behavior as a baby when she is put in Yankel's arms and her negative feelings towards her grandfather throughout her entire life (which she cannot explain rationally).

At the age of four, Mia is able to read without being taught, and soon she starts writing sorrowful poems and stories, clearly driven by Maya's ghost in her. Doubtlessly, with the trauma, she inherits Maya's talent and passion for writing. However, she seems to be using Mia's hands to put her own pain on paper, and Mia experiences this pain in its full intensity, since Maya lives in her body and soul. When Issey tells Mia that she is 'gifted' with the talent of writing, Mia says that "it hurts sometimes" (183), leaving no doubts about the pain the transgenerational trauma carries – she experiences Maya's pain.

11.2.1 MIA'S TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

Mia is plagued by nightmares regularly, which doubtlessly can be related to the inherited trauma. She repeatedly dreams about needles and blood – dream contents apparently deriving from Maya's trauma (the needle may stand for Rochel, who is a seamstress and obviously deals with needles a lot and the blood for Maya's endless suffering and pain about having lost the love of her

life). Only the dreamcloth her father cherishes like life itself can take her nightmares away – the calming effects of the dreamcloth is another indication of the inherited trauma of Maya, for whom the dreamcloth as well had a crucial meaning. In addition to the dreamcloth, raw potatoes have also calming effects on Mia - there is a scene in the novel in which Sarafina, the maid, finds a raw potato under Mia's pillow, which as well can be linked with Mia's transgenerational trauma, since Maya always connected the smell of raw potatoes with Rochel: "But the seamstress, she had a smell of something held to the earth, like a potato or a beetroot still wet with brown clods of soil" (101).

After her father commits suicide, Mia leaves South Africa and becomes a restless woman; she is not able to settle down, not able to call a place 'home'. An explanation of Mia's restlessness and her moving from place to place is Maya's ghost, who is looking for the dreamcloth. Thus, Mia is unconsciously in search of the dreamcloth. Another reason for her restlessness could be her desperate wish to get rid of her ghost – she tries to flee from her ghost by fleeing from places: "[...] flitting from country to country, from bed to bed, scattering her body parts, looking for somewhere to leave her ghost" (83). Maya's ghost is restless; she needs to find the dreamcloth, the only object being left of Rochel, the only object that can ease her pain.

She lifted him on and off bedpans, wiped his body, offered him painkillers, combed his white hair, rolled his cigarillos, lit them, caught the ash, snubbed them out when they got low. [...] When he slept, she wrestled with her longing to smother him with his own pillow. (19)

This quote shows Mia's ambivalent feelings towards Asher (Rochel's son). On the one hand she feels a deep connection to him (as Asher is Rochel's flesh and blood and once stood in direct connection to Rochel, which is important to 'the ghost' occupying her) but on the other hand she detests him for driving her father into suicide.

Not only does Mia leave *places* regularly, she is also not able to establish and maintain relationships with men. "But leave them she always did. Just when the sweetness became the sweetest; the longing its most intense" (27). This urge to leave lovers when it seems to become serious can also be seen as a symptom of her transgenerational trauma. The ghost inside her knows exactly how it

feels to lose the love of one's life – consequently, Mia unconsciously tries to prevent this experience by leaving before a relationship gets too intimate.

11.3 MIA'S HEALING

When Asher, Rochel's son, enters Mia's life, her nightmares subside. Moreover, she develops a special relationship to Asher, whose presence gives her the feeling of having found something that has been lost: "With Asher's arrival, like a parachute from the sky, the pieces she had always felt were lost or missing inside her were all gathered together. She wrote stories about lost things being found and unexpected treasures" (211). Mia's feelings for Asher can again be explained by Maya's relationship and love for Rochel. For the ghost (Maya) living in Mia, Asher's arrival constitutes some kind of reunion with Rochel as he is a direct blood relative of the love of her life. Also Asher, whose intention of coming to South Africa and becoming a close friend of Maya's family is revenge, unexpectedly feels a certain connection to Mia. Asher himself is deeply traumatized by his mother's death. He finds her dead body when he is a child, consequently stops speaking (trauma-symptom) and he grows up in foster families. When he gets older, he develops feelings of aggression and for him, the only way to get rid of these feelings is to take revenge on Maya by destroying her family – and he succeeds. He seduces Fran, develops a close relationship to Mia and consequently damages the intimate relationship between Mia and Issey. Moreover, Asher steals the dreamcloth from Issey before he disappears. Issey commits suicide, Mia leaves South Africa, and Fran is left behind, plagued by feelings of guilt and the painful effects of an unfulfilled love.

With Asher's disappearance, the joy he has brought to Mia disappears with him, and the nightmares and dark feelings and stories in her head reappear. What seems to have healed simply through Asher's presence in her life is hurting her again. She leaves South Africa, and her restless journey from country to country, from lover to lover, begins.

Finally, when she meets Asher again after many years having the feeling of looking for something/someone, the healing process begins. Finding the dreamcloth doubtlessly contributes positively to the healing process. When 'the

ghost' finally finds out where Asher and the dreamcloth are to be found, it 'persuades' Mia to visit Asher and care for him until his very end. To cut a long story short, the first step towards healing is Asher's returning of the dreamcloth: "Now her heart as furious, and before its velvet belly, she knew, because her ghost knew, that her dreamcloth was found" (23).

However, finding the cloth is not enough for the ghost to leave Mia – Mia is not yet healed from her transgenerational trauma. The truth needs to be found, the silence about Maya's secret life needs to be broken.

Back in South Africa, it is Yankel who breaks this silence and tells Mia about Maya's life. Yankel found Maya's letters to Rochel after Maya's death, disclosing Maya's secret, and on his deathbed he tells his granddaughter about this well hidden secret. Hence, the secret is spoken out aloud for the first time and finally, everything makes sense to Mia:

For years she had swirled restlessly from place to place, searching for what might make sense of it all. But right here, right in front of this old man, the rage that had coiled in her for decades slowly furled up, smaller and smaller winding into itself and making space for something new. She felt the gentle wash of its touch, softening all it traversed. (311)

The ghost leaves her:

[...] something in her heart shifted, a small motion, like the rounding of a moon on its day of fullness, or the imperceptible flicker that sets the embryo's heart a-ticking, or the final gnaw of a mouse's tooth on a rope, and the world changed. Mia felt the unravelling of a lifetime's bondage as the umbilicus between her and her ghost spun in giddy spirals separating them to different times and places. (312)

The breaking of the silence finally heals Mia from her transgenerational trauma. Giving the dreamcloth to Grace symbolically indicates her healing – she does not need it anymore. She is free.

12 FARM MURDERS AND FARM ATTACKS IN A *BLADE OF GRASS*³⁸

A Blade of Grass written by Lewis Desoto is set during apartheid in South Africa and deals with the young white couple Ben and his wife Märit, who buy a remote farm in South Africa. The farm is located close to the border "[w]here there are rumours of war" (16); the Blacks violently fight for what was taken

³⁸ The quotes in this chapter are from Desoto 2003.

from them by the Whites: their land. Soon after Ben's and Märit's arrival, the farm is stricken with disaster. When Ben gets killed by a landmine, Märit becomes, being the only white person on the farm, the 'baas' and thus, in charge of the farm. In her loneliness she makes friends with her black maid Tembi, who helps her running the farm, and also becomes her closest friend, the only person on the isolated farm whom she can share her thoughts and feelings with. An encroaching war between black guerillas, who attack farms in order 'to get back what has been taken from them' and Whites who try to defend what they call 'their land', threatens the farm increasingly; when a black man gets killed by white soldiers, all the black workers leave the farm, and Märit and Tembi are forced to run the farm on their own and have to face one catastrophe after the other. The novel deals, among others, with themes like race, war, sexuality, jealousy, isolation, friendship and betrayal.

12.1 THE ATTACKS

Due to the rumours of war, the land on the South African border is "cheap and fertile" (31) and thus affordable for Ben, whose dream of being a farmer finally comes true via buying the remote farm, which he and his wife name 'Kudufontein'. When Ben buys the farm, he is aware of the rumours and he is aware of the ongoing conflicts between the Blacks and the Whites and the danger in which a Boer lives, since farm murders and farm attacks are daily fare in South Africa. However, he is fearless and convinced of being safe provided he treats his black workers with respect:

He is not naive, he knows the risks, he knows the history, he knows that there are many who look upon him with envy, perhaps with hate. But Ben is also an idealist, and he believes that if he is fair, if he is just, if he is generous, then he will be understood, not resented, even respected. [...] So he does not trouble himself too much with politics. He is careful in his dealings with the other farmers in the district, he is careful in his dealing with the workers on the farm, he is careful with the land. (59)

But his carefulness does not save him from death: On his way back from the nearby town Klipspring to his farm, his car rolls over a landmine, previously buried by two black men whose intention of killing the Boers is revenge for what had been taken from them and whose motivation is hatred for the Whites who call the farmland 'their own':

They are in the peaceful grassland now, in the farmlands, the land that the white farmers call their own. But the two men have brought an opposing view – what might be called a disputation of ownership. Their petition is in the form of plastique; a cheap, lightweight explosive that is easy to use, and deadly. This is a petition that will give voice to many mouths, and will not go unnoticed. [...] That is their sole function – to explode, to destroy, to kill. (93)

The landmine is deadly indeed; it kills someone for whom it was buried for: a white farmer. Ben. “The gasoline in the fuel tank ignites with an instant searing heat. The truck becomes a sudden ball of flaming metal as it skids off the road into the underbrush and explodes” (118).

The second farm attack mentioned in the novel is the burning of a neighboring farm, the farm of a family called Potgieter. When Märit and Tembi go to Klipspring, they pass the farm and see it burned down to the ground: “But what she sees now, in the midst of the ochre grass and the green of the trees, is a black scorch across the slope. Where the house had been is a ruin of blackened walls and rafters” (197). In her naivety Märit believes that there has been a fire, but she soon learns that it has been a farm attack: “No, Mevrou Laurens, they didn’t have a fire. The farm was burned, intentionally, as well as the crops. And the cattle that weren’t driven across the border were killed. Their throats were cut” (201).

12.2 REACTIONS TO THE FARM ATTACKS

Obviously, the Whites do not stand back and develop the need to defend what they call ‘their land’. The hatred towards the Blacks grows. One day, white soldiers in helicopters appear on the farm, shooting a black man and arresting another one. The soldiers call them “terrorists”, having the intention of attacking farms: “‘They call themselves soldiers of liberation.’ Schoon snorts with contempt. ‘A bandit. Nothing but a terrorist’” (217). Standing in the door of the helicopter, a soldier first shoots a black man who is running for his life: “The running man falls, flung to the ground as if by invisible fists, his feet and his hands and his face broken by the bullets that spit down from the machine” (212). In horror, Tembi watches this traumatizing scene: “Tembi gasps in horror. A dead man, the blood almost violet on his dark skin, and on the ground where the blood has seeped the soil is stained black” (216). The second man they shoot is a man that Märit does not recognize as one of her farmworkers, but

who she nevertheless tries to protect by telling the soldiers that he belongs here. However, the soldiers arrest him, take him with them and inevitably “Märit has a sudden vision of a body falling through the clear blue sky” (220).

Indeed, these incidents (the death and the arrest of two black men) seems to be traumatizing for both the black workers on the farm, who start fearing for their lives and therefore leave, as well as for Tembi and Märit, who nonetheless do not have the intention to leave the farm.

Not only the black workers leave the farm, but also the white inhabitants of Klipspring and the owners of the neighboring farms leave the area in fear of the civil war and the farm attacks. However, Märit is not ready to leave the farm. Thus, Tembi and Märit are the only ones left and they start living a life in isolation.

12.3 HOW THE ATTACKS AFFECT MÄRIT

Märit is a city girl. She becomes the mistress of a farm only because her husband’s dream has always been to be a farmer. She moves to the farm for him: “And she is here because of Ben, for Ben” (31). However, Märit, who used to live in a busy city, feels lonely and out of place on the isolated farm. She doubtlessly has problems with being alone, which explains her hasty decision of marrying Ben and moving to the countryside. After her parents’ death she feels lonely, and the only person left whom it is worthy living for is Ben, whose dream has always been to be a farmer. Thus, her only choice to escape loneliness and the feeling of being useless, is becoming the mistress on a remote farm, on which she has the feeling of being a stranger; she feels uncomfortable between the black workers: “In the city, you don’t notice it so much, but out here it is she who is different, she who is the stranger” (37).

The attack on her husband is indeed traumatizing for Märit. When she learns about his death, she feels paralyzed and “the air goes out of [her] lungs, as if this man has punched her in the chest” (124). First, she refuses to believe the bad news: “Ben will come back. This strange interrogation is only a dream, outside of reality” (127). Then, the feeling of numbness overwhelms her: “[...] she is weary, and cannot see beyond the requirements of each moment, each daily task of washing herself, and dressing, and sitting in the car, and stepping

from it on to the grounds of this church. She cannot see the future” (129). Moreover, she has the feeling of being split from her own body, a typical trauma symptom: “her body seems not to belong to her, to be some clumsy object attached to her self (133).

After Ben’s death, Märit develops the feeling of having no purpose in life: “But today there is no reason and no purpose, and tomorrow, and the days after that” (147). As mentioned above, Märit has difficulties with being alone. Thus, the clinging to Tembi after Ben’s death seems natural. The reader might wonder why Märit does not go back to the city after Ben’s death, as it becomes clear to the reader that she does not feel at home on the farm and that she misses the city (“She misses the job she had in Johannesburg [...]” (16)). The simple explanation is that Märit has no motivation of going back, since there is no one there who waits for her, no one there who she can live with; she would be alone – a vision of horror for Märit. On the farm, there is Tembi, whom she develops a deep friendship with and in whom she finds a reason to live:

‘You have to be strong; Märit. For my sake. I need you also.’
Märit leans over and clasps Tembi’s hand. ‘Do you? Do you really? You don’t know how much it means to me to hear you say that. I have nothing to hold me to this life otherwise.’ (261)

Thus, going back to the city and leaving the farm are no options for her. Märit clearly experiences an identity crisis after Ben’s death. Ben has given her an identity, she was ‘the farmer’s wife’. After his death she does not know who she is anymore. She is in search of her self: “I only know I’m not the same person as the one in the photograph. And that the world is no longer the same place” (151). She desperately tries to ‘recreate her self’. As her purpose of life becomes being ‘the sister’ of Tembi, sharing her life, her thoughts and the farm with Tembi, she changes her outer appearance in order to look like Tembi. She obviously cannot change her skincolor, but what she can do is cut her hair and change her clothing in order to look like Tembi: “She will go barefoot, like Tembi [...]” (165). “We will be the same now, [...] like sisters”, Märit says to Tembi, explaining the changing of her outer appearance. From that day on, Märit keeps her hair short, wears a ‘sarong’ and walks barefoot; she obviously imitates Tembi. The cutting of her hair and the burning of the cut hair can also be

interpreted as the abandonment of her old identity (the identity first her parents and then Ben have given her): “[...] it burns away the old Märit” (167).

Thus, ‘deleting’ her old self and adopting a new identity is her personal way of dealing with her trauma. As thinking of the time before Ben’s death triggers pain and grief, she avoids being reminded of that time by changing her outer appearance and by putting focus on different issues and persons (Tembi) – the reflection in her mirror does not show her *the old Märit* (the wife of Ben) anymore. One can call this change post-traumatic growth or simply the desperate attempt of suppressing her old life, since thinking of it would be too painful for her: “When my husband died, [...] I died as well. Mevrouw Laurens died. And out of that death I have been reborn as someone other” (179). This quote shows that the latter is rather applicable; Märit denies her old self and her old life as she feels that the woman who once was Ben’s wife, is dead.

Märit and Tembi become dependent on each other. For a long time the difference of their skincolor seems to be of no relevance for them; they are equal, both living in the farm house, viewing themselves as sisters and owners of the farm. With the help of Tembi’s endless hope and their close and intimate friendship, Märit and Tembi manage to survive and to deal with several catastrophes hitting the farm (Joshua is threatening them, the cattle are stolen, the hens get killed, the water pump and the generator get broken, a locust swarm attacks the farm). Despite these difficulties Märit and Tembi live a seemingly peaceful life on the farm – until the arrival of Khoza on the farm, which changes everything. Suddenly, skincolor matters again. Khoza, who harbors immense feelings of revenge against the Whites, who, in his view, not only stole South African land, but who also treat Blacks as if they were dogs, influences Tembi, who falls in love with him. Märit, who feels Khoza’s intention of becoming the baas of the farm and his enormous feelings of rage and revenge, tries to show her superiority by ‘becoming the old Märit’ – she exchanges her ‘sarong’ for her old ‘white clothes’. Moreover, this action shows her instability; she again questions her own identity: “What have I tried to be, she asks herself, with my coloured sarong and my beads and bangles? I can never be like Tembi, I can never be lik them. [...] She unfastens the sarong, [...] bought in the African market, and divests herself of this too, peeling it from her body like a skin that does not fit” (323).

For Khoza, who feels offended by Märit's sudden transformation, this action is the final straw. Thus, he and Tembi lock Märit out of the house, let her sleep in the kraal, let her work for them – they turn the tables.

Instead of turning Tembi and Khoza in to the white soldiers who arrive at the farm, she protects them by withholding the truth about the struggle for power between the two Blacks and herself that she seems to have lost. Again, the fear of being alone and being left alone is stronger than the feeling of punishing Khoza and Tembi. Furthermore, she still loves Tembi; she still views her as the most important person in her life and turning her in to the white soldiers would mean losing her. Thus, she rather bears being the maid for Khoza and Tembi than losing Tembi and consequently losing her purpose of life.

When the black soldiers arrive at the farm, again tables are turned and Märit is forced to be the servant for the Blacks. One night, the soldiers force her to dance for them, and they start touching her: “[...] she is being pushed back and forth roughly, back and forth between the hands. Someone grasps the hem of her sarong and jerks hard. [...] And suddenly the heat is on her bare skin and the sarong is tossed past her head. [...] She falls to her knees in her underpants. The men whistle and shout.” (355). This ‘attack’ traumatizes and humiliates Märit: “I want to die” (357), she says to Tembi, who tries to comfort her.

In the end, Märit's greatest fear becomes true: The black soldiers take Tembi and Khoza with them, and she is left alone on the farm; alone and injured, as she is attacked by one of the soldiers. At first, hope lets her struggle for her life: “Even if there is war upon the land there will be people somewhere, someone left behind, someone hiding, someone like herself. She will find a vehicle and then she will go in search of Tembi” (377). However, she more and more loses this hope and gives herself up: “I have always been lost, Märit realises. I have never belonged anywhere or to anything. My life has been a dream. I have failed – at marriage, family, friendship, farming – at life (394). Overwhelmed by hopelessness, physical and emotional pain, she drowns herself in the river: “She will enter the water and become water, become air, become nothing” (394). What she once said to Tembi becomes the bitter truth: “Without you

[=Tembi] here I would die. I feel that I will never leave this farm. I will die instead” (251)

12.4 TEMBI'S POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH

Tembi experiences several traumatizing events throughout her life (the relocation, the death of her mother, the loss of her father, the rape, the death of Märit). Moreover, the fact of being a black person during the time of apartheid, i.e. the structural violence she and her family are forced to bear, is doubtlessly traumatizing as well.

However, Tembi never loses her hope and her positive attitude. Whenever Märit is in despair, Tembi is the one who always sees the positive sides of every situation: “You always have hope, Tembi. You know more about suffering than I do, yet you always have hope” (251). Her secret garden is a symbol for her endless hope for a better life and her strength and her strong will to live and to survive. Even in the end, when she returns to the farm and finds her secret garden destroyed, there is still hope in her:

She opens her hand and studies the five small seeds in her palm. She bends down and carefully places the seeds on the soil. Here she will grow that which does not as yet grow. In this small acre of the world. From here the sweetness will come. A gift. But first she must plant the seeds. (396)

13 CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, South Africa is still a traumatized nation. Its past, i.e. colonialism and apartheid time, saw suffering, discrimination, violence and death, and up to the present South Africa's inhabitants still suffer from the effects of this violent past, both Whites and Blacks. Racism, discrimination and unpleasant living conditions (especially in townships), poverty and suffering are still daily fare in South Africa, which can indeed be regarded as the reasons for South Africa being one of the countries with the highest crime rate worldwide.

After the fall of apartheid in 1994, the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) was founded in order to give South Africans the opportunity to speak openly about their traumatizing lives and experiences. Also perpetrators (mostly Whites) were given the chance to depict their situations, explain their motivations and apologize for their deeds.

However, not all the South Africans got the chance to speak before the TRC, and such an institution cannot compensate for all the violence and injustice millions of people were forced to bear during the time of apartheid.

Understandably, what remained in many victims was revenge in the form of violence – up to the present. Transgenerational trauma can be cited as an explanation for the fact that South Africans are still traumatized today, almost twenty years after the fall of apartheid – the traumas of people who were directly affected by the laws of apartheid time and who never came to terms with their traumas, are inevitably passed on to their children and grandchildren, and thus one can speak of a seemingly never-ending traumatization, triggered by the cruelties and atrocities of apartheid time. Not only black people are affected by trauma, but also Whites. They have frequently become and are still becoming victims of violence (rape, murder, torture) and what is more, many white people still feel guilty about the atrocities committed by 'their race':

I think that much of the black population suffers from far more violence than white people do, but that's not to say that white people don't endure an enormous amount of violence as well. There is still a great deal of white guilt"(Mann qdt. in Mengel et al. 2010:54)

In order to view South Africa as a traumatized nation, a broader concept of trauma is necessary. The Western concept of trauma is too heavily focused on trauma as an individual phenomenon. In the case of South Africa one can

speak of a collective trauma. Not only single events traumatize individuals in South Africa, but also conditions like poverty or structural violence accompany victims their whole lives.

Many South African novelists, who partly lived in South Africa during apartheid time and were affected by the crucial laws, indeed make a strong contribution to the raising of awareness of the traumatizing effects of apartheid on the inhabitants. According to Brink, literature helps to come to terms with the past: “[literature] has the tradition of trying to evaluate, trying to explain what was happening, trying to understand what was happening” (qtd. in Mengel et al. 5). According to Mengel et al.,

[t]rauma, memory and narrative are closely interrelated, because one way of coming to terms with a person’s and/or a nation’s traumatic past is by transforming traumatic memory (hot memory) into narrative memory (cold memory) through the telling of a story. (2010:vii)

Thus, contemporary South African novels may help the traumatized nation to come to terms with their past and may positively contribute to the improvement of the present situation in South Africa.

The analysis of trauma in South Africa has been too much restricted to rape or murder as individual forms of traumatization. This thesis has shown that there are many different forms of traumatization to be considered besides murder and rape. The analyzed novels clearly represent these different forms of traumatization and show how these traumas affect both individuals as well as whole groups, like in *Mother to Mother*, which clearly illustrates the traumatization of Blacks who are forced to move from their homes into townships where they have to bear deplorable conditions, violence and poverty.

In *Bitter Fruit*, a very common form of traumatization in South Africa is represented: rape. The novel shows how a trauma triggered by rape can affect, threaten and limit the quality of life of both the victim as well as of the people close to the victim.

Kings of the Water shows the traumatizing effects of the ongoing homophobic attitude shared by many South Africans. The effects of survivor guilt and bereavement as forms of traumatization in South Africa are well represented in

Susan Mann's *Quarter Tones*: Ana has difficulties with establishing her own identity due to survivor guilt, as she unconsciously adopts her mother's identity in order to please her father, who suffers from traumatic bereavement after the death of his beloved wife.

It's me Anna deals with another dramatic form of traumatization, namely child abuse. Not only does the novel describe the painful psychological and physical consequences of the abuse on the victim Anna, but it also illustrates the way South Africa deals with crimes like child abuse: Anna's stepfather is not held accountable for abusing his daughters physically and sexually; the court refuses prosecution. Transgenerational trauma has been examined in the novel *The Dreamcloth*, and Desoto's *A Blade of Grass* indicates the traumatizing effects of the still frequent farm murders and farm attacks, mostly affecting white farmers, attacked by Blacks seeking revenge.

Although the novels are fraught with suffering, pain and traumas, they also constitute a source of hope, since many characters in the novel experience posttraumatic growth and are able to deal with their traumas and even experience healing. Even in *Blade of Grass*, in which the protagonist Märit dies in the end, the reader can find hope: Tembi, who is multiply traumatized by relocation, death, structural violence, humiliation and rape, never gives up her dreams and her hope for a better life.

Hence, South African literature can provide people with hope and show them that healing is indeed possible.

The research in South African literature concerning forms of traumatization is by no means complete, and further analysis on the topic could and should be done in order to raise awareness of the past and present situation in South Africa, which may positively contribute to the nation's final healing.

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16 APPENDIX

GERMAN ABSTRACT

Die Arbeit *Forms of Traumatization in the Contemporary South African Novel* untersucht das Vorkommen von verschiedenen Formen von Traumatisierung in sieben südafrikanischen Romanen, die alle nach der Zeit der Apartheid geschrieben und veröffentlicht wurden.

Um einen Überblick über den Begriff Trauma zu geben, beschäftigt sich der erste Teil dieser Arbeit mit dem Trauma-Begriff an sich. Dabei wird nicht nur eine eindeutige Definition des Trauma-Begriffs gegeben, sondern auch die Symptomatik sowie verschiedene Trauma-Typen erläutert. Zudem werden die Auswirkungen von Trauma auf das Selbst des/der Betroffenen und auf dessen/deren Beziehungen und Leben behandelt. Außerdem wird auf die verschiedenen Möglichkeiten der Heilung von Trauma hingewiesen.

Im zweiten Teil der Arbeit wird der Trauma-Begriff mit Südafrika in Verbindung gebracht. Dabei wird klar, dass der westliche Trauma-Begriff für die Adaption auf den südafrikanischen Kontext nicht ausreichend ist, da Südafrika aufgrund der verheerenden Zustände während der Apartheid-Zeit kollektiv traumatisiert ist, das heißt Trauma betrifft die ganze Nation. Da sich der westliche Trauma-Begriff eher auf Individuen konzentriert wäre die Übernahme des westlichen Konzeptes auf Südafrika daher problematisch. Zudem sind es in Südafrika nicht nur bestimmte Ereignisse die traumatisieren, sondern eher Zustände wie Armut oder strukturelle Gewalt. Auch darauf wird im westlichen Trauma-Konzept wenig eingegangen.

Im dritten Teil der Arbeit werden verschiedene typische Traumatisierungen in Südafrika näher beschrieben, nämlich Vergewaltigung, Gewalt in den Townships, Zwangs-Übersiedelungen, Überlebens-Schuld, traumatische Trauer, Kindesmissbrauch, Homophobie, transgenerationales Trauma und Farmmorde bzw. Farmattacken. Diese Traumatisierungen werden dann in folgenden Büchern analysiert: *Bitter Fruit* von Achmat Dangor, *Mother to Mother* von Sindiwe Magona, *Kings of the Water* von Mark Behr, *Quarter Tones* von Susan Mann, *It's me, Anna* von Elbie Lötter, *The Dreamcloth* von Joane Fedler und *A Blade of Grass* von Luis Desoto.

LEBENS LAUF

Name: Katharina Aigner
Geb.-Datum: 23.03.1987
Geburtsort: Steyr
Nationalität: ÖSTERREICH

BILDUNG

2007 – 2013 Studium an der Universität Wien
Psychologie/Philosophie auf Lehramt
Englisch auf Lehramt

2001 – 2006 Höhere Lehranstalt für wirtschaftliche Berufe (HBLA)
Schwerpunkt Umweltökonomie
in Weyer
Matura: Juni 2006

1997 – 2001 Hauptschule Großraming

1993 – 1997 Volksschule Großraming

BERUF SERFAHRUNG

Okt. 2008 – derzeit VIP-Betreuung im Bereich Service in der Wiener
Stadthalle

August 2012 Kinderbetreuerin beim Nivea-Familienfest

August 2011 Kinderbetreuerin beim MC Donalds Ferienspiel

Juli 2008 – August 2008 Stewardess im Nachtzug der ÖBB
Juli 2009 – August 2009
Juli 2010 – August 2010

Okt. 2007 – Okt. 2008 Servicefachangestellte, Mise en Place Wien

April 2007 – Juli 2007 Servicefachangestellte, Cafe Hartner, Waidhofen/Ybbs

Sept. 2006 – März 2007 Au pair, Irland

Juni 2004 – August 2004 Praktikum im Servicebereich
Gasthof Falkenstein, St. Wolfgang