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Declaration of Authenticity

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

Signature: _____

To my parents.

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Abbreviations

ANC: African National Congress

GST: *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*

PTG: Post-Traumatic Growth

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

QoD: *A Quilt of Dreams*

QT: *Quarter Tones*

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

WoD: *Ways of Dying*

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1. Introduction

Throughout the last few decades, the South African novel has gained enormous popularity, relating the stories of the past of individuals as well as of a whole nation having been forced through the horrors of the apartheid period (1948-1991¹). Apartheid rule in South Africa can be seen as trauma that has flooded, shattered and numbed an entire country.

An extensive, undeclared war was fought [...]. Recent trials of members of security forces and evidence given at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission give an indication of how extensive torture, murder and arson were in this country during the apartheid era generally, but particularly during the 1980s and early 1990s. In the 1980s, resistance to apartheid claimed many lives and subjected unknown numbers of people to incidents of murder, bomb blasts, 'necklacing', burning of property, police brutality and other forms of politically-motivated violence. Army conscripts and the police [...] were required to wage war against the vast majority of citizens of South Africa to prevent the advent of democracy, and to attack the neighbouring countries in order to uphold the policies of apartheid. [...] Train violence in which commuters were brutally assassinated, the burning of homes and shacks, attacks by hostel dwellers on township residents, shootings of taxi-commuters, demonstrators and marchers were commonplace events. (Hirschowitz/Orkin 1997, 169-170)

The system created a metanarrative – that of the white westernized supremacy – and sought to undo and annihilate the variety of different constituents contributing to the picture of the country's wholeness, swallowing individuals' voices, in a strive for more and more power of a seemingly superior 'race'. The results were racism, violence and *death*; the death of people, the death of individual life stories, the death of a *true* past, of a valuable present and a promising future. "South Africans appear touched in many ways by violent, criminal, or otherwise potentially traumatic experiences."² (Williams et al. 2007, 846) Those exploited by the oppressor/s were basically made into nothing, their identities swept away by a giant wave of cruelty and hatred – *nullified*.

Trauma is generally said to possess the quality of shattering people's life stories, of undoing their identities. (cf. Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 25) Time's pattern of linear harmony is utterly destroyed, the meaningful unit of past, present and future ripped into pieces. A life story that is deprived of its continuity, existing in

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/apartheid/>, [24/01/2013].

² As stated by Hirschowitz and Orkin, "[a]pproximately five million adults aged between 16 and 64 years have lived through violent and other traumatic events related to the apartheid regime" (Hirschowitz/Orkin 1997, 180).

fragments instead, is no true *life* story any longer. The impact of trauma takes away its foundation, so that it lacks true embeddedness and interrelation with other people's stories. Trauma has the force to isolate; to tear its 'victim' out of the web of purposeful interaction to force him/her into the frightening realm of solitude and singularity. "In the sea of life enisled." (Matthew Arnold, *To Marguerite*³) Without anyone to share them with, one's horrors remain unspoken, caught in the torrent of silent suffering. Some people might swim in the same sea, nevertheless seeming unattainable to each other. Regarding post-apartheid South Africa, the sea is filled with numerous isolated truths, individual's stories of horror; but without bridging them and bringing them together, they will forever remain unvoiced. During apartheid these single truths were just drowned; forced to sink to the bottom of oblivion. There they remained, for their weight was too heavy for their 'owners' to lift them alone, to retrieve them from there. Buried in the opaque sands of the past, they have, however, not always been 'motionless', shaken from time to time, sending tremors to re-surface in a swirl of uncontrolled intrusions, in waves of nightmares, pain and dread. The source, buried in the depths of the sea, is still bound to the unknown, stuck in the unconscious of the 'victim's' mind. Undetected. Unspoken. Unmanageable. *Alone*.

The contemporary South African novel basically deals with the matter of deconstructing the metanarrative of apartheid, voicing the life stories of individuals, in order to bring them to the fore and to arrive at a *whole* story of *truth*. It shows how (fictive) individuals cope with their trauma/ta within the frame of their apartheid-struck home country, its breathtaking beauty as well as its cruel reminders of the past. On a micro level, they strive for the meaningful continuity of their own life stories, thus mirroring the quest for wholeness that is obvious on the macro level of the nation state. Both levels flow into each other, prove to be multiply entangled.

In portraying (fictive) individuals' coping processes, and offering room for personal identification with the characters described, the novel functions as a medium for those who have been unheard, showing them that they are not alone in the vast sea of nothingness they perceive themselves in. There are others lost in it, others one might be able to relate to, because one shares a similar story. Equally, the novel might serve the authors – whose own life stories are largely embedded in the South African context and

³ <http://www.iment.com/maida/poetry/arnold.htm#cont>, [24/01/2013].

who have therefore been influenced by its tough past in one way or the other – to find an audience of 'empathic listeners' (cf. Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 27), or better 'empathic readers' in this case, to tell their stories to. The novel thus becomes a means of coping for both, the reader as well as the author. Furthermore, it contributes to general awareness raising regarding a past that must not be forgotten and emphasizes the necessity to work through the traumatic experiences *together*, in an effort to re-write history (or histories) and re-build the nation with united forces. It reminds the reader that a *collective* process of coping has to be triggered off; a process of not only consciously remembering, but of collectively *mourning* for what has been lost. Only in that way, a nationwide fruitful attempt at healing can take place; only then, a process of collective (post-traumatic) growth might bud, prosper and flourish. The South African novels that have spread within the past years, are proof of the fact that nationwide, collective coping has already begun.

This thesis unites four accounts of this process, involving the micro- as well as the macro-level. After a theoretical part on trauma, coping and literature, Patricia Schonstein's *A Quilt of Dreams* (2006), Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying* (1995), Rachel Zadok's *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* (2005) and Susan Mann's *Quarter Tones* (2007) are discussed. All of them have one thing in common. They focus on fictive individuals coping with their traumata (basically) rooted in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. These individuals' processes shall be analyzed paying close attention to the larger context they are embedded in. Wherein do their traumata consist? How do they cope with them in the (social) environment they are living in? Which obstacles and hardships do they have to face and how is the final process of healing brought on?

What is clear from the very start is that in re-counting these fictive individuals' stories, the novels in question are more than just beautifully woven works of art. They are confessions of a brutal past, providing an outlook into a more hopeful future; a future resulting from a healing process among people paying recognition to each other, co-existing in a peaceful way. *Together as one*, each story as precious as any other. A future that – though the foundation has been laid – has yet to come.

2. Theoretical Considerations

2.1. Psychological Trauma, PTSD and identity

The phenomenon of ‘traumatic stress’ is “not an invention of the twentieth century.” (Hodgkinson/Stewart 1998, 3) Hodgkinson and Stewart point to the fact that even Homer in his *Iliad* already referred to the traumatic consequences of combat situations and claim that the “concept of post-traumatic stress appears, disappears and reappears in various guises over the centuries.” (ibid.) This certainly adds to the complexity of the matter.

The concept of psychological trauma is by far not as clear-cut as one might at first take it to be. The difficulty of dealing with ‘trauma’ primarily lies in the facts that a) the nature of the event that causes it can be complex and blurred, b) several traumatic events might combine in one individual to lead to the experience of ‘traumatic stress’, c) individual people's reactions to the event/s in question can be quite diverse and correlate with numerous factors, such as a survivor's personality and the social context within which the traumatic event/s is/are being encountered and dealt with and d) researchers' approaches to and explanations of traumatic stress have themselves produced a lot of controversy (cf. Leys 2000, 6-8).

Consulting the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* for a definition of the term ‘trauma’, it comes up with the following possibilities:

1 [U] (psychology) a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time **2** [C, U] an unpleasant experience that makes you feel upset and/or anxious [...] **3** [U,C] (medical) an injury
(*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2005, 1634)

“Trauma was originally the term for a surgical wound, conceived on the model of a rupture of the skin or protective envelope of the body resulting in a catastrophic global reaction in the entire organism.” (Leys 2000, 19) Although Ruth Leys states that “the field of trauma studies today [...] continues to lack cohesion” (ibid., 6), representatives of modern trauma theory generally agree that events ascribed the adjective ‘traumatic’ are characterized by the unusually severe impact they have on their ‘victims’. As acknowledged by psychiatrist Judith Herman in her definition of psychological trauma,

[t]raumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence or death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe. The common denominator of trauma is a feeling of intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation. (Herman 1997, 33)

Whatever its precise nature (e.g. the death of a loved one, a severe illness, a war experience), according to modern trauma theory, the event responsible for a traumatic stress reaction often comes unexpected and has the quality to shatter the individual's entire belief system and established schemata, her or his whole self-concept. (cf. Bryant-Davis 2005, 5)

Despite its complexity, attempts to categorize different kinds of 'traumatic experiences' have been made. Schauer et al. state that "[w]e can classify traumatic experiences into two types: man-made disasters and natural disasters. Examples of traumatic events caused by other humans are: exposure to combat, rape, torture, witnessing a massacre or mass killing, being held prisoner of war or experiencing catastrophes such as air-plane crashes or severe car accidents. Natural disasters classified as trauma may include floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, or volcanic eruptions." (Schauer et al. 2005, 5) The fact that witnessing a traumatic event can result in the witness also becoming negatively affected deserves special attention, as "[w]itnesses as well as victims are subject to the dialectic of trauma."⁴ (Herman 1997, 2) Bryant-Davis argues that "[n]ot only [...] direct victimization affect[s] survivors⁵, but the observation of violence can [...] have long-term effects as well." (Bryant-Davis 2005, 5), underlining this statement by referring to the matter of 'community violence'. (cf. *ibid.*) As the word implies, 'community violence' concerns the whole 'community' and not only a single individual. In case of a war or political persecution, the whole community is affected by the atrocities going on, whereas in case of personal bereavement, the individual might be alone in his or her suffering. However, both take place within a broader social context, which is worth

4 For Herman, the 'dialectic of trauma' lies in the fact that individuals experiencing the symptoms of traumatic stress prove to be numbed by their experience and actively (yet unconsciously) relive the traumatic event at the same time. (cf. Herman 1997, 47)

5 Bryant-Davis makes use of the expression 'survivor' to describe the person who has experienced the traumatic event(s), as this would endow the traumatized individual with some kind of strength and the feeling of control, whereas the term 'victim' might contribute to her or his stigmatization. (cf. Bryant-Davis 2005, 9)

thorough investigation. As Herman makes clear, “[t]o hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance. For the individual victim, this social context is created by relationships with friends, lovers, and family. For the larger society, the social context is created by political movements that give voice to the disempowered.” (Herman 1997, 9)

One might assume that always (a) single disastrous event/s constitute/s the basis for the experience of traumatic stress. Research, however, has shown that post-traumatic stress can also be the result of a long-time traumatizing situation. To describe the latter, Grinberg and Grinberg make use of the terms ‘Spannungstrauma’ and ‘akkumulatives Trauma’, as in this case several different factors contribute additively to the trauma and make the situation in question evermore unbearable. (cf. Grinberg/Grinberg 1990, 10f.) Schauer et al. refer to Herman, who takes this further and “has suggested differentiating between two different types of traumas. Type I traumatic events are those events that lead to pathological consequences after a single exposure, like a car accident or an isolated rape” (Schauer et al. 2005, 13) and events of a second type (Type II), which “include those that happen repeatedly over an extended time period, accounting for symptoms experienced by survivors of torture, childhood sexual abuse, or prisoner-of-war camps.” (ibid., 13-14)

Closely related to the fact that even witnesses, who are not *directly* affected by the traumatic event(s), can show symptoms of traumatic stress may be the phenomenon called ‘intergenerational trauma’. “Inherent in Caruth's theory of trauma is the belief that the trauma experiences by one person can be passed on to others. The basic model for that transmission is the face-to-face encounter between a victim, who enacts or performs his or her traumatic experience, and a witness who listens and is in turn contaminated by the catastrophe.” (Leys 2000, 284)

Leys further elaborates on that by stating that Caruth's

is a model of transmission that conforms to the claims of physicians such as van der Kolk and Herman that witnesses to the sufferings of others are vulnerable to the same dialectic of trauma as the victims themselves. [...] But Caruth expands that model to include the transmission of trauma across space and time, so that the trauma of one individual is

understood as capable of haunting later generations – as if the ghosts of the past could speak to those living in the present, contagiously contaminating them in turn. (ibid., 284)

This again seems to be possible on the community level (or even a broader dimension, as in the case of sharing an ethnical or national identity), as well as on that of the individual. (cf. ibid., 285) In both cases, the past's ghosts originating in one historical context are transmitted from generation to generation and remain a part of each successive generation's memory; a part that may not be consciously acknowledged. “[H]istory is collapsed into memory [...]” (ibid., 285)

2.1.1. The core dynamics of trauma

The traumatizing event/s prove/s to be historical and omnipresent for the ‘victim/s’ at the same time. They are stuck in the trauma, haunted by their ghosts in the form of traumatic memories, without being able to consciously get hold of them; without being able to consciously narrate the past. (cf. Bryant-Davis 2005, 78) According to Leys, Pierre Janet was the first to distinguish “between two kinds of memory – ‘traumatic memory,’ which merely and unconsciously repeats the past, and ‘narrative memory,’ which narrates the past as past” (Leys 2000, 105) and to acknowledge “the idea that the goal of therapy is to convert ‘traumatic memory’ into ‘narrative memory’ by getting the patient to recount his or her history.” (ibid.) The concept of ‘traumatic memory’ illustrates perfectly the dynamic that is dubbed by Herman “the dialectic of trauma” (Herman 1997, 47), as it causes both ‘intrusive’ and ‘numbing’ symptoms in the ‘victim’. (cf. ibid.)

On the one hand, a person has very vivid recollections of the event including many sensory details; on the other hand, it is very difficult for the victim to face the memories and to learn to put the details into coherent speech and chronological order. This is because traumatic events are stored differently than memories of everyday events. (Schauer et al. 2005, 15)

It is said that especially sensory information is being stored when experiencing the traumatic event. It may include certain sounds, smells and the like; details the ‘victim’ perceives with his or her senses. This information is stored in another area than the content-related one and can easily be recalled when triggered by certain stimuli, be they external (environmental, e.g. smells) or internal (e.g. thoughts). When triggered by those stimuli, the information linked to the original sensory impressions experienced is

reactivated and leads to the same physical and mental arousals the person felt when experiencing the traumatic event. Those memories of the past event cruelly intrude into the victim's present. The actual event itself – the content-related information – cannot be consciously and coherently recalled and narrated. The 'autobiographical memory', as it has been termed, which is responsible for the meaningful connection of events (or "mini-histories" (Schauer et al. 2005, 18)) appears to be distorted, as trauma 'victims' prove to be incapable of narrating the event in a coherent way. They lack the autobiographical structure within which their memories would be embedded under normal circumstances. (cf. *ibid.*) "The sensory-perceptual-emotional representations of the traumatic event have also been called hot memory or situationally accessible memory, whereas the autobiographical context memory has been called cold memory or verbally accessible memory." (*ibid.*) This can be considered the fundamental dynamic of trauma, from which the more complex picture of post-traumatic stress disorder arises.

2.1.2. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language. (Caruth 1996, 4)

Reactions in the aftermath of a traumatic experience can be diverse and vary greatly from 'victim' to 'victim'. "There is no 'right' or 'wrong' reaction to any trauma. [...] The particular ways in which people are affected by trauma can widely differ. This large range of differences reflects the normal differences among people." (Rosenbloom/Williams 1999, 18)

Regarding the pathological reactions to traumatic stress, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) has come to be the most commonly diagnosed disorder. "Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a complex group of symptoms that includes pathological anxiety. PTSD occurs when an individual is exposed to an extremely traumatic, usually life-threatening stressor such as military combat or a violent personal assault."⁶ Maercker et al. consider PTSD to be "notoriously chameleon. In many cases, it develops within a short time after the traumatic event; in others, years may pass before its delayed onset.

⁶ <http://www.mdguidelines.com/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/definition>, 19/10/2010.

Usually, after an initial period of virulence, its symptoms subside, only to flare up again” (Maercker et al. 1999, 2).

The “pathological representation of traumatic memories is what is responsible for the core symptoms of PTSD.” (Schauer et al. 2005, 15) As a consequence – due to the fundamental dialectic of trauma –, intrusion and numbness (i.e. denial) can be regarded as among the typical manifestations of PTSD. The first commonly occurs as flashbacks and nightmares. “At times when the survivor doesn't want to think about the trauma, memories of the trauma may come to mind. These thoughts of the trauma may be in the form of nightmares when sleeping, flashbacks when awake, or the mental replaying of the event when the survivor wants it to stop” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 78). The nightmares can as well be about an incident similar to the actual traumatic experience and the trauma ‘victim’ might not remember them when awake again, despite feeling extremely exhausted, anxious or afraid. Flashbacks, on the other hand, make the individual emotionally re-experience the traumatic event during waking hours and can involve sensations relating to different senses (e.g. auditory, olfactory). (cf. *ibid.*, 78)⁷

These are, however, not the only possible pathological symptoms shown by trauma ‘victims’ suffering from PTSD. Rosenbloom and Williams (cf. 18-23) differentiate between a number of trauma reactions according to four different categories: physical reactions, mental reactions, emotional reactions and behavioral reactions. Whereas the first include symptoms relating to the felt changes in bodily functions (e.g. heart rate), the second category comprises those that have to do with the ‘victim’s new way of thinking (and his or her difficulty in controlling it) and attention span. The third of the established categories deals with the way the person feels (e.g. anger) or his/her possible lack of feelings, while the last focuses on the manifestations obvious in the ‘victim’s behavior (e.g. social interaction, handling one's own needs such as sleep, eating, sex life).⁸

With the label ‘PTSD’, psychiatrists have shown an attempt to categorize the

⁷ Horowitz and Kaltreider list and describe thirteen signs and symptoms related to ‘intrusion’ (cf. Horowitz/Kaltreider 1995, 236; added in the appendix of this thesis) and thirteen others ascribed to the phase of ‘denial’, which is said to alternate with the intrusive one. (cf. *ibid.*, 234; added in the appendix of this thesis)

⁸ A detailed description is provided in Rosenbloom/Williams 1999, 18-23.

commonalities found in trauma reactions. As such it is formally acknowledged in the DSM-III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) and listed with some defining criteria. (cf. Hanson Frieze/Bookwala 1996, 304) For PTSD to be diagnosed, the following symptoms are worth considering: “(a) exaggerated startle response; (b) sleep disturbance; (c) guilt; (d) memory impairment or trouble concentrating; (e) phobias about activities triggering recollection of the event; (f) intensification of symptoms via exposure to events associated symbolically or in actuality with the traumatic event.” (ibid.) At least two of them are supposed to be shown. They are only relevant, however, if they did not exist in the person before the traumatic experience.

With such a large number of possible signs and symptoms, it is only self-explanatory that one cannot generalize in order to come up with *the* typical reaction to trauma. Not only does the list of potential (pathological) reactions to trauma seem almost inexhaustible, there are also other factors that add to the complexity of the situation. As every person obviously reacts in a somehow different way, researchers have frequently emphasized the importance of taking a closer look at the ‘victim’'s personality and the special situation he or she is in. “First, there is the nature of the event itself; [...] Second, there is what the event means to the victim. Some experiences, such as combat or rape, are likely to be traumatic for anyone. But other events are experienced as traumatic by one person but not by another.” (Rosenbloom/Williams 1999, 17) Personality as well as environmental factors appear to have a strong influence on actual trauma outcomes, as they determine to a certain extent how the person copes with the traumatic experience.

2.1.3. Trauma and the shattering of identity

“Trauma is a loss of control, a loss of understanding, a loss of identity.”
(Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 27)

When trauma is understood as “the alienation from life of a wounded soul [...] [that] destroys the human kernel that resides in moments or acts that occur within a social context [,] [...] isolates the survivor, alienates life, and freezes the flow of one's personal biography” (Schauer et al. 2005, 2), there can be no doubt that it has a severe impact on the ‘victim’'s fundamental identity structure.

At the core of theories dealing with identity is the distinction between ‘self’ and ‘identity’. Edith Jacobson, according to Peter Lohauß, mentions three main aspects related to what is understood as the ‘self’. First, it is said to be an entity that considers itself distinct, experiencing itself as separate from its environment. Second, it claims having some degree of continuity and directedness. Third, the ‘self’ represents the ability to integrate even experiences of crises and upheavals, for the sake of the preservation of its wholeness. (cf. Lohauß 1995, 28) Lohauß states that, whereas ‘self’ is always related to the person, ‘identity’ has to be looked at keeping the distinction of an “Außenperspektive” (ibid.) and an “Innenperspektive” (ibid.) in mind. The former is, for example, included in the cases of ‘social identity’, ‘collective identity’ and ‘national identity’, while ‘personal identity’ and “Identitätsgefühl” (ibid.) are said to focus on the latter. This differentiation is also obvious in the definition of what Lohauß – making use of the terms coined by Norbert Elias – mentions as “Ich-Identität” (*I-identity*; ibid., 79) and “Wir-Identität” (*we-identity*; ibid.). *I-identity* stands for the awareness of one’s distinctiveness as an individual, including everything that defines one as such. *We-identity*, on the other hand, is the awareness of being part of certain relationships and group structures. Both types are said to be in proportion to each other, which has been dubbed “Wir-Ich-Balance” (*we-I-balance*, ibid.). Every individual has some character traits that he or she shares with the others belonging to the respective group. This is said to define his or her social personality structure, the ‘social habitus’. (cf. ibid., 81)

“Der soziale Habitus ist der Hintergrund, auf dem sich die persönliche Identität entfalten muß. [...] Das Selbst entfaltet sich innerhalb von Figurationen der sozialen Identität. Die Identitätsfigurationen sind ein wesentliches Mittel zur Bildung des Selbst.” (Lohauß 1995, 81) Identity figurations are said to be multi-faceted, combining “Ichideale, bewertete Gefühle, natürliche und soziale Merkmale, Rollenvorbilder, sozialen Status und Machtchancen, soziale Beziehungen” (ibid.). In the process of finding one’s own identity, the individual’s life story has to be embedded into different figurations of identity. Among the basic identity figurations that are attributed to the individual, ‘gender’, ‘family of origin’ and ‘nationality’ can be found. However, there are also those that are not ascribed, such as the individual’s chosen social relationships within the family or working life. The family as a kind of social institution is said to be particularly important in the process of identity construction, as basic values are conveyed and internalized by the individual. On the macro level, the nation state plays a

vital role for the formation of 'self' and 'identity' ('national identity'). (cf. *ibid.*, 83-89)
"Die Art und Weise der nationalen Selbstkonstitution prägt die nationalen Institutionen, die präferierten Werte und Leitbilder. Darüber nimmt sie Einfluß auf die Ich-Ideale und die Persönlichkeitsbilder." (*ibid.*, 91) Severe events on the broader level have the tendency to influence the national as well as the individual self-perception.

In der Geschichte sind die Umstände der nationalen Selbstkonstitution lange prägend. Besetzung, Kolonialismus, Diktatur, Revolution, Genozid hinterlassen dauerhafte Spuren im nationalen Selbstbild. Auf- und Abstieg in der internationalen Machtkonkurrenz, gewonnene und verlorene Kriege können kollektiven Größenwahn oder Trauer über Verlust, Vorstellungen nationaler Größe und persönlichen Stolz oder nationale Minderwertigkeitsgefühle hinterlassen. Probleme der Konstitution nationaler Selbstbilder können defekte Persönlichkeitsbilder zur Folge haben, es gibt kollektive Verdrängungen, Schuldgefühle und Scham. (*ibid.*, 92)

These facts considered, trauma undoubtedly does have severe effects on both collective and individual identity. "Traumatized people suffer damage to the basic structures of self. [...] The identity they have formed prior to the trauma is irrevocably destroyed." (Herman 1997, 56) Berntsen and Rubin state that when trauma is regarded as an important "turning point in our life story" (Berntsen/Rubin 2006, 221), it also has to be a "central component of our personal identity." (*ibid.*) Bessel van der Kolk even describes traumatic memories as "timeless and ego-alien" (Van der Kolk 2001, 57). According to Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela, in a process of "'unmaking' the self" (a term borrowed from Susan Brison; cf. Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 25), trauma shatters a person's life narrative, thus leaving a profound rupture in the person's identity structure. "The overwhelming effect of trauma ruptures the multiple layers of the ego's protective organisational fabric. This organising matrix of the ego includes a number of aspects: the individual's basic assumptions about the world, such as belief system and sense of trust in others, physical aspects of one's body, social networks and so on. The rupture of the organisational matrix has implications for the way the traumatic circumstances are remembered." (*ibid.*, 24)

2.2. Coping with Trauma

2.2.1. The concept of coping

The concept of coping had not been prominent in the realm of psychology until the 1970s. (cf. Zeidner/Endler 1996, xi) One of the pioneers of this concept is Richard S. Lazarus, who, in 1984 and together with his colleague Susan Folkman, defined “coping” “as *constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person.*” (Lazarus/Folkman 1984, 141) Historically, coping research is said to have developed from Sigmund Freud's work on defense mechanisms. (cf. Parker/Endler 1996, 3-5)

One of Freud's earliest contributions to the study of psychopathology centered on the observation that unpleasant or disturbing thoughts are sometimes made unavailable to consciousness. A great deal of Freud's early psychoanalytic writings focused on outlining the various psychological maneuvers used by individuals to fend off, distort, or disguise unacceptable ideas or feelings. (ibid., 3)

According to Leys, Freud attempted “to define the various mechanisms of defense the ego was held capable of deploying against stimulation, as well as the consequences for the psyche when those defenses failed.” (Leys 2000, 24) In addition to his famous idea of ‘repression’, “which [...] had emerged as the psyche's fundamental response to excitation” (ibid.), he came to describe several other mechanisms, such as “‘disavowal’ (*Verleugnung*), linked by him not only to the fear of castration but also of death and the problem of mourning, ‘rejection’ or ‘repudiation’ (*Verwerfung*, Lacan's ‘foreclosure’), ‘negation’ (*Verneinung*), ‘splitting of the ego’ (*Ichspaltung*), and ‘primal repression’ (*Urverdrängung*)” (ibid.).

Freud's daughter Anna then elaborated on his theories, adding some more defense mechanisms and being the first to actually point to mechanisms which, compared to others, might be more ‘pathological’. Repression could, for example, pose a potential danger. This gave rise to a categorization by theorists of ‘adaptive defense mechanisms’ as opposed to those dubbed ‘nonadaptive’. (cf. Parker/Endler 1996, 5) When “[i]n the 1960s, a new line of research [...] began to coalesce under the ‘coping’ label” (ibid., 9), ‘coping’ first functioned as a cover term for all defense mechanisms considered as adaptive, whereas later on the expression ‘coping responses’ generally came to be used to describe the “[c]onscious strategies for reacting to stressful and upsetting situations.”

(ibid.) The concept of coping has been broadened ever since, as the definition by Schwarzer and Schwarzer illustrates:

Coping with an adversity includes numerous ways of dealing with diverse person-environment transactions. Thus, coping does not represent a homogeneous concept. Instead, it is a diffuse umbrella term. Coping can be described in terms of strategies, tactics, responses, cognitions, or behavior. Actual coping is a phenomenon that can be noticed either by introspection or by observation, and it includes internal events as well as overt actions. (Schwarzer/Schwarzer 1996, 107)

2.2.2. The coping process

According to Schwarzer and Schwarzer, coping should be assessed in terms of the *efforts* made by an individual, which means that it does not necessarily have to be a completed and successful process. These efforts might include actual behavioral action, but do not necessarily have to, as they can also be made on the level of cognitions. The latter are said to constitute the prerequisite for all following (behavioral) coping attempts, as the situation has to be cognitively appraised by the individual at first. (cf. Schwarzer/Schwarzer 1996, 107) The authors draw on the approach by Lazarus, who used to make a clear distinction between ‘coping’ and ‘appraisal’, with the first said to “refer[...] to what a person thinks or does to try to manage an emotional encounter” (ibid.) and the second being defined as “an evaluation of what might be thought or done in that encounter” (ibid.). For Folkman and Lazarus, the continuous re-appraisals of the situation represent the core dynamics in the coping process:

The dynamics and change that characterize coping as a process are not random; they are a function of continuous appraisals and reappraisals of the shifting person-environment relationship. Shifts may be the result of coping efforts directed at changing the environment, or coping directed inward that changes the meaning of the event or increases understanding. They may also be the result of changes in the environment that are independent of the person and his or her coping activity. Regardless of its source, any shift in the person-environment relationship will lead to a reevaluation of what is happening, its significance, and what can be done. The reevaluation process, or reappraisal, in turn influences subsequent coping efforts. The coping process is thus continuously mediated by cognitive reappraisals which [...] differ from appraisals primarily in that they follow and modify an earlier appraisal. (Lazarus/Folkman 1984, 142-143)

2.2.2.1. Variables influencing the coping process: personal and social coping resources

The fact that individual personality characteristics and the social environment play a significant role in the process of coping with traumatic experience/s is widely acknowledged by researchers studying the field of coping. (cf. e.g. Carver 1998, 12f.) This insight has led to the distinction between ‘personal coping resources’ and ‘social coping resources’. The former “include relatively stable personality and cognitive characteristics that shape the appraisal and coping process.” (Holahan et al. 1996, 31) Holahan et al. further elaborate on that by referring to some basic factors regarding the individual's personality that are seen as influential on his or her appraisals and coping efforts. “A variety of dispositional factors that relate broadly to personal control appear especially important as coping resources, including *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1982), *optimism* (Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986), *hardiness* (Kobasa, 1982; Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982), a *sense of coherence* (Antonovsky, 1987), and an *internal locus of control* (Lefcourt, 1992).” (ibid.) A central position is ascribed to the qualities of self-efficacy and optimism:

Perceived self-efficacy promotes more vigorous and persistent efforts to master new tasks. Persons with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to approach challenging situations in an active and persistent style, whereas those with lower levels of self-efficacy are less active or tend to avoid such situations [...]. [...] [O]ptimists rely more on coping processes that are likely to foster favorable outcome expectancies, more persistent coping, and better outcomes [...].⁹ (Holahan et al. 1996, 31)

On the other hand, a good social environment is said to be able to “strengthen coping efforts by providing emotional support that bolsters feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as by providing informational guidance that aids in assessing threat and in planning coping strategies” (ibid.). Pierce et al. (cf. 435f.) state that social support can be seen as resource or as a coping response. In case of the former, “social support encompasses the supportive provisions potentially available from specific relationship partners within the individual's social network; these resources may include the availability of tangible assistance (e.g., money), cognitive guidance (e.g., advice, information), and emotional support (e.g., someone to listen to one's problems).” (Pierce

⁹ Holahan et al. consider “problem-focused coping strategies” to be among those promoting positive outcomes, as opposed to the more unfavorable “emotion-based coping strategies”. (Holahan et al. 1996, 31; cf. part 2.2.2.2. of this thesis).

et al. 1996, 435-436) On the contrary, as a coping response “social support refers to the receipt of supportive behaviors from others in an individual's social network.” (ibid., 436) Studies have shown that a supportive family environment can lead to the individual relying on more favorable coping strategies. (cf. ibid., 31)

There is no doubt that the two categories of coping resources have to be seen as mutually dependent on each other in order to guarantee for a situation of ‘resilience’¹⁰. “Resilience in the face of adversity involves a dynamic interplay between personal and social resources and coping efforts [...]” (Holahan et al. 1996, 30)

2.2.2.2. Classifying and evaluating different coping responses

Even though the range of coping responses seems almost inexhaustible, theorists have attempted to classify them. (cf. Schwarzer/Schwarzer 108) Models have been developed, some of which draw a clear dividing line between what is considered good and bad coping behavior. “The a priori classification of behavior as adaptive or maladaptive has led [...] to differentiate between lower-level defensive behaviors (rigid, unconscious, automatized, pushed from the past, distorting, process-based, [...]) and higher-level coping behaviors (flexible, conscious, purposive, future-oriented, reality-focused, [...]).” (Zeidner/Saklofske 506) Many such binary oppositions have been created and Zeidner and Saklofske refer to the importance of keeping in mind that “[c]oping strategies should not be prejudged as adaptive or maladaptive. Rather, the concern must be for whom and under what circumstances a particular coping mode has adaptive consequences rather than the wholesale categorization of coping as adaptive versus maladaptive. Because coping is a process embedded in context, coping responses may vary across contexts and change over time in response to life conditions, and as a function of the skill with which the coping is applied.” (ibid., 506-507) Despite criticism like this, some basic distinctions have proven tenacious.

The best-known categories to define coping responses may be those established by Folkman and Lazarus, who, in their ‘transactional model’,

¹⁰ The American Psychological Association defines ‘resilience’ as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means 'bouncing back' from difficult experiences.” (APA, <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>, 20/10/2010)

discriminate between *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused* coping. The first is seen as being action centered in the sense that the troubled person-environment relationship is changed by instrumental actions. These actions need not necessarily be successful and may even have detrimental side effects; however, it is the attempt that counts. In contrast, the second kind of coping includes mainly cognitive coping strategies that do not directly change the actual situation, but rather help to assign a new meaning to it. They are not passive, but may require an internal restructuring and may cost considerable effort. (Schwarzer/Schwarzer 1996, 110)

Another attempt at labeling seemingly opposed coping responses is that made by the so-called ‘approach-avoidance models’. Based on the theory of Folkman and Lazarus, they distinguish between ‘approach coping’ and ‘avoidant coping.’ “Responses such as problem-focused coping (also termed behavioral or direct action), cognitive coping (also termed appraisal), and social coping (seeking social support) are all grouped under the rubric of approach coping because they involve active investment of effort in the coping process.” (Wills/Hirky 1996, 281) This is contrasted with ‘avoidant’ or ‘avoidance coping’, which is said to include “responses such as distraction, withdrawal, wishful thinking, or daydreaming, plus a category termed 'emotional discharge' that involves venting of negative emotions on other people.” (ibid., 282) Zeidner and Saklofske point to the ambiguous nature of research findings, stating that some literature “suggests that 'avoidance' coping (e.g., wishful thinking, escapism, overt effort to deny, and self-distraction and mental disengagement) typically works against people rather than to their advantage” (Zeidner/Saklofske 1996, 514), whereas others have shown that “[a]voidance coping may be useful at times because it gives the person a psychological breather and an opportunity to escape from the constant pressures of the stressful situation” (ibid.).

Although they do not want to completely condemn them, Mikulincer and Florian find some faults with those rather rigid categories. As a consequence, they have tried to extend these models and come up with “four higher-order categories of coping” (Mikulincer/Florian 1996, 556). These include ‘problem-focused strategies’, ‘reappraisal’, ‘reorganization’, and ‘avoidance strategies’.

The first category is said to “consist[...] of a vast array of cognitive and behavioral maneuvers that attempt to make changes in the environment that will eliminate the external sources of stress.” (ibid.) Mikulincer and Florian acknowledge the positive research outcomes for this category of coping, but also refer to its potential limitations

“particularly in uncontrollable situations” (ibid.).

The second category, reappraisal, covers “the use of selective attention on positive information, the creation of positive illusions, and the partial denial of negative aspects of reality” (ibid.). That means that the positive aspects of the situation – illusory as they might be – are emphasized by the individual. “Reappraisal’ strategies entail the positive reinterpretation of external events so that inner structures remain basically intact.” (ibid.) The latter distinguishes ‘reappraisal’ from ‘reorganization’, the third in the list of categories established by Mikulincer and Florian, as “[r]eorganization coping implies a series of intrapsychic steps (acceptance, working through the experience, and restructuring of inner structures) that entail better accommodation to reality.” (ibid.) Here the focus lies on ‘accommodation’, which, together with ‘assimilation’ as its counterpart, is mentioned by Schwarzer and Schwarzer as one further conceptual distinction made in many coping theories. While ‘assimilation’ aims “at an alteration of the environment to oneself” (Schwarzer/Schwarzer 1996, 110), ‘accommodation’ represents “an alteration of oneself to the environment” (ibid.). Mikulincer and Florian view “reorganization coping” as “the pursuit of more realistic goals and the adoption of a more appropriate view of oneself.” (Mikulincer/Florian 1996, 556) According to Schwarzer and Schwarzer (cf. 110), coping behavior based on ‘accommodation’, as in the case of Mikulincer and Florian’s ‘reorganization coping’, would involve the creation of meaning. As such, “[i]t may also result in a more flexible and rich self-system, as people become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and renew their sense of self-worth.” (Schwarzer/Schwarzer 1996, 110)

‘Avoidance coping’, as the last of the four categories, is said to consist of two basic groups or strategies. “The first consists of cognitive maneuvers, which attempt to prevent the intrusion of threat-related thoughts into consciousness [...] [, whereas] [t]he second group of strategies reflects an attempt to behaviorally disengage from the stressful situation either by actively withdrawing problem-focused efforts or by consuming and abusing substances like drugs and alcohol.” (Mikulincer/Florian 1996, 556) The authors state that, though avoidant coping might at first be helpful to reduce distress, long-term effects of this coping category have generally proven negative.

With their revision of, or better elaboration on, older coping models, Mikulincer and Florian want to provide a basic tool to define different coping strategies. They argue that an analysis of these would thus be made feasible, as they could be incorporated in one

or more of the “four higher-order categories” described. “For example, seeking support may be related to problem-focused coping (e.g., information seeking), reappraisal (e.g., making social comparisons with other people), and even avoidance (e.g. talking about distracting subjects with others). Similarly, blaming others may be a particular case of reappraisal, whereas blaming oneself may be viewed as an initial step in the reorganization process.” (Mikulincer/Florian 1996, 556) Although this theory might offer some sort of guidance in the vastness of different coping strategies, one should never forget the warning uttered by Zeidner and Saklofske (cf. 506f.) that only a look at the individual's coping resources and unique situational circumstances will offer the basis for understanding his or her coping process.

2.2.3. Herman's ‘Stages of Recovery’

Also the numerous stage models provided by theorists can only be seen as ‘aids to orientation’ and should not be taken at face value. The assumption that the coping process might proceed according to a number of clearly defined consecutive steps is being refuted by the sheer complexity of the coping concept. In her ‘Stages of Recovery’, Judith Herman describes three stages that she considers vital in the individual's process of coping with and recovery from traumatic stress. (cf. Herman 1997, 133-236) As also Herman's model suggests an ‘ideal’ coping process in the form of three successive stages, a healthy amount of criticism concerning its generalizing quality might be appropriate. Comments such as “Because recovery occurs in stages, treatment must be appropriate at each stage” (ibid., 156) should be viewed with great caution. Herman's approach is, however, definitely worth further consideration, as the three broad stages defined by her for the process of recovery undoubtedly prove to be of great relevance to the traumatized individual, even though one might argue that they would rather overlap than strictly follow each other chronologically and that they might vary in importance from case to case. As Herman herself mentions, “[l]ike any abstract concept, these stages of recovery are a convenient fiction, not to be taken too literally. They are an attempt to impose simplicity and order upon a process that is inherently turbulent and complex.” (ibid., 155) As such they work pretty well.

What proves to be of utmost importance for Herman is that, as the trauma has led to the

‘victim’'s “disempowerment and disconnection from others” (Herman 1997, 133), the individual demands back his or her power and newly connects with the people around him or her. “In her renewed connections with other people, the survivor re-creates the psychological faculties that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic experience. These faculties include the basic capacities for trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy.” (ibid.) In the sense of personal empowerment, the task of reforming these relationships and gaining strength has to be given into the hands of the individual affected, as it is important that he or she takes over responsibility, according to the “principle of restoring control to the traumatized person” (ibid., 134). Herman primarily focuses on the relationship between traumatized individual and therapist. However, the situation described can also be found outside the therapist-patient-relationship, as the empathic listener may equally be found in a family member or friend. For the sake of the trauma ‘victim’'s autonomy, the person assisting him or her to re-enter trusting social relationships, should not “assume the role of a rescuer” (ibid., 142), as “the more helpless, dependent, and incompetent the patient feels, generally the worse her symptoms become.” (ibid., 143) It is of equal importance that the person offering assistance to the traumatized individual is aware that he or she might experience the same feelings as the concerned person himself/herself. “Trauma is contagious” (ibid., 140), a matter acknowledged as “traumatic countertransference” (ibid.). The empathic identification on part of the empathic listener might thus also go too far. Also the experience of grief and the feeling of mourning might be transferred. (cf. ibid., 144)

2.2.3.1. The establishment of safety

Judith Herman shows her conviction of the fact 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). As a consequence, the first stage set up by her is concerned with the (re-)establishment of safety. “Trauma robs the victim of a sense of power and control; the guiding principle of recovery is to restore power and control to the survivor. The first task of recovery is to establish the survivor's safety.” (ibid., 159) Establishing safety does not primarily mean to guarantee

a safe environment, but initially focuses on the traumatized individual's sense of control, as “[s]urvivors feel unsafe in their bodies. Their emotions and their thinking feel out of control. They also feel unsafe in relation to other people.” (ibid., 160)

Bryant-Davis also counts ‘safety’ among the basic stepping stones on the path to a healthy life after the experience of trauma and states that the “unsafe feeling may be occasional or constant. It may have lasted for a month after the experience, or it may be years later and the survivor continuous to feel unsafe.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 14) The signs hinting at the feeling of insecurity may include panic attacks, increased body tension, other psychosomatic issues (e.g. troubles sleeping, an upset stomach), the fear of being alone or of being among other people and the feeling that “something bad is going to happen” (ibid., 15). (cf. Bryant-Davis 2005, 14f.) Bryant-Davis agrees with Herman in that she acknowledges the fact that “[i]t is important for the survivor to regain a sense of safety so that anxiety and tension can be reduced and so she can reconnect with the self. [...] It is vital for the survivor to determine possible ways that she or those around her may endanger her well-being.” (ibid., 21) The trauma ‘victim’ might also endanger himself or herself by showing self-injurious behavior, such as drinking too much alcohol or using other drugs, “cutting and burning” (ibid., 21), and attempting suicide. (cf. ibid., 21f.) Herman states that such destructive behavior “serve[s] the function of regulating intolerable feeling states, in the absence of more adaptive self-soothing strategies.” (Herman 1997, 166) Bryant-Davis and Herman further seem to agree on the positive correlation between the traumatic experience and the affected person's low self-esteem and link it to the issue of safety in the way that the traumatized individual “as a result [...] may not believe that she is worthy of protection and safety.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 21) “The patient who is filled with self-loathing may not feel deserving of good treatment.” (Herman 1997, 166)

According to Herman, the first stage comes to an end when “the traumatized person regains some rudimentary sense of safety, or at least predictability, in her life.” (ibid., 174) The trauma ‘victim’ will find it possible to rely on herself or himself again and to trust other people as well. Although there might still be some lack of intimacy in the relationships with others, the feeling of entire vulnerability and isolation will be gone, a sense of control and safety established. (cf. ibid.) There is, however, now the danger that the traumatic experience is not further tackled, as the ‘victim’ simply longs to put it aside. “Denial of reality makes them feel crazy, but acceptance of the full reality seems beyond what any human being can bear.” (ibid., 181) Locking the truth away might

work well for some time, “[b]ut traumatic events ultimately refuse to be put away. At some point the memory of the trauma is bound to return, demanding attention.” (ibid., 174)

2.2.3.2. Remembering and mourning for what is past

Acknowledging this fact is said to lead to the second recovery stage, in which the traumatized individual thoroughly deals with his or her traumatic experience/s, in order to be able to integrate it/them into his or her life story. This is the phase where traumatic memory is meant to be transformed into narrative memory. (cf. Herman 1997, 175) “The therapist plays the role of a witness and ally, in whose presence the survivor can speak of the unspeakable.” (ibid.) Again, this task does not necessarily have to involve a therapist, as the role of the empathic listener can also be taken on by a family member or friend, who assists the trauma ‘victim’ in bringing to consciousness bit by bit what lies deeply buried inside. This unveiling of the past has to happen at a proper pace, in order “to negotiate a safe passage between the twin dangers of constriction and intrusion. Avoiding the traumatic memories leads to stagnation in the recovery process, while approaching them too precipitately leads to a fruitless and damaging reliving of the trauma.” (ibid., 176) Herman emphasizes the fact that the person's life before his or her traumatic experience/s has to be considered as well, as this is needed to “re-create the flow' of the patient's life and restore a sense of continuity with the past.” (ibid.) This requires the re-creation of a context, in which the trauma makes sense, in which the person can make meaning of it.

There is no doubt that also the traumatized person's response to the event/s has to be tackled, as understanding the trauma is only possible when he or she is aware of his/her feelings towards to it. (cf. ibid., 177) According to Herman, the first attempts at narrating the entire story – at putting the unspeakable into words – might be clumsy. “Given the 'iconic', visual nature of traumatic memories, creating pictures may represent the most effective initial approach to these 'indelible images.’” (ibid.) The process of closing the gaps and making sense out of what happened is said to go hand in hand with a potential revision of the affected individual's belief system, often leading to conflicts with the people surrounding him or her. (cf. ibid., 178) As claimed by Herman, it is not the most difficult task to “[b]reak[...] through the barriers of amnesia” (ibid., 184); it

might only take a little clue relating to the person's past to trigger the horror. “[T]he patient may explore the past by viewing photographs, constructing a family tree, or visiting the site of childhood experiences.” (ibid., 185) What proves truly tough is the fruitful integration of the event/s, in order to come up with the individual's coherent and complete – and completely communicable – life story. Sometimes the trauma ‘victims’ seem not to want to let go of intrusive symptoms, as they have been given some meaning and fulfill a certain function. They “may be a symbolic means of keeping faith with a lost person, a substitute of mourning, or an expression of unresolved guilt.” (ibid., 184)

This relates to the other part of Herman's second stage – the importance of mourning. Apparently grieving is something that gives many people the creeps. As a consequence, its healing capacity is often overlooked. “Trauma and change bring loss. Although uncomfortable and at times, even unbearable, the pain of loss can be one way to acknowledge and respect what you value. Pain confirms that what was lost was important to you and mattered. Respecting your feelings means that you have value, you matter, and continue to matter, even through loss.” (Rosenbloom/Williams 1999, 316-317) Consciously admitting these losses is what comes first in the process of grieving. “Mourning is experiencing grief for and recognizing the losses one has endured. People mourn in different ways. It requires the capacity to sit with one's feelings of sadness. This begins with an acceptance of the fact that there have been losses.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 94) Losses might include the person's “sense of safety [...] [,] [c]ontrol over her body [...] [,] [h]er health [...] [,] trust [...] [,] sense of power [...] [,] [a] loved one's life” (ibid.) among others.

The importance of this phase equals the threat that it represents for the traumatized individual. (cf. Herman 1997, 188) What seems to be at the center of that horror, is the fear of being soaked into an uncontrollable and invincible torrent of emotions. Bryant-Davis agrees with Herman on the fact that “[i]t is healthy to mourn and to give the survivor space for grief. If the survivor alternates between numbness and intense overwhelming emotion, he will need to work on moderation. Moderation does not mean I turn off my feelings and remain numb. It means I allow myself to feel a range of emotions, and I also learn strategies to soothe and calm myself after I feel the sorrow.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 95) Some might not only fear to be overwhelmed by their emotions, but seem to be humiliated by accepting the process of mourning. “In this case

it is important to reframe the patient's mourning as an act of courage rather than humiliation.” (Herman 1997, 188) Mourning is not a sign of weakness, but shows the traumatized person's strength to openly deal with what has happened; to face the truth and lift the veil from a past that is all but joyful, in order to set free the whole range of emotions it entails. The necessity of taking control of one's own recovery accompanies that task (cf. *ibid.*, 192), as well as the importance of feeling for and taking responsibility for others, especially for those that are weaker than oneself. “The patient's own capacity to feel compassion for animals or children, even at a distance, may be the fragile beginning of compassion for herself.” (*ibid.*, 194) Although the stage of mourning might appear to last for an eternity, the vividness of re-lived emotions will gradually subside and the trauma will lose its outstanding importance in the individuals' life story. “At first these thoughts may seem almost heretical. The survivor may wonder how she can possibly give due respect to the horror she has endured if she no longer devotes her life to remembrance and mourning.” (*ibid.*, 195) There is no doubt that reconstructing the trauma will never be completed, as parts of it might again and again be triggered and brought back into the present. However, when the story is successfully told, the traumatic experience is consciously acknowledged as a part of the past. This is seen by Herman as the end of stage number two. “At this point, the survivor faces the tasks of rebuilding her life in the present and pursuing her aspirations for the future.” (*ibid.*)

2.2.3.3. Reclaiming one's world

This third stage described by Herman is entirely concerned with the coping individual's task of developing “a new self” (Herman 1997, 196). It is future-centered and includes the development of new relationships as well as that of a new faith. “She can recover some of her aspirations from the time before the trauma, or perhaps for the first time she can discover her own ambitions.” (*ibid.*, 197) This is also the stage at which the person recognizes that she or he has become a survivor and consciously begins “to take concrete steps” (*ibid.*) to fully overcome the ‘victim’ status within which she or he was trapped. Reliving the traumatic experience/s is still involved at that level of recovery, however, more often conscious attempts to get hold of the past are now risked. The person might willingly confront himself or herself with the fears linked to the traumatic

experience/s. That this action is consciously taken distinguishes it in a way from the pure re-enactment of trauma. “On one level, the choice to expose oneself to danger can be understood as yet another reenactment of trauma. Like reenactment, this choice is an attempt to master the traumatic experience; unlike reenactment, however, it is undertaken consciously, in a planned and methodical manner” (ibid.).

This simple statement - 'I know I have myself' – could stand as the emblem of the third and final stage of recovery. The survivor no longer feels possessed by her traumatic past; she is in possession of herself. She has some understanding of the person she used to be and of the damage done to that person by the traumatic event. Her task now is to become the person she wants to be. In the process she draws upon those aspects of herself that she most values from the time before the trauma, from the experience of the trauma itself, and from the period of recovery. Integrating all of these elements, she creates a new self, both ideally and in actuality. (Herman 1997, 202)

The individual enters into a process of reconciliation with himself/herself as well as with his/her social environment. On the personal level, the person begins to form realistic wishes, hopes and dreams and also tries to take concrete action in order to make them real. They might as well find some positive aspects in having dealt with the trauma, value their newly gained strength stemming from coping with it and admire their abilities to cope. “For example, a survivor who used dissociation to cope with terror and helplessness may begin to marvel at this extraordinary capacity of the mind.” (ibid., 204)

As concerns the broader level of reconnection with his/her social environment, the individual is able to act on the basis of his/her newly found sense of trust and thus to engage in forming more intimate relationships. “Because the survivor is focusing on issues of identity and intimacy, she often feels at this stage as though she is in a second adolescence.” (ibid., 205) Herman considers that an explanation for the “[a]dolescent styles of coping” (ibid.) that are shown by some persons throughout that stage, making them behave like teenagers sometimes. This is, however, only one possible way of coping for the trauma survivor. Others might find new meaning in the form of social action. “[A] significant minority [...] feel called upon to engage in a wider world. These survivors recognize a political or religious dimension in their misfortune and discover that they can transform the meaning of their personal tragedy by making it the basis for social action. [...] The trauma is redeemed only when it becomes the source of a survivor mission.” (ibid., 207) Deciding on following such a survivor mission proves to be a very demanding task as it “calls upon the survivor's most mature and adaptive

coping strategies of patience, anticipation, altruism, and humor.” (ibid.) Apart from the various forms this action can take, there is one aspect that applies to all of them. It is the “reciprocal connection” (ibid., 208) with other people that the survivor establishes and which gives him or her the feeling of being of use. “In taking care of others, survivors feel recognized, loved, and cared for themselves.” (ibid., 209)

2.2.4. Coping – Thriving – PTG: more than just bouncing back

“[H]ow some persons cope successfully with negative events, has existed outside [the] mainstream disease-oriented framework.” (Tedeschi et al. 1998, 1) Tedeschi et al. regret the fact that situations of positive outcome after adversities are widely ignored in mainstream literature belonging to the field of psychology and psychiatry. There is often no mention of those “people who not only bounce back from trauma, but use it as a springboard to further individual development or growth, and the development of more humane social behaviors and social organization.” (ibid.) The emphasis is mostly put on curing the symptoms of trauma ‘victims’, even though there can be achieved a lot more. “Symptom reduction and elimination is important for trauma recovery, but thriving necessitates a healing of one’s sense of self, including an awareness of one’s strengths and skills.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 6)

‘Post-traumatic growth’ (PTG) is considered the antithesis to post-traumatic stress disorder and the events triggering it off are said to be of almost ‘seismic quality’. The experiences might involve severe losses, such as the bereavement of loved ones and losing certain roles or abilities. “In the face of these losses and the confusion they cause, some people rebuild a way of life that they experience as superior to their old one in important ways.” (Tedeschi et al. 1998, 2) They might develop qualities they would have never expected in them. This psychological thriving can lead to changes in different areas. Carver mentions some possible gain with regard to three different areas: skills and knowledge, confidence and interpersonal relations. (cf. Carver 1998, 5-6) People who have survived their trauma might have developed new skills and knowledge that can be used in future states of adversity. Such skills may include handling external matters (e.g. dealing with bureaucracies) or internal ones (e.g. affect management). A profound knowledge concerning resources that can be used when tackling specific problems might also have been created. All this leads to an enhanced flexibility; people

will be more flexible when confronted with tough situations in the future. ‘Confidence’ is said to be closely linked to the newly acquired skills and knowledge, as they might create a feeling of mastery and powerfulness in the person in question. It can, however, also stem from simply having survived the adverse situation. “Regardless of its source, confidence can be a critically important variable in keeping the person engaged in the effort to cope” (ibid., 5) There might have also been positive changes regarding the person's social relations and these might have led to “an enhanced sense of security in relationships” (ibid., 6) in general. Finally, thriving can involve a change in the person's general outlook on life, in setting priorities and dealing with new challenges. (cf. ibid., 4) However, not all people might be able to experience PTG, as whether a person thrives or not is said to again depend to some extent on personality variables (e.g. optimism, coping responses (problem-focused coping)) and contextual variables (e.g. given resources of social support, independence (no excessive external control – self-determination)). (cf. ibid., 12f.)

2.3. Coping and Literature

Trauma possesses the power to shatter a person's life story and with it his or her identity structure. Striving for coherence and determined to engage in a process of making meaning, we continuously try preserve the wholeness of our “life narrative” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 2). According to Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela “[w]e are the narrators of our life stories, and we also play the part of the main character in them – therefore our stories are 'autobiographies’” (ibid.). Narrating our life story is what leads to the formation of our personal identity. The process of narrating an individual life story is, however, not carried out in isolation, as our story is embedded in numerous other stories, like that of the country we live in or the family we belong to. It also does not merely take place in the present, but involves the past and envisions a possible future.

Our whole life narrative – like our identity – is to a great extent shaped by history. “Die Identität einer Nation sowie die eines Individuums sind stark an die Vergangenheit gebunden. Die Vergangenheit einer Nation ist dabei ebenso wichtig wie die individuelle Lebensgeschichte des Einzelnen.” (Drawe 2007, 30) In order to guarantee “inner wholeness” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 4) and to succeed in making

meaning it is vital to establish a coherent pattern of past, present and potential future. This means that events from the past have to be successfully integrated into the life story of the individual (as well as in the story of a nation, community or family). On the other hand, it has to be acknowledged that it is never possible to completely understand our stories. “[A] full understanding will [...] elude us. [...] [N]arrating our lives does not mean to come to a full understanding of life, but rather to strive towards a meaningful existence and to live the best of possible lives.” (ibid., 3) This is what is also conveyed by Derrida's concept of ‘différance’, which points to the fact that complete meaning forever evades us. (cf. Mengel 2009, 4)

Whereas narrating our stories is aimed at preserving and creating ‘inner wholeness’, trauma proves to be a threat to it. “The essence of psychological trauma is loss: loss of language, meaning, order, and sense of continuity. Trauma is a shattering of the basic organising principles necessary to construct meaningful narratives about ourselves, others, and our environment. [...] Trauma [...] is a disruption of the narrative-building function of the self.” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 39) Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela use the metaphor of the earthquake to illustrate what trauma does to the individual's life narrative. It is basically said to create a breach between the time before the traumatic experience/s and the time following after it/them, thus leaving an abyss which the individual is unable to bridge. (cf. ibid., 6) Central to the matter is the ‘victim’'s incapability to verbalize what happened.

Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela refer to Charlotte Delbo's differentiation between ‘intellectual/external memory’ and ‘deep memory’. Whereas the first can be put into words, the second proves to escape verbal expression. Deep memory cannot be “recall[ed] [...] in everyday language, because the language is insufficient.” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 6) Trauma ‘victims’ lack the means to fully integrate their experience/s into their life narrative, to make it whole again, because they lack the means to deal with the ‘unspeakable’. Nevertheless, they need the experience/s to be part of their ‘autobiographical memory’, to re-write their life narrative. For this, it is important that they gain a voice and find the right words for what they fail to consciously express. “The significance of narrative lies not simply in remembering trauma, but in its transformation through language.” (ibid., 25) The unspeakable has to be told in a coherent way – putting the fragments, the bits and pieces, together. This can, however, only succeed if there is also someone who carefully listens to what is told. “Psychologists writing about trauma stress the importance of the relational aspect of

narrative: in order for the trauma narrative to heal, one's trauma narrative has to be received by an empathic listener. [...] The significance of the empathic listener for the trauma narrative is the possibility created for the victim of trauma to externalise the traumatic event.” (ibid., 27) Only then “the process of working through and healing the wounds of trauma” (ibid., 41) will be possible.

Re-writing the life narrative for the sake of wholeness is not only required for one's own well-being, but also for that of those who might be affected by it, as “in an ever-spreading influence [...] my narrative spreads further, from those in contact with me to those in contact with them, in a never-ending movement.” (ibid., 5) The poison of trauma does not stop at the ‘victim’ who directly experienced the traumatic event/s; “unacknowledged trauma is often passed on from one generation to the next, from victims to their descendants” (ibid., 32). As long as it is not woven smoothly into the story, as long as there is no certainty, no meaning, the negative effects of trauma will show again and again. As long as there is no “‘closure’ in one's memory” (ibid., 45), the past will be uncannily disturbing.

2.3.1. Re-writing ‘life narratives’

McLeod refers to “therapy as a form of storytelling” (McLeod 2006, 23) – in which an empathic listener is ‘officially’ chosen (accepted by society) in order to attend to an individual's life narrative – and points at what gives storytelling its potential to heal. As one of its distinctive qualities, he mentions its sequentiality, the “sense of ‘nextness’” (ibid., 34), which guarantees that past, present and future are effectively connected with each other. “[E]ach bit of the story, each segment of action or feeling, somehow points toward an emerging future. A sense of the history is also conveyed through any story. The sequentiality of the story implies a past that is becoming transformed into a future.” (ibid.) It is exactly this continuity that has been destroyed by the trauma and which the ‘victim’ needs to re-build. This can be done by relating the life story to the empathic listener, who – due to another “feature of storytelling” (ibid., 33) – can by no means be considered inactive. “The existence of ambiguity as a fundamental property of stories has the effect of forcing the reader or listener to engage in an active process of meaning-making whenever a story is offered. There can be no definitive ‘reading’ of a story. Different audiences will interpret a story differently according to their interests and

point of view.” (ibid., 36) The mention of ‘the reader’ shows that storytelling in its written form is very similar. According to McLeod, “therapy as a form of storytelling” (ibid., 23) has a lot in common with the narrative form of the novel.

Like novels, therapy stories are often concerned with the attempts of a singular hero/self to find meaning and fulfilment in the face of restrictive social conditions. Novels and therapy stories are also typically constructed around a linear time-frame, making connections between past and present within the span of an individual life. Novels, like therapy sessions, are like little cultural modules that can be purchased and slotted into a life for some period of time, then discarded. Finally, the novelist, like the therapist, is in the position of a privileged narrator, enjoying an omniscient ‘God’s eye’ view of events. (McLeod 2006, 23)

Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela state that modern novels are to some extent open to interpretation and in that way resemble traumatic stories themselves, as they both evade final meaning. (cf. Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 66)

The modern novel often contains ambivalences, aporias and open endings; it lacks final certainties – and that makes it an extremely fitting vehicle for conveying the enigmatic experience of trauma. A huge trauma stimulates a response from authors, and a seemingly endless flow of literary narratives usually follows in its wake. There is never a final interpretation of any of these literary narratives – new readers continually find new meanings in them, and one and the same reader finds different meanings in the same narrative at different stages of her life. The story of literary narratives about trauma is a story with an open end. (ibid.)

For these reasons the novel can also be considered as endowed with the potential to heal, to help bridging the abyss that the trauma has left. For the writer, who raises his or her ‘voice’ and relates his or her story to the audience, the creative process might constitute an act of *poiesis*¹¹, leading to the (re-)constitution of self. (cf. Jaeggi 2005, 224f.) “Trauma may be a stimulus for the creation of art” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 9) and “does often lead to the expression and narration of pain.” (ibid., 10) In this case the reading audience resembles the ‘empathic listener’. On the other hand, “[s]tories move people. [...] [R]eading a novel, [...] may result in having

¹¹ Especially interesting in this context is Heidegger’s modification of Aristotle’s concept of ‘poiesis’ and the notion of ‘enframing’ and ‘dwelling’ he connects with it. Heidegger “problematizes the modern conquering of place by time, and the erosion of a people’s authentic sense of Being-in-the-World” (Young 2002, 192). As a consequence we do not feel truly ‘at home’ anymore. We do not show our ‘true nature’. “With *poiesis*, we are ‘making’ a World by allowing it to rise up to us and be ‘unhidden’. *Poiesis* as language, in Heidegger’s [...] words, is ‘a naming of being ... not just any saying, but that whereby everything steps into the open, which we can then talk about in everyday conversation’. Of course, as ‘building’, such poetry can be architecture, sculpture, or painting; each may ‘make’ the World for us” (ibid., 197). “[*P*]oiesis helps us to become ‘at home’ in the world.” (ibid., 199)

feelings that were not in awareness before that particular story was told. From an experiential perspective, the audience for such a story will engage in the meaning of the story by allowing the themes or images of the narrative to resonate with appropriate areas of inner feeling.” (McLeod 2006, 43) Thus a process of identification with characters and their feelings in certain situations is triggered on the part of the reader. This might encourage the reader to start consciously reflecting on his or her own life story. For example, a character going through the stage of active mourning might evoke feelings of grief in the person in question, which represents a vital step towards cathartic closure. “The process of grieving presents us with a reflective ability to put the past in its proper place, and to move on.” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 45) The reader might also learn that he or she is not the only one who has to cope with symptoms of post-traumatic stress and therefore be less ashamed of the way he or she feels and behaves. He or she might also see that it is possible to find the words to express the adversities experienced. “When one struggles with a shattered life story, literary narratives can help to find words for one's trauma.” (ibid., 10)

Literary narratives present their readers with models of identities and ways of coping to which they might orient themselves. “In the imagining of new ways of survival and in the rewriting of identities, the literary writer is often a pioneer; and the traumatised reader, suffering from a shattered identity, may find guidance in the literary narrative.” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 61) In case of the novel, the “polyphony of voices [...] leaves the reader with a wide variety of possible identifications” (ibid., 60) and the impression that there is not just one single way to complete his/her life narrative.

2.2.5. Coping with Trauma in contemporary South African literature

What is possible at the micro level of the individual trauma ‘victim’ certainly also works at the macro level of a community or society. Important for both is the (re-)creation of continuity by closing the gap between the time before the traumatic event/s and the time after it/them and widening the scope for identity formation. “Identitäten, sei es auf der sehr persönlichen Ebene oder auf der höchsten nationalen Ebene, funktionieren [...] im Grunde auf sehr ähnliche Weise: Gekennzeichnet sind sie von dem Wunsch nach einer kohärenten Geschichte” (Drawe 2007, 9).

In South Africa the apartheid system with all its atrocities can be seen as a national trauma that had the power to numb the whole society. “Für den südafrikanischen Kontext bedeutet der Zusammenhang zwischen Vergangenheit und Identität Folgendes: Zur Zeit der Apartheid wurde eine Politik der Rassentrennung verfolgt, das heißt, die Vergangenheit der dominierenden Macht musste in den Vordergrund gerückt werden” (Drawe 2007, 34). The regime significantly narrowed the scope for identity formation and prescribed the roles that the public had to take on. As a consequence, numerous voices were oppressed, silenced. Only after the fall of apartheid and with the establishment of the TRC (‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’), broad social attempts to unveil the various pasts of South Africa were made.

Das demokratische Südafrika hat in seiner Interim-Verfassung von 1995 festgelegt, dass sich eine besondere Kommission um die Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit kümmern sollte, nämlich die TRC [...]. Dieses Instrumentarium zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass sich bei der Kommission private und offizielle Erinnerung überschneiden. [...] Die Aufgabe der TRC besteht darin, durch Anhörungen der verschiedenen Gruppen, Täter und Opfer, die Ereignisse der Vergangenheit zu beleuchten [...], also das Schweigen über Folter, Misshandlungen und Mord zu brechen. (ibid., 38-39)

In these testimonies power has been given to those who had been powerless; a voice has been gained by those who had been silenced. Suddenly the traumatic experiences were officially heard and acknowledged. Herman mentions “the universality of testimony as a ritual of healing” (Herman 1997, 181) and points out that “[i]n the absence of a socially meaningful form of testimony, many traumatized people choose to keep their symptoms.” (ibid., 184) Contemporary South African literature is said to have equally contributed to turning the traumatic experiences of the past into testimonies, with “South African writers [...] act[ing] almost as their own Truth and Reconciliation Commission” (Van der Merwe/Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 61). As Drawe puts it: “[E]s [ist][...] insbesondere interessant zu beobachten, welche anderen Identitäten in der Literatur nach der Apartheid frei gelegt und durchgespielt werden.” (Drawe 2007, 2)

Not only is the temporal abyss left by the trauma bridged in the novels, there is also the attempt to close the breach between the individual and the community. South Africa's experience of apartheid rule has shown how “[t]raumatic events [...] shatter the sense of connection between individual and community, creating a crisis of faith.” (Herman 1997, 55) Addressing the close connection of memory, identity and narrative in the contemporary South African novel, Drawe refers to the special relation of the national

level and the personal level (of the protagonists). The macrocosm (the 'shared' past) and the microcosm (the life story of the individual) are thoroughly interwoven. Both the 'broader' past (the nation's past) and the past of the individual characters have a bearing on what is going on in the present. As much as the individuals' struggles for the sake of their self and of the wholeness of their life narrative and identity are depicted, the nation as a larger construct is shown to undergo a process of re-construction and re-orientation. “Die Romane beziehen sich nicht nur auf die Geschichtsschreibung der Vergangenheit und damit verbunden die Identitätsmöglichkeiten zur Zeit der Apartheid. [...] Auf der nationalen Ebene erfolgt eine Neuorientierung im Bezug auf die Vergangenheit und die 'Identität' des Staates, die wiederum mit der Hervorhebung bestimmter Momente der Geschichte als Projektionsfläche für das Wir-Gefühl einer Nation einhergeht.” (Drawe 2007, 51)

The novels show the efforts of individuals coping with their own personal traumas, which are embedded in the broader context of the nation's trauma. Attempts and possibilities of coping, of successfully integrating the past into the narrative/s of the nation, communities, individuals are illustrated in a way that makes them trigger a process of identification and evoke hope in the readers.

3. Patricia Schonstein's *A Quilt of Dreams*

3.1. Transgressing time and space: the multiple layers of traumatization in *A Quilt of Dreams*

In *A Quilt of Dreams* by Patricia Schonstein, the reader is presented with a tight net of multiple traumata, on the macro level of the nation state as well as on the micro level of the individual characters and their families. Trauma is depicted as a phenomenon that is equally timeless and impossible to get hold of, shown to be able to subtly cross the boundaries of both time and space. As such, it resembles that of evil, which in the book is endowed with a cyclic quality and also bound to neither place nor time. Different perspectives – different characters' (life) stories told in the seven parts the novel is divided into – are woven together, the main story line centering on Reuben, who is equally haunted by the historical ghosts of his family's past and entangled in the tragedies of his own life in apartheid and transitional South Africa.

3.1.1. The never-ending cycle of evil: from Nazi Germany to South African apartheid system

“Gershon had been driven from his home by the Nazi engineers of racial intolerance, only to arrive at a place of mirrors in which would be reflected much of the meanness of human spirit he had fled from.” (QoD 65) The nightmare of multiple traumata of Reuben Cohen van Tonder's family begins with his grandfather Gershon's experiences in Nazi Germany, who, aged thirty-eight and an observant Jew, has to watch his father die in the horrors of Kristallnacht, in Dresden on 9th to 10th November 1938, and – after being instructed by him to do so – escapes to South Africa, only to find himself entwined by a new ready-made net of hatred and cruelty. The evil evoked by the human spirit is a phenomenon so omnipresent that Gershon is directly thrown into another scenery dominated by ethnical segregation and political persecution.

The evil that is portrayed in *A Quilt of Dreams* appears to be close to what Hannah Arendt describes in her essay on the ‘banality of evil’. (cf. Henke 2001) Jennifer L. Geddes points to Arendt's theory of the amorphous and ever-changing nature of ‘evil’, which underlines the fact that a “new form of evil” (Geddes 2003, 108) could be found in Nazi Germany – one that “was made possible by the emergence of the modern,

bureaucratic state” (ibid.) – and gives emphasis to the role of institutions socializing people and helping to spread evil among them. According to Geddes, it is of utmost importance that “evil” or the perpetrators of evil do not get mythologized.

People speak of evil geniuses or demonic monsters, as if there is an extraordinary quality to those who do evil (Shattuck 1996). Evil takes on a mythical quality in these ways of speaking, making it less a problem for humanity than a mysterious aberration. The evildoer who is a monster is removed from us, placed in a category outside of the human [...]. Thinking of those who do evil as monsters renders them as dissimilar from us as possible. But as Arendt shows us, and as much research on the perpetrators of the Holocaust has revealed, thoughtless bureaucrats and 'ordinary people' were responsible for extreme cruelty and inflicted evil of the sort it is hard even to imagine [...].” (ibid., 105-106)

Mythologizing ‘evil’ consequently means establishing it as a category which could never contain anything caused by human activities, but only deeds carried out by monsters and demons. Arendt, however, points to the fact that ‘evil’ – as it exists today and as it showed in Nazi Germany – was committed by ‘ordinary’ people that mostly “displayed little of the demonic intelligence associated with 'moral monsters' or 'evil geniuses'.” (ibid., 108) This, of course, does not banalize ‘evil’ itself in any way, but makes it even “more horrifying” (ibid., 107). As Geddes shows, Arendt's words neither intend to downplay the crimes committed nor try to free the perpetrators from their guilt. What is emphasized is the highly dangerous and “strange interdependence of thoughtlessness and evil” (ibid., 108). Blindly following the authority's orders, ordinary people degenerated into evil puppets, whose strings were held so tightly and were so rigidly interwoven with other fellow puppets' strings that autonomous, considered moves became almost impossible. ‘Evil’ reigns among the ordinary, can be triggered anywhere at any time and – once released – spreads radically, growing more and more potent, consuming the masses and thus creating an effect that compares to a chain reaction. There is no doubt that – despite these infectious dynamics – the “individual actors were responsible for the acts they committed.” (ibid.) The amorphous character of ‘evil’, letting it appear in various – often completely unknown and unexpected – disguises, is also said to make it less recognizable to the ordinary mind. “Implicit in this idea is the suggestion that evil has many forms, that these forms may change over time, and that historical/sociological contexts may produce new forms of evil and evildoers. In other words, Arendt's thesis points to an understanding of evil as particular, evolving, and nonessentialist.” (ibid., 109) In Nazi Germany, propaganda messages were so

promising (and therefore easily accepted and eagerly supported by the masses) that their true evil essence came to the fore only much later. Patricia Schonstein's portrayal of the virgin bomber, who among other fellow puppets was responsible for the cruel deeds in the Dresden bombing and “who shared with me the nightmares and grief he suffered in old age for the part he played [...] in the destruction of the city and the death of so many of its inhabitants” (QoD, Acknowledgements), perfectly underlines Arendt's thesis. True consciousness and conscience only show much later, when time is ripe and light is slowly shed on the atrocities buried in the past.

In *A Quilt of Dreams* a line is drawn between Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa, the latter serving as an example for the fact that ‘evil’ will never recede and can be triggered and spread among the ordinary masses anywhere at any time. When “Hitler and his men prised open and lifted the lid of the chest that held all things evil” (QoD, 62), “a [human] horde [...] swept through the streets like a many-limbed, slathering demon, leaving a swathe of destruction in its wake” (ibid., 63). ‘Evil’ is set free among ordinary humans “baying like all the devils of hell at this apocryphal orgy.” (ibid.) There is no devil that rages outside humankind; humankind is the place where ‘de-evil’ resides, where it slumbers until it is evoked to rampage freely.

In a way, ‘evil’ and war are portrayed as something *ludicrous* – a word Arendt also uses to describe the dilemma of the sheer horrors committed and the actual ordinariness and simple-mindedness of men responsible for them (cf. Geddes 2003, 108) – and due to their destructiveness as something directly opposed to the power and dynamics of art. “[O]n the night 13 February 1945” (QoD, 87), the day of the aerial bombing of Dresden, “Lily Rosenberg, the object of Gershon's first feelings of love” (ibid.), who left Gershon for a paragon of Aryan masculinity, dies when in a circus tent watching a circus performance. This setting of laughter and joy could not be more distinct from the atrocities war entails. “As the first bombs exploded, the clown ran out from the circus tent. He shouted upward.” (ibid., 89) – to no avail, for “there are certain words that mean nothing to the architects of war: Rococo. Baroque. Romanesque. Byzantine. Gothic. These are just five of them.” (ibid.) The masters of war show neither respect nor understanding for the beauty of art. “The master bomber, he who flew in first and low, he who oversaw, was not a master of literature, nor one of art and fine music, nor even was he master of his own soul. He forsook true mastery that night.” (ibid.) He has sold

his soul to the system of cruelty and hatred and “[e]ven the angels, [...] those commissioned to care for human souls” (ibid., 90) had no chance, “even they were consumed” (ibid.) by a system strikingly similar to the one putting down roots in South Africa.

In South Africa, after the war, the Nationalist Party dislodged Jan Smut's United Party and set a table for the Devil's Banquet. Here supped the dignitaries of evil, who prepared an extraordinary template of racial division, one that was impressed by Nazi dominion; one that would engender ruthless and cruel policies to ensure white supremacy for decades to come; one whose very name, apartheid, would become synonymous with the worst of human endeavours. (ibid., 96)

Travelling from one site of the dark abyss of the human soul to the next, Gershon refuses to accept the fact that all the bad has really happened to him, unwilling to believe that his old life has really been taken away from him, desperately searching for some familiarities in the unknown vastness of his future home country. “[H]e listened for voices in the wind. He searched for his father's face in deep water, screwing up his eyes to see better whether on the far horizon his figure was there beckoning him back home, telling him it had all been a bad dream.” (QoD, 66)

Even though Gershon finds refuge in *Hope* Street in Grahamstown, hope seems to be the last thing he envisions. The only way he believes to be able to live on is by cladding the atrocities he experienced in silence. On the way to his aunt Pearl's home, he finds himself in a daze, unconscious of the outside world flying by, unaware of the actual beauty and richness the landscape provides. “[H]e saw nothing of the unfolding landscape because his focus was inward, afraid and lonely. He paid no attention to the richly red flowers of proud-standing aloes that filled the moving background.” (ibid.) “He did not respond to”, “[h]e did not notice” (ibid.) anything. With “his focus [...] inward, afraid and lonely” (ibid., 66), he tries to hold his feelings tight, only to let them come to the fore once, when breaking down crying after having arrived at his aunt's house. Gershon fears to have insufficient control over his emotions, as triggers are to be found everywhere. “Triggers such as certain people, places, and things may remind the survivor of the trauma [...] [and] elicit automatic negative thoughts and feelings.” (Bryant-Davis, 78) For this reason, Gershon

realized that the only way he could carry on living and conversing with others would be to close up his past for ever. From that first morning in Auntie Pearl's guestroom Gershon kept his horror tightly sealed in his heart, where it would remain, surfacing only in

nightmares that would plague him periodically, in the dark hours before dawn, for the rest of his life. (QoD, 68)

These intrusions will follow Gershon until his last breath, recurring mostly in the form of horrible nightmares. In the case of intrusive thoughts “[t]he nightmares may be of the actual incident or of a similar incident, or the survivor may not remember the nightmares but wake up feeling afraid and having night sweats.” (Bryant-Davis, 78) Gershon remembers his very well, re-living his memories “of Dresden fragmented into glittering glass” (QoD, 134) on a regular basis “during the dark hours before dawn” (ibid., 133), finding himself on constant alert. “To protect himself from it, he slept with his coats on, the thin one first and the trench coat on top. He wore his boots to bed and wrapped a small old blanket around his head and mouth. He lay very still, ready to leap up at any minute through the long, black night.” (ibid.) Attempts to avoid these intrusive thoughts largely prove to be in vain. Nevertheless, Gershon tries to ignore them, as does his future wife Rosa, to whom he is introduced by his aunt, who has promised to take care of him and not to talk to him about any of the atrocities that have happened. “Like Gershon, she [=Rosa] was in her middle years and still a virgin, though once someone had touched her body and, she believed spoilt her virtue.” (QoD, 70)

Rosa, like Gershon, has to deal with numerous traumatic experiences. Rejected from the very start – mostly due to her congenital abnormality, a hare lip, which has troubled her ever since she was born –, she has come to live with “the spinster Pearl Kulber in Grahamstown” (ibid., 73). Though nobody had thought that she would ever be able to lead a ‘normal’ life, let alone find a husband, due to her defect, Rosa “never lost the strong and distinctive core of a survivor” (ibid., 73-74) and marries Gershon, before moving in with him into a house in George Street. Their engagement is, however, not really rooted in mutual adoration. “She [Rosa] accepted him [Gershon] because he seemed not to notice that she had a disfigured lip, or, if he did, it did not repulse him as it did all other men. She knew he did not love her, as she did not love him [...]” (ibid., 71)

3.1.2. Passing on the ghosts of the past: trauma as intergenerational phenomenon

The two of them rely on each other; they need each other to cope, floating together in the sea of silent suffering. A silence which proves to be rather contra-productive, as their memories are forced into the realm of the subconscious mind, where they slumber – seemingly fallen into oblivion – only to resurface again, gaining momentum and intrusively defying control from the person suffering. Gershon and Rosa Cohen's coping style is undoubtedly avoidant, with a clear focus on distraction and withdrawal responses. “Avoidance of memory is blocking the recall of traumatic events. It may be a conscious decision on the survivor's part, or she may want to remember but have difficulty doing so. If the survivor has been trying to avoid the memories, she may avoid certain things.” (Bryant-Davis, 79) Gershon and Rosa seek distraction from their horrors by means of their work in their “trading store in the black location.” (QoD, 74) After “their shop was looted and a petrol bomb thrown in [...] [and] [i]t burst into flames” (ibid., 132), Gershon's intrusions get worse. “Without the shop to distract and tire him, Gershon found his recurring nightmare preyed on him more frequently” (ibid., 133); a nightmare revolving around the same Dresden horrors again and again.

Even though they suffer unbearable pain, Rosa and Gershon never give voice to the horrors they keep hidden inside; they never talk about what has happened to them. As much as they need each other to go on leading their lives, as little have they ever attempted to work through their personal disasters and to calm the ghosts of their past. Their somehow sociophobic tendencies, another product left behind by their traumatizing experiences, additionally prevent them from seeking help within the community.

There seems to be a spark of hope arising with the birth of their daughter Lilianna, named after Gershon's first love in Dresden¹², who becomes their center of attention, their deified princess. Lilies, representing Lilianna, are being planted in the garden and spread in the form of wallpapers along the wall. (cf. QoD, 263) Flooded with love and care – and almost suffocated by parental overprotectiveness (cf. ibid., 264) – Lilianna falls (more or less unluckily) in love with still married Jacobus van Tonder and gives

¹² Both study art, which is also very interesting, especially considering the explicitly emphasized binary opposition of ‘art’ and ‘evil’.

birth to Reuben, only to commit suicide shortly after. The ghosts of Gershon and Rosa's past have not spared her. Lilianna's suicide can be considered a result of various factors, among them her unlucky love relationship with Jacobus, her personality traits as well as the suppressed atrocities which have haunted the family and their inappropriate ways to cope with them.

In a way Gershon and Rosa's unresolved traumata have led to their next traumatizing experience, the death of their beloved daughter, which seems to lead to their total decay. Again it is covered in silence – a silence which has already affected Lilianna and will now spread on to Reuben, passing the unspoken horrors on to him and thus also being responsible for his pain and misery.

3.2. Maladaptive coping in *A Quilt of Dreams*

As a consequence, Reuben is branded from the very start and – being presented with the coping mechanisms used by Rosa and Gershon – never learns how to cope in a way which is good for him. Rosa and Gershon deny Jacobus van Tonder's existence so that he is never told that his father is still alive and actually wants to meet him and be there for his son. They blame his father alone for their daughter's suicide. Of course, Jacobus made some horrible mistakes, for example, when forcing Lilianna to have an abortion, but that does not make him the devil Rosa and Gershon consider him to be.

Believing the stories he is told, his life story is being distorted before his own eyes. Gershon and Rosa send him to a Catholic orphanage, where, being the only Jewish boy there, his life is all but easy for Reuben. Visiting his grandparents only on weekends, he quickly finds out that he does not have anyone to talk to about the bullying and mobbing he is subjected to by classmates and teachers alike. He is called names ("Nappy", "Kaffir lover" (because his grandparents own a grocery shop where they serve black people)) and locked into a dark cupboard at the age of five. (cf. QoD, 33) Reuben soon learns that his grandparents, fragile and scarred by life as they appear to him, are not able to help him deal with the problems he has to face. In order to protect them, he pretends to be strong and stable. By means of developing a tough façade, he pretends to be alright. The boy keeps his emotions to himself (he stops crying) and locks his troubles away, not knowing that they will not let go of him, not knowing that what is veiled by silence will haunt him a lot in future times.

3.2.1. Learning how to suffer in silence: avoidant coping and its effects

These circumstances considered, it seems only logical that Reuben develops a coping style that consists of unfavorable coping actions that equally involve avoidance as well as aggressive – and mostly self-destructive – behavior.

Negative Coping Actions help to perpetuate problems. They may reduce distress immediately, but short-circuit more permanent change. Actions that may be immediately effective but cause later problems can be addictive, like smoking or drug use. These habits can become difficult to change. Negative coping methods can include isolation, use of drugs or alcohol, 'workaholism', violent behavior, angry intimidation of others, eating, and different types of self-destructive behavior (e.g., attempting suicide). Before learning more effective and healthy coping, most people with PTSD try to cope with their distress and other reactions in ways that lead to more problems. (Ruzek 2006, 2)

Such actions might include severe use of alcohol and drugs, with the help of which 'victims' seek to drown their problems. They, however, overlook the harmful potential of these substances and do not notice for a very long time that they actually make their life worse, for example, by strongly affecting their mental abilities and gradually distancing them from their friends and family. (cf. *ibid.*)

Apart from being a consequence of negative coping by means of substance abuse, social isolation can itself be used as a negative coping action. It achieves the same effect as does anger (including aggressive behavior), which is mentioned by Ruzek as another coping action. Keeping people away, trauma 'victims' hope to avoid troublesome situations, within which their 'ghosts' might brutally come to the fore again. This might seem reasonable at first; avoiding *positive* connections, however, certainly is not helpful (cf. *ibid.*, 2-3).

One should not forget that anger is not necessarily a bad thing. "Constructive anger is healthy. Destructive anger is not." (Bryant-Davis 2005, 114) It is only harmful when dealt with in a wrong way. "Those people who are left too afraid of their own anger to do other than defend against it may remain crippled by the trauma for a considerable time. One such defence involves denial and projection – that is, getting rid of feelings by, in phantasy, locating them in the outside world and other people" (Young/Gibb 2007, 81). In this way anger might manifest as chronic anxiety and lead to phobic behavior, as the whole outside world is perceived as hostile and dangerous. (cf. *ibid.*) Anger has to be "re-introject[ed]" (*ibid.*), thoroughly worked through and channeled in such a way that – in case of the most favorable outcome – one might even be able to use

it as a positive driving force, for it is a fact that “[a]nger is also a potent form of assertiveness, enabling the determination to rebuild one's life after something devastating has happened. It is allied to potency and agency; without any anger all that remains may be passivity and a sense of defeat.” (ibid., 82) Bryant-Davis, however, mentions that “[a]s long as [...] [traumatic] memories [are in] control [...], he [= the traumatized person] will feel intense fear and anxiety [...]. In addition, he may continue to reenact the trauma through self-destructive behaviors [...] or by causing harm or destruction in the lives of others” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 80).

3.2.2. Coping and Substance abuse

Anger (released in the form of aggressive behavior) and substance abuse are two types of coping actions which are very characteristic of Reuben's coping style when he reaches adulthood. Not knowing his true life story and never having tried to talk to anyone about his problems, he tries to calm his inner agitation with the help of alcohol.

3.2.2.1. Factors influencing the choice of substance abuse as coping style

Wills and Hirky mention a few different factors that – according to coping research regarding substance use – increase vulnerability. First, there are some ‘biological factors’ that might make individuals more likely to develop some kind of substance-related addiction.

With regard to gender, for instance, alcohol abuse shows a male differential (Helzer, 1987), whereas use of tranquilizers shows a female differential (e.g. Cafferata, Kasper, & Bernstein, 1983). It is believed that these effects are at least partly related to differences in affect states and drug effects between men and women. Also, there is evidence for a genetic component in alcoholism [...]. Temperamental characteristics such as activity level are also related to risk for substance abuse (Tarter, 1988).” (Wills/Hirky 1996, 283)

Second, the ‘social/cultural environment’ is said to be decisive in a person's becoming susceptible to substance abuse. Reuben is initially influenced by his grandparents and the unhealthy school environment, which means that proper role models regarding constructive coping strategies are absent. His serving in the army, where he first gets to know alcohol as a means to drown his problems, further drives him into the claws of the

tempting liquid.

Finally, Reuben has been confronted with numerous stressors – from Gershon and Rosa's intergenerationally transmitted traumata, the suicide of his mother and the blurring of his true life story to his own traumatizing experiences in the orphanage. 'Life stress', the third factor that greatly increases vulnerability, thus also clearly applies to him. "This suggests that the tendency for substance abuse will be increased when individuals have a great many demands to face and lack sufficient coping resources for dealing with them." (ibid., 283)

Owning a bottle store, it is easy for Reuben to satisfy his craving for this substance and to control his emotions by simply swallowing them and keeping them down where they cannot be consciously accessed. Substance use seems to prove very practical (and might be successful in the short run) for many trauma 'victims' in order to prevent their wounds from bleeding and is therefore an important topic regarding coping research.

Concerning substance use, coping theories generally distinguish between two possibilities: "occasional use" and "high-intensity use" (Wills/Hirky 1996, 279).

Occasional use is temporally infrequent, presents no health problems for the user, and would be regarded as normal from a societal standpoint (e.g., having one or two drinks at a party). High-intensity use involves more frequent use and larger amounts of consumption (e.g., getting drunk at a party), may cause immediate or delayed problems for the user, and may involve drugs or behaviors that would be regarded as deviant in terms of general social norms. (ibid., 279-280)

Coping research mostly deals with 'high-intensity use', which is said to be significantly connected to personal distress and "more likely to have negative implications for the adjustment of the individual." (ibid., 280) "Studies of quitting" (ibid.) present an important research area.

3.2.2.2. Theoretical approaches and models

It is worth mentioning that models that relate coping and substance abuse are different from simple 'behavioral models' (considering substance use as socially motivated and learned behavior) as well as 'deviancy models' (which see substance use as some kind of 'deviant behavior' and negative reaction to predominating social values and norms). (cf. ibid., 280) Theories are not restricted to these two models, even though they most

certainly include them in one way or the other. They, however, also “provide postulates about other factors that are predicted to place a person at increased risk.” (ibid.)

Substances are said to fulfill certain coping functions, which are differentiated by Wills and Hirky according to “three basic models” (ibid., 280). First, there is the model of ‘*direct affect regulation*’, which ascribes substances the ability to directly manipulate and change affects. “For example, the tension-reduction model of alcohol use posits that alcohol reduces anxiety” (ibid.). Substances are considered to contribute both to the reduction of negative affects and to the increase of positive affects. (cf. ibid.) They can, however, also function as a means of ‘*distraction from problems*’, as attention is temporarily focused on substance use rather than on the issues one is otherwise occupied with. In this way, it offers some kind of escape from reality into a temporary illusory world. This change of focus also sometimes leads to ‘*performance enhancement*’, the third coping function mentioned. (cf. ibid., 281) After an ‘initial exposure’ to the respective substance, it is integrated into everyday life and used to cope with certain stressful situations and problems, which also means that coping through substance use varies greatly across individuals. (cf. ibid.)

Adult Reuben learns to drown his problems in alcohol during his period serving the army at the Angolan border, where he discovers it as the – seemingly – best way to suppress his anger, hatred, frustration and general emotional world. He falls into depression when he learns that Georgie, his girlfriend and later wife, has not waited for him to come back from the Angolan border, but has moved on to someone else. Reuben retreats to his grandparents' house – and especially his mother's room – and stays there (“unshaven, unkempt and unhappy” (QoD, 169)) for months - “staring down at the vegetable garden, overgrown and uncared for [like Reuben himself]” (ibid.). Later on the bottle store, which Gershon has bought for him from a deceased friend's estate (whose death has constituted another traumatic experience for Gershon), makes it easy for Reuben to further give in to his temptation. The unbearable strength of his craving for the dangerous liquid is shown in various passages. “The bottles stood, as they did each morning, in greeting, their glorious colours glowing through their glass, their promises of transcendence strapped across them like the lights of angels – their partnered nightmares hiding far away.” (QoD, 21) Reuben therefore undoubtedly belongs to the category of the ‘high-intensity user’. There are a few additional plausible

explanations for his choice of this coping action.

“[A] theoretical question [theories on coping and substance use concern themselves with] is the interplay between substance use and other types of coping, considering how the level of other coping processes makes substance use more or less likely.” (Wills/Hirky 1996, 281) To illustrate this, Wills and Hirky refer to the transactional model by Lazarus and Folkman (discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis). “The original transactional model proposed the distinction between problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping [...]. The Lazarus and Folkman model predicts that both types of coping are protective with respect to substance use, problem-focused coping because it reduces the level of problems that could create stress, and emotion-focused coping because it reduces the level of internal emotional distress.” (ibid.) It is obvious that Reuben has never learned to use these coping styles, first and foremost because he did not have any role models to show him how it could be done. Forced to suppress his emotions from the very start, he rather turns to ‘distraction’ (e.g. by means of alcohol), ‘withdrawal’ and “a category termed ‘emotional discharge’ that involves venting of negative emotions on other people” (ibid., 282; e.g. his aggressive behavior toward Georgie and his activities as a military reservist), which approach-avoidance models ascribe to the category of ‘avoidant coping’. (cf. ibid.)

Studies have shown that problem drinkers rather tend to use avoidant coping strategies instead of “approach mechanisms such as positive reappraisal and seeking social support.” (ibid., 288) Avoiding the actual problems and “seek[ing] the path of least resistance toward restoring affective balance” (ibid.) is said to strongly increase the risk of high-intensity substance use. Individuals tend to deny the troubling situation by literally washing it away, which might be effective for a short period of time, but will prevent the development of long-lasting and successful positive coping strategies.

Active coping, on the other hand, is “predicted to decrease risk” (ibid., 284) of excessive substance use.

A problem-solving approach is more likely to resolve problematic situations, increase feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem, and attract others to assist in the problem-solving process. This is likely to produce a ‘positive cycle,’ in which initial efforts at problem solving produce some beneficial effects on problem situations and attract supporters, so that further active coping is encouraged. Avoidant coping is likely to produce a ‘vicious cycle,’ in which withdrawal from coping effort only leaves problem situations worse than they started, and venting of anger on others only serves to drive

away supporters and decrease the amount of social support available for further problem solution (ibid., 284).

Looking at the research outcomes Wills and Hirky illustrate, the relationship between Reuben and Georgie proves highly relevant. Like passing on trauma intergenerationally, Reuben seems to have passed on his frustration and anger to Georgie (e.g. by acting aggressively toward her), who is obviously addicted to substances as well (cf. QoD, 199). His wife could thus be considered some kind of ‘co-dependent’¹³, who is also infected by the chain reaction triggered off by trauma. The result – regarding biological factors and substance abuse – that men are generally more likely to be drawn to alcoholism than excessive medication (e.g. by means of tranquilizers and painkillers), which seems to be “more prevalent among women” (ibid., 288), actually applies to Reuben and Georgie. (cf. ibid., 287-288)

What is also particularly interesting regarding Reuben's case is that “[i]nteraction analyses indicated [...] [that the link] of avoidant coping [and] [...] alcohol use [...] was stronger when the spouse was high on depressive or physical symptoms and hence, was less available as a source of social support.” (ibid., 288) Here the importance of a helpful social support network is emphasized again. Not openly talking about their miseries, Reuben and Georgie both rely on negative coping strategies and are therefore unable to support and steady each other in a good way. Instead they tend to disparage each other. Reuben does so by insulting Georgie and accusing her of taking advantage of him (cf. QoD, 144), blaming her for the way he behaves and even almost killing her in one of his violent outbursts (after one of which she even has a miscarriage (“after two youthful abortions” ibid., 197)). (cf. Ibid., 146) Georgie, on the other hand, betrays him and calls her *Baby* “a weak man”, “a nothing” and a simple “failure” (ibid., 145). It seems as if Reuben and Georgie lead each other into sporadic floods of depression. They have clearly disappointed each other in one way or the other (e.g. Georgie by betraying Reuben during his time serving in Angola (and then suddenly coming back for him), Reuben by not respecting her as an equal person in their relationship, calling her “just a whore without work” (ibid., 145)) and their wounds will never heal if they are not addressed properly in a calm way and if none of the two shows any interest in working things out. Reuben's grandparents have also never been a great help, as Rosa feels more or less threatened by the unknown woman of non-Jewish origin (cf. ibid.,

¹³ cf. <http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/hrdepts/asap/Documents/Codependence.pdf>, 10/12/2012.

162), strongly blaming Jacobus van Tonder's non-Jewish existence for Lilianna's misery and even making it responsible for her death. As one can see, racism appears in various forms and numerous facets, so that even Rosa, herself stigmatized, is not free from stereotypes and prejudices. Like everything else, also those doubts remain unspoken, left to seethe and prosper in silence.

Reuben and Georgie's reluctance to seek social support within their larger social environment also constitutes an obstacle for the development of positive coping strategies. This is indeed a 'vicious circle' that has to be broken if cathartic closure is to be achieved.

3.2.3 Violent behavior: the venting of anger on others

Besides severely threatening his own safety by means of substance abuse and generally careless behavior regarding his person, it is obvious from the descriptions given above that Reuben has developed another negative coping strategy to deal with his problems: the venting of his anger on others, something shown in his violent behavior toward Georgie as well as in his fascination for and his activities with the reservists.

Reuben relies on the avoidant mechanism of distraction (e.g. alcohol and caring about his shop) in order to suppress his blooming violent tendencies, but this strategy does not seem to work.

Reuben drank more and more, alone at the back [of his shop], easily finishing off a bottle of whisky on his own. He focused on his business. His new sense of inner violence did not go away. He found himself remembering the boys in the orphanage and wanting to kill them all, one by one, slowly strangling them with wire. (QoD, 198)

His inner anger represents a negative coping mechanism itself, which is being repressed by means of further negative coping actions: distraction, excessive drinking, violent outbursts and joining the military reservists, "signing up for weekend camps and patrols. In this way he channeled this new violent and angry energy into defence duties, patrolling with the units that now monitored the black township." (ibid., 199) And in this way he also continuous the ever-spreading cycle of violence. The anger has most certainly also infected Georgie, who copes with it by becoming overly religious and developing racist tendencies (which means that she also vents her anger on others).

Moreover, she gives up drinking and smoking and turns to an excessive use of “Calmettes and over-the-counter painkillers” (ibid.). All of these coping mechanisms do not prevent her body from negatively reacting to the distress she feels and so Georgie develops psychosomatic symptoms in the form of “mild neuralgia in her back [...], asthma, and [...] frequent headaches.” (ibid.)

Substance abuse and the venting of anger thus neither for Reuben nor for Georgie lead to any successful coping outcomes. Instead they only make them spiral deeper into their unconsciously shared misery; and it will only become more and more difficult for them to escape from it and not to completely drown in it. More difficult, but not impossible.

3.3. The healing process: A turn for the sake of sanity and a striving for wholeness

3.3.1. Reuben's wake-up call and active coping process

“Baby Cohen van Tonder, the proprietor of Goldberg Bottle Store in High Street, decided, on the morning of his thirty-second birthday, in his pistachio-green-tiled bathroom, which was hung with ferns and purple-leaved Wandering Jew, to do something about his life.” (QoD, 15) This is the beginning of Patricia Schonstein's novel and the decision of Reuben to become active and start bringing his life into a new and better direction. Aged thirty-two and at the end of his wits regarding his marriage and general outlook on life, standing in front of the mirror showing his devastated reflection, he comes to the conclusion that something finally has to be done. Reuben's grandparents have died – having aged rapidly after the attack of their shop and become demented (cf. ibid., 135). Gershon has set himself on fire when making coffee. (cf. ibid., 139) After the grandparents' death and searching through their estate, Reuben stumbles upon some unknown bits and pieces that refer to his true life story and point to his real identity. He finds all the letters written by his father, which Gershon has thoroughly kept away from him. In addition to that, there are pictures showing his parents happy together. By means of these things he learns that his grandparents have construed his very existence around a great lie and that the ‘devilish’ creature roaming around in the garden actually was his father, who tried to get in touch with him many times. Reuben, on the contrary, has always been made believe that his father was a heartless lunatic, who would show not a spark of interest in his son.

Jacobus van Tonder, however, shows remorse for what he has done to Reuben's mother and moves in with her after Reuben's complicated birth (he “was miraculously intact and safe” (ibid., 270)). Staying at her place and regretting the whole situation, “Gershon and Rosa could not look upon Jaco as anything but a *goy* – a *goy* who had intruded into their lives and stolen their daughter's innocence, ruining her future. [...] The only sparkle of pleasure came from the baby's eyes.” (ibid., 272) Not even the baby – Reuben – can bridge the gap that has developed between Jacobus and Lilianna. The two photos found by Reuben among his dead grandparents' things, are taken when Jacobus last sees Lilianna, leaving her in order to take a job in Port Elizabeth, promising to return every fortnight. “[H]ow lovely she looked in her frailty, with her black hair spread across the bright colours of her quilt.” (ibid., 273) Left behind, Lilianna commits suicide by drowning herself in the nearby river. From that time onward, Gershon and Rosa see no point in dealing with Jacobus, the disgusting ‘goy’, any longer. Neither do they inform him about Lilianna's death, nor do they consider it necessary to answer any of his phone calls. Not let into the house again, Jacobus van Tonder learns about his love's death when talking to Rosa through the window. He is also told to never come back again. The repetitive use of the word ‘perhaps’ illustrates which incredible horrors Jaco has to live through. Losing his mind over the situation, he is taken to the mental hospital.

When he was discharged from the asylum, nearly three years later, he came straight to the house in George Street, where he broke the lock of the servant's room at the back and settled there with his few bleak belongings, sleeping on a mattress. One day, in a rage, he took a pick and dug up the lilies that grew at the back, all of them, row after row, and he hacked every one of the bulbs, rendering them useless. (QoD, 54)

After his return, Jacobus tries to erase all his memories of Lilianna, willing to never let the heartbreaking images resurface again. He does not know that his boy is being cared for at a Catholic orphanage, where he suffers unbearable pain. Supposing that he lives upstairs with his grandparents, Jacobus does not dare to visit him, to look into his eyes, because he fears that it might trigger off painful memories. He is equally afraid of looking at Reuben's mother's quilt. (cf. ibid., 275)

In time, after his grief had blown itself out, in the way that a tempest finally quietens against a beach, and after he had properly harnessed, in his own terms, his mental equilibrium, he dug the earth again and planted rows of grapes, beans and pumpkin, onions and potatoes. (ibid.)

Jaco intends to give the vegetables to his son, so that he can at least do something good for him. Rosa, however, does not accept anything – the doors remain closed. When Reuben is six, his father finally moves to Johannesburg and starts to live again. He becomes an art critic and sends money back for Reuben.

This money has been sent with some of the letters found by Reuben in Rosa's dressing table, where Gershon has hidden them away, unopened. In addition to that, Reuben learns that his grandparents have not been poor at all. “[M]y grandparents had money. They didn't have to live like that. [...] They didn't have to send me to the orphanage.” (QoD, 293) He realizes that his whole life has been built upon a lie and that the truth has always been locked away from him. That is when he starts making sense of his life, of his whole existence, suddenly knowing that this is not the way his life should be.

'Look at me,' said Reuben, addressing his bottles, taking the page of the phonebook out of his pocket and again dialing the number he had circled. 'Look at this shit-awful situation. I almost killed my wife.' He was shaking as he battled his own tears, for inside himself, deep somewhere, he loved Georgie. And he hated his inner violence. (ibid., 147)

The passage shows how shocked Reuben is at his behavior, at the person he has become; a person he openly despises. This realization, together with one particularly horrible event he has experienced as a reservist, seems to wake Reuben from his lethargic state and makes him show some actions which can be counted among the category of ‘active coping’.

3.3.2. Seeking for an empathic listener and narrating the story

He needed a therapist who would understand why he drank in the first place; one who would empathize with him, who would keep confidence, and who would not abandon him should his inner devil surge. Perhaps this person might even like him. Most importantly he did not want to argue with anyone. There was already enough disagreement in his life. (QoD, 22)

First, Reuben seeks help and comes up with an empathic listener with whom he can share his life story and all the atrocities he has kept deeply buried inside. By opening up to a psychotherapist, he does something that is vital for one's healing process.

For the first time in his life, he starts talking about the anger he feels and therefore begins to deal with it in a positive way. Among the constructive ways to express anger,

Bryant-Davis lists the importance to “[t]ell[...] the support person that the survivor is angry and the reason he is angry” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 14), to “[s]har[e] with those who support the survivor [...] how he is feeling.” (ibid.) and to “[a]cknowledg[e] to the self how the survivor feels without self-judgment.” (ibid.)

Reuben also addresses his drinking problem and strongly emphasizes his will to stop and the effort he has made in withstanding the tempting bottles so far. “In the beginning, when I realized it's time to change things, I was just going to fix up things like my backyard, and plant some roses, and stop drinking.” (QoD, 317) Fighting his addiction is vital for his process of growth – which is very well depicted in the planting and growing of new flowers.

Of course, the conviction clearly shown by him is only the very good beginning on a stony path towards abstinence. It is, however, generally acknowledged that “[f]or cessation [...], the belief that one can cope is likely to influence whether a person actually does something to resist temptation (vs. not coping at all) when a temptation arises” (Wills/Hirky 1996, 284). Relapse is a constant threat and it is necessary to acquire coping strategies which assure that the tempted individual does not fall back into the old pattern. Wills and Hirky point to Shiffman's term ‘temptation coping’ to distinguish between this specific challenge “in contrast to dealing with general life stressors.” (ibid., 282)

Stage models have been developed to illustrate the steps a person has to take (the ‘stages of change’ an individual has to go through) before he/she can actually be considered permanently abstinent. Wills and Hirky refer to the ‘stage-of-change model’ by Prochaska, DiClemente and Norcross (1992). “This model postulates that readiness for change can be classified on a 5-step scale ranging from Precontemplation (not currently ready for change) through Contemplation, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance of Change.” (ibid., 282) As change is considered to occur in cyclic movements, the individual has to “go through a cycle of cessation and relapse several times before achieving permanent abstinence.” (ibid.) It is, however, said that – despite going “through cessation and relapse, back to contemplation or preparation” (ibid.) – there is always a better starting point than in the cycle before. (cf. ibid.) In order to reach the various stages, one has to make use of different coping mechanisms.

The stage model postulates that use of particular coping mechanisms is what moves

persons from one stage to another. [...] The stage model predicts, for example, that moving from precontemplation to preparation involves behavioral coping mechanisms such as information seeking (termed 'consciousness raising' by Prochaska et al., 1992) and considering different alternatives ('environmental reevaluation'). Moving from preparation to action involves making a decision and implementing the plan of action ('self-liberation'), and moving from action to maintenance involves use of social support from significant others ('helping relationships'). (Ibid., 283)

Keeping this model in mind, one can say that Reuben has already taken some very important steps. Although he does not openly call himself an 'alcoholic' ("I'm borderline. Borderline alcoholic. I'm almost one. I don't want to be one. I've just got it under control." (QoD, 285)), he considers his current situation as unfavorable and has decided to change something. Avoiding the bottles and talking to the therapist, he has already become active and tries to make the first changes. His initiative to actually really leave his old life behind – leaving Georgie in order to start over anew – contributes further to this change. What is of utter importance is that Reuben reduces the tempting effect that the bottles have on him. This can happen in various ways, as stated by Wills and Hirky:

The measures of temptation-coping strategies define behavioral coping as actions such as employing planning to avoid substance use stimuli (e.g., throwing all cigarettes out of the house), using physical activity (e.g., exercising) to deal with temptation, using relaxation to reduce stress, enlisting social support from family or friends, or actively leaving a tempting situation. Cognitive coping involves strategies such as thinking about health benefits of abstinence, thinking about social consequences (e.g., 'Spouse and kids will be pleased'), using distraction strategies that involve thinking about alternative pleasant activities, or simple delay ('I'll just wait this out'). Nonadaptive strategies are defined as using 'willpower' (coded only when a cognitive strategy did not involve other activity), wishful thinking, helplessness, or self-punitive strategies (e.g., 'I can't do this,' 'I'm a weakling'). (Wills/Hirky 1996, 290-291)

Separating from Georgie for a while or forever might not be the worst idea, considering how Reuben and Georgie demotivate each other and drag each other down. Leaving is also a good choice for the fact that continuing his work in a bottle store would only make it more difficult for Reuben to achieve permanent abstinence, as he would always be surrounded by tempting stimuli.

What is, however, certainly the most important aspect is Reuben's decision to narrate his story to someone; someone who is neutral, who does not judge him in any way. Only in this way he manages to give voice to his horrors experienced at the orphanage, to his disappointment and anger about the lies he has always been told and to the

horrible things he did when serving his government as a soldier. There is one occurrence which has greatly influenced Reuben's decision to become another person, simply because it is stuck in his mind and does not let go of him anymore. "I've done my share of killing" (QoD, 284), he confesses to his therapist.

I killed lots of blacks, up in Angola, on the border. I don't have a problem with that. I was a soldier. Just doing what I was told. And you know, I went straight from the orphanage to the army to the border. All I knew was to do as I was told and not ask questions. The first one you kill is hard. But after that, you just shoot and don't get emotional. You just close off. [...] If you didn't shoot, you'd get shot yourself. It's not a picnic, being a soldier. It's killing work. So I don't know why shooting this kid freaked me. But it freaked me. (ibid.)

This passage perfectly illustrates the 'thoughtlessness' that is involved in warfare, when people are told to stop thinking and start (re-)acting. It shows how people are forced to turn off their emotions when under pressure, fighting for their mere survival. The unfortunate truth about warfare is that it makes people give up their humanity and their 'morality' – trading the latter for a supposedly better one. There is no awareness among the masses of the arbitrariness of this morality and the almost animalistic automatism which guarantees that it remains mostly unquestioned. "Morality is [...] the emotive fiction we create on the basis of some collectively agreed and sanctioned rules." (Parkin, 307) Of course, this does not excuse any of the horrible deeds; it does not rid anyone of his guilt. However, it describes the dynamics involved pretty well; the dynamics that ensure that people are not seen as such anymore, but considered mere targets that are to be erased.

Reuben acts according to that mechanism until he looks one of his 'targets' into the eyes, until he sees and feels the fear of his 'target'. This 'target's' name is Boniface and his eyes deprive Reuben of his sleep after he shoots him. "I see his face when I dream" (QoD, 283), he tells his therapist. "Only the eyes are soft. Just a kid's eyes. Crying. They don't want to be dead. He was just a kid." (ibid.) This traumatic memory still haunts Reuben and has finally woken him up; it has made him think and has strengthened his will to change something.

There are some people who have already woken up in order to openly oppose the regime. Reuben's father – the supposed 'devil' – is one of them. "By chance, Jaco began to move among people who opposed the apartheid regime. [...] [He] decided to work with underground movements to overthrow the government. His son, the boy he had

never known, was eighteen years old and had already completed a year of conscripted military service.” (ibid., 276) That means that Reuben and his father actually fight against each other. By means of one letter, Reuben learns that Jacobus “was in exile himself [...], that when [his] father worked [...] as an art critic, he was also part of the ANC underground. [...] He was caught and got a six-year sentence with two other guys. [...] When he was released, he left the country. First he went to London. Then Maputo in Mozambique. Then to Tanzania” (ibid., 294), where he teaches art to other exiles. (cf. ibid.)

For Reuben there is no chance of talking to his father about this (or anything else) anymore. Jacobus van Tonder has died in a car accident. There has also been no chance for any collective mourning so far. After his grandparents’ death, Reuben is more or less alone; he is also almost alone at their funeral, which is the reason that they cannot be given a full Jewish ceremony. (cf. ibid., 289) Again his having a different religion makes things more difficult for him. “[T]here weren't other Jews in town. There are no Jews in town. Except me.” (ibid., 290)

Even though Reuben has not been able to mourn together with others, he admits to his therapist that he has started to mourn alone, finally showing his pain and regret, after having held his emotions back far too long. Showing his feelings to an empathic other is a vital step on his path towards cathartic closure. “I started to cry. I cried and cried like a damn baby.” (ibid., 306) He has begun to vent his tears for all the things he does not know as well as for the things he has just discovered, to shed them for his past as well as for his present. He equally weeps for what he has lost and for what he has found. Reuben has found out much about his past, about his father in particular; but he is not satisfied with the scattered pieces of information he has collected. Eager to know more about the person his father used to be, he is also aware of the fact that he will never get hold of everything; that the entire truth of his existence has died along with him.

What is left is “a little carved bull” (ibid., 302) made by his father, which is given to Reuben by Nicodemus, a “black guy” (ibid., 304) whose son was in the mental hospital together with Jacobus van Tonder. Nicodemus cannot tell him anything else about his father, but he adds two sentences that deeply affect Reuben. “When I look at your face, I

see your father. You have the face of a good man.” (ibid., 305-306) As can be seen from the words said to his therapist, Reuben does not consider himself a good man. Somehow everyone has always made him believe that he was the bad one, either for being Jewish or for being the son of a no-good father. This way of thinking also shows something that is generally said to be very common among trauma ‘victims’: the feeling of ‘self-blame’. “Self-blame is the feeling that the survivor is responsible for a negative event. The survivor feels that they caused the event by their thoughts, words, deeds, or because the survivor is simply evil or bad.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 62)

3.3.3. Saving ‘Vita’

That Reuben is actually a good person – a person who has started to care and to think and not to take the generally proclaimed morality as irrevocable – is illustrated in the further actions he takes. When he finds himself among a large student protest to oppose the regime, he realizes that there are actually children out there; children fighting for their rights; children who are most certainly going to get harmed any moment. “[T]he black problem” (QoD, 324) is suddenly given faces, voices, and identities. “As he stood looking out at the explosive, tinder-dry gathering, something deep in him stirred. It was a quick movement, a swift reshuffling of his perception of right and wrong.” (ibid.) This is the day he saves Vita, an arrested black activist's little daughter who accidentally gets involved in the protest when on a mission to buy a bull – ‘Boer Isaac's Bull’ – for one special golden coin, an action which, according to a myth told her by her grandmother, would take all the bad luck from her family.

It all happens “[b]eneath the statue of the angel” (ibid., 323), “[t]he sculpture of Peace, in Grahamstown” (ibid., 365). Vita is shot and Reuben hurries forward to help her, his image blurring with that of the angel in the girl's eyes. “The angel held Vita close to her, then touched her cheek, so the girl looked up at her and then across into the mist.” (ibid., 327) Reuben saves Vita and takes her to a white people's hospital, fighting for her to get some help there. The ‘devil’ has turned into an angel saving Vita – ‘vita’, which means ‘life’.¹⁴ Reuben has saved ‘life’ – his own life and the one of the little black girl. What he does not know is that the young boy, Boniface, whom Reuben has killed when serving the army is Vita's brother, who is still expected to come back safe by her family.

¹⁴ There are many telling names in the novel, for example, ‘Trotzky’ (the dog's name) and ‘Dr. Marx’ (the doctor's name), which might point to left-wing political thought.

The boundaries between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ are once again getting blurred.¹⁵

He gives Vita the carved bull, the way his father has given it to his colored friend, not knowing that by doing so he contributes to the completion of another story – that he reunites and makes whole what was torn apart.

Reuben tries to clean himself of what he has experienced, of what he has done, of the life he has led and the person he has become.

In the shower, Reuben soaped his whole body, trying to block the sound of her voice, suppressing a sob that seized him at the throat. Unable to stop his emotions, which burst like a spring tide against the retaining wall of his composure, he leant against the tiles and cried, holding in the sounds so that Georgie would not hear, and letting the hot water pour over him, washing him clean, taking his tears down the drain. (QoD, 341)

He takes them “down the drain”, but he does not swallow them anymore, leaving them unexpressed. It is almost a form of cathartic cleansing. This is a completely new way to behave for Reuben, a completely new way to cope. However, he does not trust Georgie sufficiently to let her hear him, to let her look behind his facade and into his emotional world. “After a trauma, the survivor may feel that by opening up, relying on, trusting another person, he becomes vulnerable. [...] One of the major consequences of interpersonal trauma is a sense of disconnection.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 45) Breaking this “sense of disconnection” and opening up to someone, apart from the therapist he has already talked to, would be important for his healing.

3.3.4. Identity in transition, country in transition: the role of the quilt

Identity plays a great role in Schonstein's novel. Here the micro level mirrors the macro level, as a whole country's transition of identity is mirrored in one individual's (Reuben's) identity transition. This is where the quilt comes in. In *A Quilt of Dreams*, it functions as a so-called ‘transitional object’ for Reuben, who develops from ‘Nappy’ and ‘Baby’ (the nicknames given him by his bullying schoolmates and his grandparents

¹⁵ There is this general confusion of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in *A Quilt of Dreams*. Gershon and Rosa Cohen are said to look like the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (cf. QoD, 49). “Fair is foul and foul is fair.” (Act 1, Scene 1, Line 10) They suffer a lot of ‘evil’, but they also do some things which cannot be considered ‘right’, like denying Reuben's true past and sending him away to the orphanage. Gershon's “vot[ing] for the Nationalists, counselling his wife to do the same” (QoD, 96) serves as another example (and also as one of ‘evil's’ cyclic quality). They do not do the things because they are bad to the core; they just do not think enough about the consequences of their actions.

respectively) to 'Reuben', finally deciding to take his life into his own hands.

3.3.4.1. 'Baby' in transition: the quilt as a 'transitional object'

From the time of his mother's death onwards, Reuben's life has been built upon a lie. He carries the name of Jacobus *van Tonder*, a person whom he has been taught to hate. In addition to that, he has been stigmatized because of his Jewish religion all his life. When called a bad person by the boys and teachers at the orphanage, he believes it. He incorporates their views, which also leads to his negative self-image. Reuben has learned to be ashamed of who he is, of his past, of his whole existence. As a consequence he shows racist tendencies himself ("I'm not so. I'm not a Jew. And I'm not a Kaffir-lover,' denied Baby, defending himself. 'I hate them.'" (QoD, 50)). The early loss of his mother, however, as well as the lack of openness on the part of his grandparents have affected his identity structure the most. At the beginning of his active coping process is the decision to put together his once shattered life story and to re-structure his fragmented self.

"[P]eople should henceforth address him as Reuben, the name his mother had given him and the one by which his grandparents had always called him. [...] [O]n the day in question [...] the name had to go [...] and his heavy drinking. He admitted too that it was time to leave his wife." (ibid., 15) Reuben leaves. He leaves without a note; without a word. The only thing, the only reminder, he takes with him is *the quilt*. The quilt which Rosa has made for his mother; the quilt, which represents the only direct link to his mother; the quilt that has helped him through so many moments filled with sorrow. The quilt, which cannot be left behind. At least not yet.

3.3.4.1.1. The 'transitional object'

Sylvia Brody refers to the fact that according to Winnicott (1953), who came up with the concept of the 'transitional object', it typically "is a soft object¹⁶ in the infant's intimate environment, usually part of a blanket, sheet, pillow case, or diaper ('nappy') or other soft cloth used by the mother for the baby." (Brody 1980, 566) "Symbolic of

¹⁶ There might be more than one transitional object, as stated by Tolpin (1971, 326).

the mother (breast)” (ibid.) and thus serving “needs of the oral phase” (ibid.), it is said to be created by the infant at the age of about four to twelve months and to “become[...] an [inanimate] object of consolation, love and hate [...], and a prized possession” (ibid.). The child usually shows its demand for it when feeling emotionally distressed or at the time it is laid down to sleep. The object might be

a bundle of wool or the corner of a blanket or eiderdown, or a word or tune, or a mannerism, which becomes vitally important to the infant for use at the time of going to sleep, and is a defence against anxiety, especially anxiety of depressive type. Perhaps some soft object or type of object has been found and used by the infant, and this then becomes what I am calling a *transitional object*. (Winnicott 1953, 91)

The child holds it in its hands, presses it against its face, sucks at it, or strokes it. As soon as the infant's motor abilities develop, the object is carried along whenever possible. (cf. Brody 1980, 567) Usually having some specific qualities (e.g. being mostly made of soft materials such as cloth or silk; cf. Busch 1974, 222), the inanimate object is seen as fostering the child's “emotional growth” (Brody 1980, 562). Relating to “maternal nurturing” (ibid., 567), the transitional object represents the child's “first 'not-me' possession” (ibid.). It has also been claimed that the inanimate object stands for the mother herself and is therefore especially important in times of maternal absence, fulfilling some kind of soothing function for the infant in these times of unease. (cf. ibid., 580) Charles Schulz (1952) came up with the term ‘object of security’ to describe this function, as the object provides the child with some kind of safe haven. (cf. Brody 1980, 567, footnote) Studies have shown that the respective object that becomes the transitional object has often been “an intimate part of soothing mother-child interactions since birth” (Busch 1974, 222), playing a role in actions such as feeding, sleeping and the like. (cf. ibid.)

According to Busch, research has found out that blankets are the most common (first) transitional objects among children, explaining that their relation to the crib (which generally proves to be a safe place for the child) might be responsible for this choice. (cf. ibid., 219) He adds that the establishment of a transitional object is often considered to take place as a measure to overcome the breach that undoubtedly occurs between the ‘symbiotic unity’ of the child and the mother as the child grows. The matter of ‘control’ is also an important issue, as the child is not able to control the mother in the way it can exert control over the chosen transitional object, which as a consequence also increases a sense of stability for the child. (cf. ibid., 119-220)

Likewise it increases the child's independence. "When the infant begins to use his blanket to soothe himself, he has created something – that is, he has endowed an inconsequential bit of the 'external world' with a capacity to restore or improve his inner equilibrium." (Tolpin 1971, 322) As referred to by Winnicott, the transitional object should not be regarded as an internal object, which would be a mental concept, but as a real possession. On the other hand, it could also not be considered an external object, as it does not function as such for the child (that actually regards it as a part of itself). (cf. Winnicott 1953, 94) "The transitional object is never under magical control like the internal object, nor is it outside control as the real mother is." (ibid.)

Internalization is, however, the next step the child has to achieve, as it is supposed to incorporate the soothing functions fulfilled by the transitional object. So the phase of the 'transitional object' ("during the separation-individuation phase of development" (Tolpin 1971, 317)) naturally goes by on the path of developing a 'cohesive self', which is a term coined by Heinz Kohut. (cf. ibid.) Regarding the "formation of a cohesive self" (ibid.) and somewhat opposing Winnicott, Tolpin proposes "that the *soothing functions* of the transitional object do, in fact, '*go inside*' as *mental structure*; and precisely because of this the treasured possession is neither missed, mourned, repressed, nor forgotten. It is no longer needed." (ibid., 321) Her theory relies on the concept of "transmuting internalization" (ibid., 318) by Kohut and is described by her as follows:

When a 'tolerable' phase-appropriate loss of some discrete function that the object carried out for the child is experienced ('optimal frustration'), the psyche does not resign itself to the loss; instead, it preserves the function of the object by internalization. When 'effective internalization' replaces a function of the auxiliary ego by an internal structure that carries out the same function, a process has taken place that can be described as a structural 'leap'. (ibid.)

This gradual loss is explicitly differentiated from traumatic loss. There is no abrupt breach – neither of the defined 'mother-child-symbiosis' nor of the 'transitional object-child-relationship' –, but a slow movement towards independence (where the child repeatedly abandons ('decathects') the transitional object and regresses to ('cathects') it again), which is vital to bring the 'separation-individuation phase' to a conclusion. (cf. ibid., 319-323) The transitional object might, however, in some cases also be carried along into following developmental phases and ascribed additional functions. (cf. ibid., 327)

3.3.4.1.2. From 'Baby' to Reuben: Reuben's way to wholeness

Reuben decides to leave his old life behind; to leave everything, except for one object: his mother's quilt.

No one told him that his grandmother had not always stared out of the window [...]; that in the past, when she sat there, she would open a wicker sewing basket and work on his mother's large quilt, tenderly sewing squares of the most prized and carefully chosen materials. He had no way of knowing that, with a silver thimble protecting the middle finger of her working hand, and a small yellowwood table taking the weight of the work as it grew, she sewed slowly, in small, delicate and precise stitches, joining together fabrics that had come from all corners of the earth, some ancient and some just old; all of them exquisite. (QoD, 55)

What constitutes an act of 'poiesis' for his grandmother in its making, represents a transitional object for Reuben. Rosa has also tried to bridge the gap between her and her little daughter during the absence of the latter.

After her baby was born, in a fit of melancholy at being separated from her while she worked in the store, Rosa decided to make a quilt for her daughter, though she had never sewn before and did not know any of the intricate stitches required. She thought that if with each stitch she whispered her daughter's name, the quilt would become imbued with her love and longing. (ibid., 104)

The "love and longing" filled into the quilt for Lilianna, is the same "love and longing" that Reuben feels for his mother when he is a child and "would lie on her double bed, on the beautiful patchwork quilt Rosa had made for her, and try to invent her" (ibid., 45). As a transitional object, the quilt constitutes a safe haven for Reuben and has always comforted him in times of distress. Tolpin refers to Freud when saying that "[t]he blanket [...] functions as a psychic 'preserve' analogous to the realm of fantasy in later development" (Tolpin 1971, 329), offering a possibility of mental retreat and escape in difficult times. As a child, the quilt represents the only real connection Reuben has to his mother and thus substitutes her in a way – especially when he wants to escape from the horrors in the orphanage. "'Hold me,' the boy would whisper [...]. 'Come back to me so that I can sleep here and not at the orphanage. Come to me, Mamma. I am waiting for you,' and he would attend with bated breath, his eyes closed as he anticipated a heaviness on the bed to signal that she was lying there next to him, ready to take him in her arms.'" (QoD, 45)

It still carries out this function for mature Reuben, who turns to it whenever he feels depressed. "He lay for days on his mother's bed, wrapped in her quilt, depressed, staring

up at the ceiling of her room, which had not been refurnished since her death and was still referred to as ‘Mamma’s room’.” (ibid., 168) The quilt is also involved when Reuben and Georgie make up after having been separated for some time. “Reuben, overcome by the months of pent-up desire, pulled her down onto the bed and they made strong, hungry love on his mother's pretty quilt.” (ibid., 176) There is a second object that proves to be important for Reuben when he is a child. He often turns to his mother's favorite black dress in addition to the quilt. However, after his grandparents' death, he burns it in a fit of desperation (cf. ibid., 300), whereas the quilt has been made into a place for personal mourning, as shown in the following passage.

‘It was night when I went back in [after Nicodemus had given him the carved bull and told him about his father]. I locked myself inside and went to lie on my mother’s bed. On her quilt. And then I started to cry. I cried and cried like a damn baby.’ (ibid., 306)

The quilt is needed by him in order to be able to mourn at all. One could argue that – according to the theory of the ‘transitional object’ – his self-soothing structures have not been fully internalized yet. Interestingly, for Tolpin this internalization itself resembles the process of mourning, as “[t]he underlying mental mechanism by which this self-sustaining capacity is acquired [...] is analogous to the work of mourning, as well as to the work of analysis, ‘working through’, and to the ‘work’ of structure formation that proceeds throughout childhood” (Tolpin 1971, 331).

It might also offer Reuben some kind of control; the control that he has never had over his mother and that he still does not have over his life. The quilt helps Reuben to hold himself together emotionally, so that he does not lose himself. Only when internalization and containment are fully achieved, he will be able to let go of it. As Brody states, the need for the transitional object gradually passes by when “enough speech” as well as “locomotion” are developed.

It should no longer obtain once the child had acquired feelings of intactness about his own body or his mother's concern. Presumably those feelings would be present when he has developed enough speech and independent locomotion to walk and talk to persons other than those with whom he is most familiar, in order to express his wishes, thoughts, or feelings; and when he can accept the mother's absence for the better part of a day without overt signs of anxiety. (Brody 1980, 583)

Reuben's leaving symbolizes his wish for independence. He has developed sufficient speech to talk to the therapist about his problems, to give voice to his horrors and to

express his feelings. Carrying the quilt with him, he does not completely let go of his mother and his past in general, but takes an important step towards internalization and independence. It is this transitional process – from ‘Baby’ to ‘Reuben’ – which will lead to the acceptance of his life story, the containment of his past and the forming of his true identity.

[H]e placed his lips upon an embroidered lily and let his tears wash down on it until, like a Namib desert succulent blossoming after rain, its petals took life and reached out to touch his face. The fragrance of a woman’s breath overwhelmed him and the tranquility of love alighted upon his heart. Little embroidered tendrils stretched out, covering him, drawing him into the cloth masterpiece, holding him to the silks and cretonnes and ancient linens which many different women had once woven and which one had sewn together into a sequence of dreams.

He lay within the quilt for a minute or an hour or a hundred years. How was he to know how long it took to still his soul? When his tears stopped falling, when the lilies and leaves had finished their comforting, they drew back into the silent composition and released him from their embrace. He stepped back as a sigh shuddered through him, and looked at the quilt as he had never done before, seeing that it was burnished and good and wonderful.

Halfway down the stairs he hesitated, put down his bag and came up again. Without making a sound he slid his mother’s quilt off its rail, rolled it up and threw it over his shoulder. (QoD, 352-353)

By means of the quilt he can leave his old life behind, but also carries some important parts of it along with him in order to invent himself anew later on. This includes aspects of his social and cultural identity. Parkin refers to the importance of the objects carried along by people who are forced to leave their place or country in order to start a life somewhere else and describes how they might function as ‘transitional objects’ and offer people (and peoples) “the possibility of their own de-objectification and re-personalization afterwards.” (Parkin 1999, 303) To describe this process, the author refers to Thomas’ (1991) “metaphor of human-object entanglement” (ibid., 304) and states that the objects taken along are “articles of sentimental value which both inscribe and are inscribed by their [= people’s] own memories of self and personhood.” (ibid.) They are therefore especially useful for re-creating oneself after a traumatic experience. The processes involved in trauma and coping with trauma are called ‘objectification’ and ‘de-objectification’. In trauma “the body has become a lifeless object incorporating traumatized personhood.” (ibid., 315) Carrying an important object with you, which holds positive pre-traumatic memories, might help to become a real ‘person’ again, to de-objectify (in contrast to “irreversible objectification” (ibid.)).

Let us call this reversible objectification. In practice, reversible and irreversible

objectification reflect the ambivalent power of memories to evoke either pre-traumatic hope and life or post-traumatic morbidity unresolved by mourning.

The recoverability or otherwise of personhood from an objectified state may, then, depend not just on the severity of trauma but on how much memories of life before trauma can become an acceptably realistic link with the present, bridging the gap between past loss and future potential. (ibid.)

The quilt clearly fulfills the function of such a memento for Reuben, also in the way that it “encod[es] continuity between and across the generations” (ibid., 318). It “reproduces the possibility of lineal continuity from past to future but also is an attempt to accommodate grief” (ibid., 316) and is thus vital for Reuben's personal mourning process. “[T]hese personal mementoes provide the material markers of templates, inscribed with narrative and sentiment, which may later re-articulate the shifting [territorial] boundaries of a socio-cultural identity.” (ibid., 313)

Consisting of different stories, the quilt carries some important cultural values. It is not only significant for Reuben's past, present and future, but illustrates the past, present and (expected) future of a whole country. The soft piece of art carries in it parts of the old South Africa as well as hopes for the new one. In this way it also depicts the transitional process of a whole nation.

3.3.4.2. From apartheid South Africa to the new South Africa: a country in transition

Reuben's quilt equally points to South Africa's past and stands for its aspired future. In its structure it directly opposes apartheid South Africa, which was

a monochrome work in which colours would never overlap or complement each other, but would remain in their own distinctive quarters. From a certain position the finished work might be considered beautiful, as a floor tiled only in black or white or brown is striking. But from the viewpoint of the true artist, the one who maps the intricacies of the human heart, it was a work bland and cruel. (QoD, 65)

The quilt, on the other hand, is made of various different kinds of cloth, “cloth which it would be criminal to cut” (ibid., 105), that were made into one piece of true art. Various different pieces co-exist in a peaceful way. The work of art has been created in a process of poiesis, “grow[ing] without apparent system, for we cannot anticipate the dimension of the pieces [...], but only the size of the whole completed quilt.” (ibid.)

Reuben's grandmother is given the different parts by Emmanuel Levy, a salesman “fond of fabrics” (ibid., 104), “itinerant story-teller” (ibid., 106) and Rosa's unacknowledged true love, who has collected them on his trips all around the world. He brings the pieces to her and with them the respective stories they have to tell. “It took Rosa thirteen years to finish her quilt” (ibid., 111), the years “while the country’s apartheid regime strengthened and its policies became more cruel and divisive.” (ibid.) The soft work of art, however, has united all the different colors to develop into the paragon of beauty and harmony, which “had a shimmer of its own, brought about by its differing textures and colours and embroidered motifs.” (ibid., 113) It represents the new South Africa as opposed to the old one where people were forced into rigid categories according to their skin-color and ethnical background. In the case of the quilt, the patches from all around the world all have their individual identities and tell their own unique stories in order to equally contribute to one single true story. This story is not a metanarrative in which the different parts drown and are not seen for what they are anymore. It does not swallow everything to undo the realities and stories which are there. Instead of overshadowing them, the quilt, the *whole story*, pays recognition to every single individual part. It does not fake some kind of reality, but lets the patches, the single true narratives, stand for themselves, with all the various shades they appear in. In this way, the metanarrative that predominated in apartheid South Africa is deconstructed in the quilt, which represents another totality, but one in which each patch is still particular and recognized and valued for this very uniqueness.

What is especially striking is the reference to the importance of correctly completing the quilt, of making it whole to achieve a proper ‘closure’. “[T]he last piece is always the most important. [...] It is very much like the keystone of an arch: the signature, so to speak.” (QoD, 115) It summarizes the whole (cf. ibid.) and guarantees that the harmony of the different parts is not interrupted. Somehow this “keystone” seems like the proper foundation for the quilt, as vital as a good constitution is for a country that strives to exist in peace; a nation, where every individual is given the right to stand up and speak up and where the truth is what is valued most; where the horrors of the past are properly depicted and mourned and the individual hopes for the future sufficiently emphasized.

Quilting and quilts have generally proven to be of great importance for people in disaster-struck parts of the world. The former also exists as a metaphor in social sciences to describe “how things developed [...] a process in time, open to additions

and changes; a variety of possible uses (in the social sciences as well as in policy-making); an opportunity to communicate ideas and words; and a final product, or artefact.” (Balbo 2005, 3)

From a cultural perspective, quilts have come in various forms and been developed for various different purposes – from mourning quilts and friendship quilts, to simple bed coverings and comforters.

[Q]uilts have been a means of artistic expression by women worldwide to depict the horrors and atrocities of human rights abuses. Sewing, embroidering, appliquéing and stitching, women explore the effects of armed conflict, suppression, vulnerability, violence and trauma, among other ordeals in their daily lives. (Bacic, 1)

They have been used by people to “rebuild (re-sew)” (ibid., 2) their lives and as a means of political criticism or protest. Re-sewing ensures that people can express their experiences, even though they are not able to put them into words. Moreover, quilts are universally understandable and not limited to the knowledge of one language or culture. Apart from being a possibility to distract oneself and keep one's mind occupied, “allowing [people] to shed pain with their stitches” (ibid., 5), quilting is also therapeutic regarding the fact that in some cultures the open expression of pain is not valued highly or even prevented. (cf. ibid.)

“In South Africa, tapestries brought to light the horrors [...] of the apartheid regime.” (ibid., 3) The quilt in *A Quilt of Dreams* has also been hung onto the wall and does not merely have the function of a bed cover. In Peru, for example, some works of art, produced by people who “used a non-violent language” (ibid., 7), and were “claiming a space to try to tell and clarify their truth” (ibid.), were even presented in front of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Individual stories were shared and have been woven into one whole true story. “Quilting has become a language, devoid of written speech. The quilts are timeless and inter-generational. They are a way of communicating between cultures, a fundamental expression of the unspoken truth.” (ibid.)

Quilts have thus constituted a means of coping for many people, like Reuben and Rosa in *A Quilt of Dreams*, and have become a testimony about the true horrors of entire nations. A testimony of the past as well as an outlook into a more colorful and brighter future. Recognized. Unique, but united. One.

4. Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying*

4.1. Death and trauma in *Ways of Dying*

The story of Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying* is woven around Toloki, who leaves his village after a horrible conflict with his father, which can be seen as his defining traumatic experience, and moves to the city, where he first takes "part time jobs loading ships" (WoD, 120) and then establishes the vocation of the 'Professional Mourner'. Having met death in its various forms along his way (cf. WoD, 66), he decides that mourning for the departed is his special calling. He turns up at funerals and convinces people to let him mourn for the dead, to sit on the mound and give emphasis to the speech of 'the Nurse' – whose job is to shed light on how the respective person has died (cf. WoD, 7) and thus to openly announce the truth – with a broad range of heartbreaking sounds of sorrow and lamentation. His costume, "a particularly beautiful outfit all in black comprising a tall shiny top hat, lustrous tight-fitting pants, almost like the tights that the young women wear today, and a knee-length velvety black cape buckled with a hand-sized gold-coloured brooch with tassels of yellow, red and green" (WoD, 26)¹⁷, which has been bought for him by two restaurant owners who fear that he might shy away their customers, gives him a conspicuous look. Toloki indeed manages to make a living out of the 'mourning business', as "[t]here are many ways of dying" (WoD, 7).

'Dying' in Zakes Mda's novel carries more than one meaning, has more than one function. It is depicted as the result of the never-ending daily cruelties that are faced by people in post-apartheid South Africa, which still struggles for the establishment of true democratic values, and shown to have taken on its own dynamics and developed what could be called a chain reaction. Death follows death – one triggers off the next. On the other hand, it might be looked at keeping Heidegger's existentialist philosophy in mind and be seen as a metaphor for a traumatized nation. Dying is illustrated as a phenomenon so omnipresent that nobody can elude it. Every living being is affected by it in one way or the other. Death in *Ways of Dying* possesses the power to leave whole communities in a voiceless daze, for the ways in which it occurs are of such incredible cruelty that the shock that results can only numb the ones affected. In this way, its

¹⁷ Some colors of the new South African flag are shown. Interestingly, 'white' and 'blue' – relating to the Boer republics – are left out, while all those taken from the ANC flag (yellow, black, green) are included.(cf. http://msunduzi.gov.za/dedi134.cpt2.host-h.net/site/user_data/files/COLOURS_OF_THE_SOUTH_AFRICAN_FLAG.pdf, 03/01/2013)

dynamics are similar to those ascribed to trauma, which also has the power to silence whole communities and put them into zombie-like states. Additionally, Zakes Mda points to the way 'death' is dealt with regarding 'traditional' African belief systems as opposed to Western ways of thinking. This binary opposition proves to be generally very prominent throughout the novel.

4.1.1. Death and dying as result of organized violence

As has been mentioned, death comes in various forms in *Ways of Dying*, which can also be inferred from the novel's title. What is, however, clearly to be seen, is the large amount of deaths that result from systematic violence towards certain people or groups of people. Due to the segregation policies in apartheid South Africa, the country has divided into various groups of people, who either act as oppressors or appear as the oppressed and sometimes (or one might say often) take on both roles. Zakes Mda illustrates the fights between different groups belonging to the category of the 'oppressed' (black informal settlers in so-called 'squatter camps', black township inhabitants, migrants/hostel dwellers, so-called freedom fighters) and the cruel measures they turn to in order to counteract each other, to harm each other. Power is shown to be the ever-dominating driving force for their actions which – as violence appears in a systematic form and is targeted at people belonging to clearly defined groups – can be assigned to the category of 'organized violence' as opposed to its 'unorganized types'.

Organized violence is violence with a systematic strategy. It is put into operation by members of groups with a centrally guided structure or political orientation (police units, rebel organizations, terror organizations, paramilitary and military formations). It is targeted for continuous use against individuals and groups who have different political attitudes, nationalities, or who come from specific racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. It is characterized by the violation of human rights and disregard of women's and children's rights. The consequences reach far into the future of a society. (Schauer et al. 2005, 7)

The violence portrayed in *Ways of Dying* is like the one that was created in the times of apartheid on a large-scale basis, only that now various smaller communities and social groups are brought into focus. Segregation has not disappeared, even in the highly praised new South Africa, but taken on new dimensions and is orientated to new social strata. Instead of the question of one's ethnical background, the divide between rich and

poor has moved to the center of attention. The powerful 'tribal chief' is said to use *his* migrants as a force in the struggle for even greater power. "They came to the city to work for their children, but the tribal chief armed them, and sent them out to harass the local residents." (WoD, 23) Nefolovhodwe – who originally comes from Toloki's village and has always been a good friend of his father's – has made it in the city by means of his coffin trade, using death as promising monetary source. (cf. WoD, 13) Financial power is greatly emphasized, with the rich ones putting pressure on those without means. Skin color does not matter that much anymore in Zakes Mda's novel.

The focus has been shifted from the sphere of the nation state to the community level, where violence breeds more violence and provides the fuel and the fertile soil for the continuous chain reaction of dying. Even those who are least expected to join the ever-spreading cycle of violence are caught in it. In *Ways of Dying* the police is shown to commit violent crimes against the civil society. One example, which proves to be especially cruel, is the so-called "hell-ride" (WoD, 143). Taxi drivers are abducted and tortured. The taxi owner Shadrack, who works for a taxi company and has refused to pay regular subscription fees, is abducted by the local police, forced to take part in sexual actions involving dead women with bullet wounds and gladly makes it out alive. (cf. WoD, 143) Shadrack plans to turn to human rights lawyers to take revenge. The novel leaves no doubt that this undertaking will prove in vain, for the law (like the police) does not seem to be in favor of poor informal settlers like Shadrack.

Often deeds are covered in silence in order not to negatively interfere with the interests of some groups. The case of Noria, Toloki's homegirl whom he meets, after not having seen her for twenty years, when on duty at the cemetery grounds, serves as an example of this problem. Noria's second son Vutha has been killed at the age of only five by the so-called 'Young Tigers', a local group of people "in their late teens and early twenties" (WoD, 181) defining themselves as 'freedom fighters'. Originally involved in this group's activities (even at his very young age), Vutha is killed by another child who, even younger than him, is told to do so, because he has been labeled a sell-out for (not quite intentionally) telling the nearby hostel dwellers about an attack the 'Young Tigers' were about to commit as vengeance for their deeds. (cf. WoD, 190) "This our little brother was killed by those who are fighting to free us!" (WoD, 7) The label 'freedom fighters' is clearly misleading and of an ambiguous quality. In addition to that, nobody feels responsible for the deed. Instead of blaming one person, the whole group is accused, which means that individual identity is given up for group identity and

individual conscience is given up for the goal pursued by the group. Violence does not have a name and therefore slips away so easily and cannot be kept at bay. Noria has to be silenced, because nobody wants any negative light to be shed on the struggle for ‘freedom’. (cf. WoD, 173) The ambiguity surrounding the so-called ‘freedom fighters’ should not become a public matter.

The crimes described mostly happen in the big city, which, together with the village Toloki comes from, is the central place of action in *Ways of Dying*. Contrary to the village, the city is endowed with some evil, corruptive powers and shown to deprave those who go and stay there; those who try to cut their roots and forget where they have come from. (cf. WoD, 13) There is no mention of any particular city name, which might indicate that evil can happen anywhere.

Toloki, however, tries to stay away from people's violent encounters. Ever since the violent argument with his father and the escape into the city – which has held so many false promises for him – Toloki has avoided people in his private life. He stays away from them and they equally avoid him, not at least for the reason of his physical appearance and his odor – Toloki is not keen on regularly washing himself and “smell[s] like death“ (WoD, 57). He only meets people when openly mourning the many tragic deaths. The self-proclaimed “professional mourner” follows his “calling” (WoD, 115), which is inspired by the “austere [...] monks from faraway mountain monasteries” (WoD, 114), and mourns for the people who are captured in their continuous cycle of violence and death.

4.1.2. ‘Authentic-Being-Toward-Death’ (Heidegger): trauma as continuous dying

“A bare subject without a world never 'is.'”
(Martin Heidegger in Stolorow 2007, 1)

They are in this net of death and dying together and can only get out of that misery with united forces. Stolorow relies on Heidegger's theories that are central to the “intersubjective-systems theory” (Stolorow 2007, 9) he and his colleagues have developed to describe the dynamics of trauma, relating it to those of “dying”. In his book he openly distances himself from Freud's psychoanalytic theories and the

“Cartesian, isolated-mind conception of psychic trauma” (ibid.) that has derived from them. “Unlike drives [that are central to Freud's theories], which originate deep within the interior of a Cartesian isolated mind, affect – that is, subjective emotional experience – is something that from birth onward is regulated, or misregulated, within ongoing relational systems.” (ibid., 1) Trauma can only be understood with regard to the social context the trauma victim lives in, as “for Heidegger the being of human life was primordially embedded and engaged ‘in-the-world.’” (ibid., 2) and how this context reacts to his/her feelings or moods, which Heidegger covers with the term ‘Befindlichkeit’ (cf. ibid.). In addition to Heidegger's existentialist philosophy, Stolorow also turns to Kohut's ‘selfobject concept’ to illustrate the contextuality of existence and trauma. The way in which a child's social environment reacts to his/her feelings – “the intersubjective contexts of attunement and malattunement” (ibid., 3) – plays a great role for his/her further development and future coping with traumatic experiences.

Psychological conflict develops when central affect states of the child cannot be integrated because they evoke massive or consistent malattunement from caregivers. [...] Such unintegrated affect states become the source of lifelong emotional conflict and vulnerability to traumatic states because they are experienced as threats both to the person's established psychological organization and to the maintenance of vitally needed ties. Defenses against affect thus become necessary. (ibid.)

According to Stolorow, people are traumatized by the experience itself and other people's reactions to their emotions and suffering. “Shaming reactions” (ibid., 9) are said to make people expect further negative reactions by their social context. What accounts for the development of a child, is also said to be relevant for coping with traumatic experiences later in life. For Stolorow “trauma [...] [is], in essence, an experience of unbearable affect” (ibid.) for which there has not been found or provided “a relational home” (ibid.). Not having found such a place for one's emotional pain forces the person in question to retreat to some kind of emotional exile.

When one does not find a place (or ‘relational home’) to hold one's emotions, the situation can feel like true homelessness. The traumatized person might feel “like a strange and alien being – not of this world” (ibid., 14), in a daze and numbed state, as mentioned before. Stolorow refers to his own trauma – the sudden death of his wife – and the way he felt among people after his experience of bereavement. “[T]he world was divided into two groups: the normals and the traumatized ones. There was no

possibility [...] for a normal ever to grasp the experience of a traumatized one.” (ibid.) He calls it “an alien culture” (ibid., 15), where the traumatized person lives alone, “insulated from human dialogue” (ibid., 20); in an alien space with an alien concept of time, as “[t]rauma destroys time” (ibid., 17). Stolorow mentions that Heidegger's concept of time is built on that of Husserl (1905), who uses the term ‘thick’ to describe the *present* that is experienced. ‘Thick’ is said to contain both, “the past and the future” (ibid., 19). Heidegger (1927) has elaborated on this theory and has come up with the expression “*ecstases* of temporality” (ibid.), which means that each dimension (past, present or future) always points to the other two. They are all thoroughly interwoven, so that each moment refers to all of them. It is, however, exactly this connectedness – “the sense of stretching along between past and future” (ibid., 20) – which is destroyed by trauma.

Experiences of trauma become freeze-framed into an eternal present in which one remains forever trapped, or to which one is condemned to be perpetually returned. [...] [S]tretching along collapses, past becomes present, and future loses all meaning other than endless repetition. (ibid.)

These things considered, trauma constitutes a state of emotional exile, one which cannot be put into words. Finding a ‘relational home’ also means that trauma can be symbolically encoded in order to communicate it to others, to share one's experiences. (ibid., 23) For Stolorow this is also important for the sharing of “world horizons” (ibid., 28). The horizon is taken as a metaphor for what an individual is able to feel and know. “Whatever one is not able to feel or know can be said to fall outside the horizons of one's experiential world.” (ibid.) He adds that there are various different kinds of ‘world horizons’ and that one can only contain in one's horizon what can be represented (or encoded) in a way. The emotions involved in a state of hot memory show in a bodily way and cannot be verbalized. (cf. ibid., 29) “[T]he disarticulation of emotional experience, brings a diminution or even loss of the sense of being, an ontological unconsciousness.” (ibid., 30) Not being able to express this experience basically means not being able to communicate it, not being able to share it, and as a consequence relating to others is not guaranteed the way it should be.

Using Heidegger's conception, one can define trauma as the state of “authentic Being-toward-death” (ibid., 35). Here his distinction of anxiety and fear is important, the

former including “a feeling of uncanniness, in the sense of 'not-being-at-home'” (ibid., 34), whereas the latter can be seen as relating to something that is in the world, something one can get hold of. “Emotional trauma produces an affective state whose features bear a close similarity to the central elements in Heidegger's description of anxiety [...] by plunging the traumatized person into a form of authentic Being-toward-death” (ibid., 39), stripping the everyday world of its significance. One is caught in the ‘smoke’, entirely covered in anxiety and only directed to one's finitude. This constant awareness of one's finitude and exclusive directedness towards it, is described by Heidegger as “authentic Being-toward-death” (ibid., 35).

Trauma is ‘authentic Being-toward-death’, as the isolated person's world is deprived of its sense, meaning and purpose – in short, its entire significance.

Significance, for Heidegger, is a system or context of 'involvements. [...] Any such referential system is anchored in a 'for-the-sake-of-which' – that is, in some possibility of Dasein, some potentiality-for-Being. [...] [T]hese potentialities-for-Being are prescribed by the 'they' (actualizing publicly defined goals and social roles, for example). In authentic Being-toward-death, all such publicly defined potentialities-for-Being are nullified. (ibid.)

The ‘they’ does not exist anymore for the traumatized person. What is left is the awareness of one's singularity. Locked into one's own horizon that cannot be shared with anyone else, the traumatized person is left without any purpose – without a ‘they’ to distract himself/herself from her/his finitude –, anxious, dying.

The characters in *Ways of Dying* are continuously confronted with death; the death of people they know, people they love and care about. Everything is structured around dying, the cruel deeds that lead to it and the (in many cases) almost absurd causes that trigger them off. “Death lives with us everyday. Indeed our ways of dying are our ways of living. Or should I say our ways of living are our ways of dying?” (Toloki, WoD, 98)

Death remains the only possibility, as the outlook into the future (if a *future* is expected at all) is far from positive. In this way, this ‘Being-toward-death’ constitutes “the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all. Death [...] gives Dasein nothing to be 'actualized,' nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself *be*.” (ibid., 36) The ‘for-the-sake-of-which's’ (orientation toward a special purpose) is completely nullified by it. In addition to that, ‘Dasein’ is isolated, “wrenched away from the 'they'” (ibid., 36). ‘Dasein’, however, normally has the function to “cover [...] up” the awareness of ‘Being-toward-death’, to distract people from their own finitude, by “[f]alling into

identification with the 'they' and becoming absorbed in the publicly interpreted everyday world of its practical concern" (ibid., 38). The 'they' endows each individual with social roles and functions and therefore with a certain purpose in life and "provides a constant tranquillization about death" (ibid.) in doing that. As a consequence death is considered a mere (future) event that is not yet there and anxiety is turned into fear, which means that the person in question is not constantly threatened by death any longer. One has found or created some meaning for oneself, one has made sense of one's life and does not find oneself in a continuous state of dying anymore. In *Ways of Dying* whole communities are being captured in a daze, not able to make sense of their existence, only being surrounded by death and destruction, caught in the nameless horrors they have experienced.

As Stolorow mentions, trauma might, however, also "bring one into the mood for a possible resolution, as Heidegger claims of anxiety" (ibid., 45), for "as the smoke begins to clear a bit, traumatized people sometimes feel they have gained 'perspective,' a sense of what 'really matters.'" (ibid.) This is the basis on which post-traumatic growth can flourish. When Toloki leaves the village, he imagines the city to hold only the most beautiful experiences for him. He expects to become a rich man and to find love and peace; "Toloki's odyssey to a wondrous world of freedom and riches." (WoD, 59) The opposite, however, turns out to be the case. Toloki's path to the city is already paved with cruelty and death (e.g. he befriends a worker who then gets killed; he finds a whole community that has been numbed by a horrible massacre (cf. WoD, 66)) and in the city he is confronted with even more death and dying. First, he takes a job as a dockworker, later he sells sausages until his trolley is stolen. (cf. WoD, 120) Toloki experiences another trauma when his shack is destroyed, which leaves him in a daze. (cf. WoD, 145) It is only later, "as the smoke begins to clear a bit" (Stolorow 2007, 45), that he makes up his mind, finds some creative energy and invents the position of the 'Professional Mourner'. He has found a new purpose in life. Dealing with death by means of public mourning, Toloki thus takes one step away from 'authentic being-toward-death'. When Noria asks him if he "is afraid to die, even though his daily work involves death" (WoD, 97), "Toloki [...] says that it is true that death is his constant companion, but where one can avoid one's own death, one must do so. He has a mission in the world, that of mourning for the dead. It is imperative that he does his utmost to stay alive, so that he can fulfil his sacred trust, and mourn for the dead." (ibid.) Being a 'Professional

Mourner', he has found a reason to exist. What he misses, however, is the real connection to a 'they' and a 'relational home' to hold his emotions. Toloki still lives alone and avoids people, or gladly accepts being avoided by them.

4.2. Mourning for what has been lost

Toloki's first step towards coping with his traumatic experiences – and with the brutal environment of death and dying surrounding him in the city – is to establish the vocation of the 'Professional Mourner', in order to show his grief and sorrow, supporting the Nurse's speech at funerals. By doing this, he does not only seem to actively cope with the atrocities that happen around him every day, but also sends the people attending the ceremonies an important message, making those who have lost their loved ones, those who have experienced bereavement, aware of the fact that it is important for one's healing to openly express the sadness one feels inside.

4.2.1. Collective mourning: an attempt to re-unite the community

In *Ways of Dying*, the truth of the deaths is often clad in silence and not publicly acknowledged, mainly because people fear to be attacked by certain groups, if they shed light on the crimes that have led to them. On the one hand, people do not openly mourn for the dead, because they are forced to keep quiet about the facts and as a consequence also have to suppress their emotions. However, it also seems like people do not *know* how to mourn for what has happened to them, for what they have lost, because death is such an omnipresent phenomenon and they are numbed by the hardships they have to endure, unable to express the grief they hold inside. "Some might think that they do not have the necessary time to mourn" (Bryant-Davis 2005, 95), because all of it goes into caring for the family or preparing for and dealing with the next troubles and problems. Mourning might also be socially stigmatized, considering that there are many "taboo topics" (ibid., 96) and certain "societal expectations" (ibid.). "Men are not often given permission to mourn" (ibid.), which means that also gender plays a role.

At the cemetery Toloki sits on one of the five mounds, and groans and wails, and produces other new sounds that he has recently invented especially for mass funerals with political overtones. These sounds are loosely based on chants that youths utter during political

rallies. But Toloki has modified them, and added to them whines and moans that are meant to invoke sorrow and pain. He sways from side to side, particularly when the Nurse tells us the story of the death of these our brothers and sisters. (WoD, 108)

From the above passage, it can be seen that Toloki sends a clear message to his audience, using parts of ‘political chants’ and adding heartbreaking sounds of mourning to them. This is not only an attempt to “invoke sorrow and pain” (WoD, 108) in his spectators, but also one to make people think why so much pain is suffered in apartheid-struck South Africa. Toloki's audience really seems to be inspired and touched by his performance, as “[a]fter the funeral, people come and thank Toloki, and give him some coins.” (WoD, 109) Once an old woman sees him at a funeral and consequently also invites him to one arranged by her, because he “added an aura of sorrow and dignity that we last saw in the olden days when people knew how to mourn their dead.” (WoD, 109) There seems to have been a time when death was not so omnipresent and predictable that one could make a fortune out of it (like Nefolovhodwe has done it); when dying did not possess such an absurd quality (e.g. like when “[t]hese our brothers and sisters died in a squabble over a tin of beef” (WoD, 108)) and when the dead were truly mourned for. Back then one was still able to make sense of the things going on.

Spreading his message, the ‘professional mourner’ wants people to “[r]ecognize the losses that one has had” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 94) and to “feel the impact to those losses – including sadness and grief” (ibid.). Bryant-Davis (as well as Herman (see chapter 1)) emphasize the importance of “connect[ing] with people who will not dismiss their pain.” (Bryant-Davis 2005, 96). Referring back to Stolorow, a ‘relational home’ should be offered by them. “There may [...] be particular strategies or rituals that the survivor is familiar with to help in his mourning.” (ibid., 97) Toloki bases his ‘mourning’ on the traditional funeral ritual (e.g. including that of the Nurse¹⁸), which is something people can relate to, something which brings the community together.

The value of the community is stressed throughout the novel, not only by means of the narrative style, which frequently includes 1st person plural narration, a “communal narrator” (Niadoo 1997, 254). Asked about the motivation for using this narrative

¹⁸ “The concept of the Nurse [...] is a real one. Among the African people [...] the Nurse has an important function at funerals. He is called the Nurse because he is supposed to have nursed the dead person during his or her last moment on earth. The Nurse is also someone who may have not nursed a person, but who might have knowledge of how someone died. The Nurse is therefore a funeral orator who could tell people how a person died.” (Mda in Niadoo 1997, 253)

perspective, Zakes Mda states that “[i]t is very much from [African] orature, really, because the story can be told in the plural form. This is how African people tell stories. But this need not be the case all the time.” (ibid.)

The sense of the ‘community’ generally plays a great role in *Ways of Dying*, which, according to Knapp, portrays a scenery of “social apathy” (Knapp 2006, 57). Everyone is selfish, cares only about himself/herself, unable to feel any sense of ‘togetherness’. There is no ‘sense of moral’ or ‘collective responsibility’ left, as people have been brutalized by the violence that is experienced everyday. Their state of ‘authentic Being-toward-Death’ has made them lose their “ability to mourn at funerals; blunted feelings that are the result of a violent society” (ibid., 56). This goes hand in hand with the naïve believing in one single truth and the rigorous condemnation of all other positions. Telling the ‘truth’ – or what seems to be the entire truth – constitutes another prominent issue in the novel. Knapp refers to the fact that the communal voice points to the manifold varieties of *truth* (cf. Knapp 2006, 64-65) and the subjectivity of story-telling, but still claims to be able to know everything and to tell the *whole* truth. Knapp refers to this as a metafictional comment, by means of which “Mda not only depicts the selective and biased nature of storytelling but also foregrounds the ultimate fictitiousness of all written works of fiction (or history) by parodying its truth-claiming tendencies.” (ibid., 65) A lot of troubles depicted in the novel result from insisting on *one* proclaimed truth and the clash of different positions and perspectives. Some people (or groups of people) try to hide the truth, because officially acknowledging it would mean their loss of face. Others commit violent acts, as from their point of view they are justified; *their truth* demands them. What is missing is the reasonable negotiation of different versions of the *truth*; the collecting and putting together of various stories. Only then the way to reconciliation can be paved. That is something the ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, which began its work in 1994, has been trying to achieve in post-apartheid South Africa. (cf. Knapp 2006, 12) *Ways of Dying* is set in the period of time between 1990 and 1994 – the one of the most significant political transition and the most violent one (cf. ibid., 57) – and is all about reconciliation and “identity reconstruction” (ibid., 11).

The beginning of the process of reconciliation, however, can only be rooted in admitting and expressing one's feelings, in order to vent negative emotions, work through traumatic experiences and to create room for new ideas and a sense of ‘togetherness’, a

new promising form of the 'they'. Mourning in public, Toloki sets an example for other people and also represents some kind of 'empathic listener' (or better 'empathic other'), who senses people's pain and tries to express it in a proper way. "[H]is shoulders are wide enough to comfortably bear all the woes of bereavement" (WoD, 11) and he allows the suffering to transfer them to him. He takes people's sorrow, he sends his message, but he does not really mourn for his own past and traumatic experiences – that process is only started when he gets closer to Noria.

4.2.2. Suffering together: 'Siblings in the same darkness'

Being a 'professional mourner', Toloki feels and expresses the pain and grief of the community. He himself has, however, also a lot of traumatic experiences to carry, which are left unexpressed at first. As much as he mourns other people's losses, his own ones remain unmourned for. Bryant-Davis tackles the question of how it shows when a victim of trauma is involved in a period of active mourning and states that a person who actively mourns is "aware of specific losses that she experienced in the wake of trauma" (Bryant-Davis 2005, 101) and "able to feel sadness and sorrow" (ibid.).

Toloki does not feel particularly positive about his homegirl Noria, when meeting her at the graveyard. His feelings are mixed at best, which is due to some of his childhood experiences. Contrary to Noria, Toloki has never been called lovely or beautiful; nobody has praised him for his laughter, most have just laughed at him because of his perceived 'ugliness'. His father has done his share in negatively influencing Toloki's concept of self.

From the age of five onwards, Noria is seen by Toloki's father as a muse, as an inspiring source of creativity. In his workshop, Toloki's father Jwara, a blacksmith, creates iron figurines and it turns out that his creative energy can only be channeled adequately with the help of Noria, whose singing accompanies the process of creation. At first, Noria seems to enjoy supporting Jwara, not least because he gives her the feeling of being really important. Toloki's father treats her like a goddess, even buying her things as reward for her help. Their sessions of creation sometimes last for one entire week, where the two of them neither stop for drink nor food.

Growing up, however, Noria develops other interests, further seeking to attract people

(especially men), which works well for her. She starts to abandon Jwara and stops caring about their arrangements, which prevents him from creating his figurines, slowly leads him into depression and finally into total decay and death. The depression is accompanied by waves of frustration that make Jwara act aggressively towards his family, including Toloki. His wife, Toloki's mother, blames Noria for this behavior, who is given the nickname 'stuck-up-bitch'. "You spend all your time with that stuck-up bitch, Noria, and you do not care for your family!" (Toloki's mother in WoD, 29)

Seeing her again, Toloki still knows Noria by this name and remembers her as the one who – not only being responsible for his father's cruel aggressive outbursts – has more or less killed his father; the wonderful Noria, whose laughter has always attracted the men. However, he soon learns that the situation is different now, that Noria does not lead the happy life he has always expected her to lead. In fact, he finds out that the girl from his past has just lost her son to the everyday violence dominating the city. Knowing about this traumatic loss links Toloki to her in a way, as he is also traumatized, first and foremost by the loss he experienced when leaving his family after one of his father's outbursts and the cruelties he has faced on his way to the city and in the city. "Loss can be an emotional trauma for which it is especially difficult to find a relational home." (Stolorow 2007, 50) Noria's trauma is something that makes him relate to her, something they have in common. They both know what loss feels like, they share some truth, their 'world horizons' overlap, or, as Stolorow would say, this time moving a little bit farther away from Heidegger, they are "[s]iblings in the same darkness" (ibid., 47).

A number of commentators note an impoverishment characteristic of Heidegger's conception of 'being-with,' his term for the existential structure that underpins the capacity for relationality. Authentic being-with is largely restricted in Heidegger's philosophy to a form of 'solicitude' that mirrors and encourages the other, liberating the other for his or her 'ownmost' authentic possibilities." (ibid., 48)

This basically means that "the treasuring of a particular other" (ibid.), or love, is not central to Heidegger's theories. *Death* is something that is seen as totally non-relational, as everyone is alone in one's dying. In *Dasein*, however, one is said to be able to share with others and – as one takes on certain social roles – one can also be substituted by or substitute another individual. There is some common basis, some common understanding that is shared. "[I]n the face of the [...] nonrelationality (unsharability) of the possibility of death, the intersubstitutability characteristic of the 'they' 'breaks down

completely” (ibid., 37). *Death* is something that in terms of Heidegger's philosophy cannot be shared by individuals and also does not entail substitutability, as nobody can die for another one; everyone has to individually experience one's death and is utterly left alone in this experience.

As a consequence, trauma, as ‘authentic Being-toward-death’ – with the trauma victim's death as the only possibility left – makes one feel totally alone and unable to share one's experiences. Here Stolorow makes some important change to arrive at a proper synthesis for his theory relating trauma to human existence. Referring to Vogel (1994), he turns to

another dimension of the relationality of finitude. Just as finitude is fundamental to our existential constitution, so too is it constitutive of our existence that we meet each other as ‘brothers and sisters in the same dark night’ [...], deeply connected with one another in virtue of our *common* finitude. Thus, although the possibility of emotional trauma is ever present, so too is the possibility of forming bonds of deep emotional attunement within which devastating emotional pain can be held, rendered more tolerable, and, hopefully, eventually integrated. (ibid., 49)

Even though the individual might be alone in his own death, we all share a ‘common finitude’, which also relates us to one another. Like the possibility of death, the possibility of trauma is something that we share, that is always part of our existence. The experience of trauma (as ‘Being-toward-death’) can thus also be shared by those who know it, who have it in common. As one cannot prevent death, one cannot get rid of the traumatic loss itself, but one can help each other cope with it, with life.

According to Stolorow, there is a certain “longing[...] for twinship or emotional kinship” (ibid., 49) linked to trauma which creates the feeling of “singularity, estrangement, and solitude” (ibid.), and refers to himself when he states that

[w]hen I have been traumatized, my only hope for being deeply understood is to form a connection with a brother or sister who knows the same darkness. Twinship longings are ubiquitous [...] because the possibility of emotional trauma is constitutive of our existence and of our being-with one another in our common finitude. (ibid., 49-50)

Stolorow has found his personal “brother-in-darkness” (ibid., 51) – a “phrase in Vogel's work” (ibid.) – in a friend of his, who suffered a similar traumatic loss. Equally Toloki and Noria find in each other a “sibling[...] in the same darkness” (ibid., 47). Noria has just lost her second child at the very young age of five and experiences the reluctance of

the street committee to officially acknowledge the true reason for his death. “Their apology is made privately, and not at the public meeting, as the local street committee had promised, and is accompanied by a rider about her son’s guilt. This fills her with anger.” (WoD, 174) Toloki, like Noria, is familiar with the cruel feeling of loss, which draws the two of them closer together.

They both ascribe to each other the ability to know how to live (cf. WoD, 115, 144, 169) and assist each other in the process of coping with their traumatic experiences. First, Toloki does not give way to a lot of his own past, but listens closely to what Noria has to say, being the empathic listener with whom she can share her story and her emotions. It can be seen that Toloki is very compassionate and careful with Noria's feelings. He never puts any pressure on Noria; he does not prompt or force her to talk about the things she is not yet ready to talk about.

‘Perhaps we shouldn’t talk about this, Noria. I am sorry I brought it up.’

‘It is painful to remember. But we cannot pretend it did not happen.’

Toloki is longing to hear how The Second [Noria's second son, who, like the first one, is called Vutha] saw his death. But he will not add to Noria’s sorrow by pressing the matter.

(Toloki and Noria in WoD, 150)

Likewise, Noria accepts Toloki the way he is, does not prejudge him, shows interest in his ‘profession’ and tries to understand his way of living.

‘I would like to go with you. Please let me go with you.’

‘Was it not unsettling for you when you went with me yesterday? I did not hear you say anything about it.’

‘I have not yet come to grips with it, Toloki. Please give me time to come to grips with it.’

[...]

‘I do want to go, Toloki. I want to participate in your world.’

(Toloki and Noria in WoD, 150-151)

This behavior shows Toloki that she is no threat to him, that he does not have to hide anything from her. In addition to that, Noria also shows her compassion and lets Toloki know how sorry she feels for the way he used to be treated back in the village.

Then out of the blue, Noria is distressed.

‘Toloki, I am sorry about the way they treated you back in the village...about the way we treated you.’

‘It happened a long time ago, Noria. I never think about it all.’

‘You are a beautiful person, Toloki. That is why I want you to teach me how to live. And how to forgive.’

(Toloki and Noria in WoD, 151)

Being called 'beautiful' proves to be very important for Toloki, who has always been given the feeling to be an 'ugly' person. (cf. WoD, 151) A sense of safety develops between the two of them, which, according to Herman (see chapter 1), is the first step that has to be taken in a person's process of recovery.

What is equally important is that they slowly begin to allow themselves to *feel* something and to admit their true feelings for each other. They become emotionally attached. "He has never had so much good feeling swelling in his chest before." (WoD, 200) Starting to feel something is a very good sign, as traumatized people tend to keep their emotions locked up (at least in the presence of others), afraid that the feelings encountered at the initial experience might re-surface again or that they might become vulnerable when opening up emotionally. There are a few passages that clearly show that Toloki and Noria have either openly denied their emotions or have been unable to feel anything at times.

What he [= Toloki] is feeling now is perhaps akin to what people have described as love. But then he made up his mind a long time ago that he was not capable of such feelings. They are common feelings for common people. They are taboo in his vocation (WoD, 51).

But unfortunately she [= Noria] finds it impossible to love at the moment. (WoD, 70)

Concerning emotions, 'laughing' proves to be an important reaction in the novel and seems to be associated with genuine 'happiness' – or, with regard to Stolorow, can be seen as directly opposed to anxiety. "In our language there is a proverb which says the greatest death is laughter." (Toloki in WoD, 164) As shown above, for Stolorow trauma is constant 'Being-toward-death' and entails the feeling of 'anxiety'. 'Laughing' seems to directly overcome this state. A laughing person is taken to be a *happy* person, an emotional condition that is totally different from that involved in constantly felt 'Being-toward-death'. The laughing person will die a happy person, one who has reached his personal happy ending. Noria is famous for her beautiful laughter until she loses it, because of the traumatic experiences she makes. Life is not as peaceful for her anymore; life has become constant 'Being-toward-death', distorted by anxiety.

Noria could not laugh. She tried very hard to live up to their expectations, and to make her homeboys and homegirls happy, as she had willingly done so many times back in the village, but her laughter would not come. She could only manage a strained grin; which, according to those who saw it, looked like that of someone who was constipated. It was as though the well from which the pleasant laughter flowed had run dry. (WoD, 136)

Together with Toloki, however, she slowly manages to win back her laughter on her path of healing, something which is also noticed by Toloki. “Sudden elation overwhelms Toloki. Noria’s laughter is surely regaining its old potency.” (WoD, 67) The healing power of ‘laughing’ together is unmistakably expressed in the novel.

The stories of the past are painful. But when Toloki and Noria talk about them, they laugh. Laughter is known to heal even the deepest of wounds. Noria’s laughter has the power to heal troubled souls. This afternoon, as the two of them sit in front of the shanty, exhausted from building last night’s creation, and refreshing themselves with stories of the past and soured porridge, Toloki lavishly bathes his soul in her laughter. (WoD, 95)

They enjoy themselves in an outburst of laughter after having re-built Noria's shack, which was destroyed in a fire set by the same people who are responsible for her second son's death – the so-called ‘freedom fighters’. This is only the beginning of a process of collective *re-building and growth*.

4.3. Re-shaping, re-building and post-traumatic growth: glowing together in the darkness

There are many symbols in Zakes Mda's novel that indicate a process of growth and re-building. Flowers (roses and zinnias), which Toloki brings Noria as a gift and a sign of their bonding and budding love, are the first to come up. They, however, also signify a process of post-traumatic thriving in Toloki as well as Noria. Like the two of them, flowers stand out from the sadness – the dreariness that shows in every corner of the city and cruelty of everyday city life.

That is what he loves most about this city. It is a garden city, with flowers and well-tended shrubs and bushes growing at every conceivable place. In all seasons, blossoms fill the air. Sometimes when he goes to a funeral he picks a flower or two, as long as no one sees him, as you are not supposed to pick the flowers in the city parks, gardens and sidewalks. And that gives him a great idea: he might as well pick a few flowers for Noria. Just to make doubly sure, he looks around, then picks a few zinnias. He would have preferred roses, but he would have had to cross two streets in the opposite direction to get roses. So, zinnias will do. (WoD, 45-46)

Zinnias that “come in different colours” (WoD, 46) and roses that can be understood as *the* symbol of love. They illustrate how love can outgrow hate in order to help shape a better future.

4.3.1. Re-building the past, creating a future: the power of make-belief

Working through their traumatic experiences together, Toloki and Noria attempt to rebuild their past and start to create a more promising future. This is shown in the several artistic activities they engage in, the first of which can be seen in the re-establishment of Noria's shack. What once used to be a simple shack is turned into a wondrous site of beauty and magic, created in an act that seems to be accompanied by forces of spiritual quality. "Through Toloki's connections with dockworkers and watchmen, they were able to get plenty of building material, mostly plastic and canvas. There are sheets of iron and poles as well. And nails and ropes and pieces of wire. Noria's house is going to be beautiful, because the canvas and plastic come in all the colours of the rainbow. [...] [T]hey have enough material to create a really elegant shack, without paper and cardboard, something much better than the one Noria had before." (WoD, 58) The old shack has been laid to rest and the new one shines brighter than any shack has ever done before, proudly bearing the colors of the new South Africa, constituting a magical symbol of hope for a whole country's brighter future. "[T]here is a full moon, and they continue through the night, constructing what Toloki feels is going to be a masterpiece. And of course, the moon would shine when Noria builds her house, wouldn't it?" (WoD, 58) There are many magical elements in *Ways of Dying*, due to Zakes Mda's frequent use of the stylistic device of magical realism, which according to him simply points to the great role magic plays in African belief systems. "[A]s Africans we always live with magic." (Naidoo 1997, 250) The author claims to have used magical elements in his works before even knowing 'magic realism' existed as a device.

I had not heard of magic realism when I started writing [...] plays. It is something that I have always done in my writing. I make things happen the way I want things to happen, however much that might contradict what you might call objective reality. Basically I felt that these were my creations. The world that I was writing about was the world that I created. [...] Whether in the so-called objective reality things would happen in that way, or not, is not the issue for me." (Naidoo 1997, 250)

In a way, Zakes Mda deconstructs the concept of an objective world and points to the subjectivity of reality, which is shaped by different world views and belief systems. "When I started with my first novel *Ways of Dying* I was conscious of a movement called magic realism and that I was writing a magic realist novel. But basically I was doing what I had done much earlier. Here in Africa there is magic happening all the

time. There are many belief systems and in fact a lot of the things that the western world refers to as superstition. For me such things actually happen and I portray them as such in my writings.” (ibid.) Magic realism also shows in the walks Toloki and Noria take in their newly-found make-belief garden, “their wonderland” (WoD, 113), another site of fancy’s flight into more colorful, blossoming days to come. (cf. WoD, 112-114)

Having re-built the shack in a stunning fashion, Noria and Toloki are henceforth referred to as “[t]he two creators” (WoD, 69). Local people that come to take a look at the magical creation seem to be captivated by the power of their work of art. “When the neighbours wake up that morning, they all come to witness the wonder that grew in the night. They marvel at the workmanship, and at how the plastic and canvas of different colours have been woven together to form patterns that seem to say something to the viewer. No one can really say what their message is, except to observe that it is a very profound one.” (WoD, 68) Children come and start to sing and dance in order to praise the wonderful work of art and the two creators Toloki and Noria, striking up songs, “some of which they have heard their parents, and their brothers and sisters, sing at demonstrations, and at political rallies and funerals. Soon the song becomes stronger, with the voices of adults joining in.” (WoD, 69) Noria and Toloki’s creation has managed to bring people together in a peaceful way. It has bridged the gap brought about by communal violence and cruelty in post-apartheid South Africa. The power of art is great and it knows to heal people’s wounded souls.

4.3.2. Art and its healing power: re-connecting and re-shaping

Art can help people to convey meaning, even if they lack the necessary words to communicate it. By means of artistic activity, trauma victims are able to express what cannot be verbalized. This is exactly what art therapy tries to support.

Visual art therapy is a therapeutic process based on spontaneous or prompted creative expression using various art materials and art techniques such as painting, drawing, sculpture, modeling (clay or substitutes), collage, etc. It offers a nonverbal language to express emotions and focuses on the way the client works and creates. The artwork products document the therapeutic process, enable their creators to hold a dialogue with themselves, and are lasting objects that can be related to for a long time. At the heart of art therapy lies the healing power of the creative process and the special communication that takes place [...]. Although the art expresses the suffering, it also calls to the creative,

healthy part of the client, which enables an authentic, non-threatening expression, opening new possibilities for change and growth. (Avrahami 2006, 6)

There are two art forms that receive special emphasis in *Ways of Dying*: drawing and sculpting, both of which are shown to have some healing function. In addition to that, singing plays a role, as is to be seen in the “meaningless” (WoD, 199) melody Noria sings for Jwara when he creates his figurines; the same melody that she later sings for Toloki.

4.3.2.1. Drawing people: establishing a ‘they’

The bond between Toloki and Noria is described as a “creative partnership” (WoD, 200), a relationship that helps each ‘partner’ to re-create, to cope with his/her traumatic experiences and to forge a brighter future. There is, however, another process to be observed, considering the fact that Noria and Toloki do not focus on themselves, but also start to (re-)connect with their social environment. What develops is a sense of ‘togetherness’. Together with Noria, Toloki manages to truly get in touch with people, to start living and working with people (e.g. when helping Noria's friend Madimbhaza (cf. WoD, 162)) and to establish a ‘they’ for himself, which endows him with new tasks, purposes and roles; in short, with a civilian life. First, Toloki does not really trust the situation and seems to be slightly shocked about Noria's idea to move in with her, calling it his duty to stay away from people. “I am a monk, Noria. A man with a vocation. I mourn for the dead. I cannot stop mourning, Noria. Death continues every day. Death becomes me, it is a part of me.” (WoD, 115) As a monk he cannot get closer to one person; it would be against his personal unwritten code of honor. In actual fact, Toloki uses this justification as a defense mechanism, as an excuse for avoiding others. “He will have nothing to do with people who have treated him with so much disrespect.” (WoD, 10) Noria, however, does not let go of him. “What power does this woman have, who has dragged him into communion with live human beings, when he had vowed to dedicate all his life to the dead? [...] She does not carry her grief like a cross, but goes on with her life.” (WoD, 148) Noria's life takes place between the living and the dead, whereas Toloki has chosen the dead over the living who have disappointed him so often. The latter has opted for the continuous ‘Being-toward-death’, while “[t]his intoxicating Noria, surrounded by live and dead flowers” (WoD, 115) has decided to re-

establish her life among a 'they'. Here the flowers might also stand for the people Toloki finally connects with. He has always been able to draw *flowers* (at least until he stops drawing at all), but has never managed to draw people. Laughed at from the very start, called ugly and dumb by the village community and met with harsh rejection on the part of his father, he has never been able to successfully bond with others. Noria is the first one to gain his trust and love and to offer him a 'relational home' for his emotions. Assisted by her singing, he finally successfully starts drawing pictures of community members. People are like blossoming flowers in the end, growing and thriving together, spreading in various colors, constituting a sight of beauty and harmony.

Toloki remembers the crayons and paper that he brought from the city. He takes them out and starts drawing pictures. He draws flowers, and is surprised to see that his hand has not lost its touch. He draws roses that look like those he brought Noria, the roses that are still very much alive in the bottle that is filled with water inside the shack. He also draws zinnias that he brought her the other day. [...] Noria sings her meaningless song of old. All of a sudden, Toloki finds himself drawing pictures of the children playing. [...] The drawing becomes frenzied, as Noria's voice rises. Passers-by stop to watch, and are overcome by warm feelings. It is as though Toloki is possessed by this new ability to create human figures. He breathes heavily with excitement, and his palms are clammy. His whole body tingles, as he furiously gives shape to the lines on the paper. His breathing reaches a crescendo that is broken by an orgasmic scream. (WoD, 198-199)

Drawing people symbolizes Toloki's healing effort as well as a general sense of 'togetherness' in the community. In the description above, the process of visual creation is linked to the dynamics of re-production, of re-creating living human being. A link that will also be obvious with regard to the figurines.

"Noria has suggested that he wear his mourning clothes only when he goes to funerals. At home, he must look like other men." (WoD, 162) The change Toloki undergoes can also be noticed in the way he dresses now. "Toloki's transformation from an austere living monk to a normal living and feeling human being is for the first time hinted at when he and Noria share their newly erected shack for the night" (Knapp 2006, 58) A project that has also enhanced his self-esteem, as he clearly shows some pride about what they have achieved. "If you don't praise yourself while you are still alive, no one else will. They will only praise you in their funeral orations when you are dead." (WoD, 147) Art makes Toloki see that he has the power to create something, that he is talented and that he can achieve whatever he wants, if only he gives it a try. People do not mock

him anymore and for the first time it seems to be clear to him that his father has always been wrong about him.

4.3.2.2. Sculpting: the magic of the figurines

There is no doubt that, apart from its healing capacity, art carries some other functions and symbolic value in *Ways of Dying*. Sculpting the figurines depicts this perfectly well, not least because of the various social connotations metallurgy has in African belief systems, with magic playing an important role again.

4.3.2.2.1. Metallurgy and magic in African belief systems

As shown by Childs and Killick, magic has always been tightly interwoven with metallurgy in rural African spheres.

The processes of transforming ore into metal and unrefined metal into an object through the control of fire are widely conceived in Africa as dangerous and uncertain acts of creation, subject to interference by ancestral spirits and by acts of sorcery from fellow mortals [...]. Secret rituals and symbols, along with various rules and taboos, were viewed as essential to counteract such supernatural forces, and as important to a successful smelt as were the ore and fuel. Smelting operations were carried out far from villages, required special protective charms and medicines, and were restricted to specific individuals, usually those with particular kin ties and specialized training [...]. While mining and smithing were more public enterprises, they also often required special precautions and rituals. (Childs/Killick 1993, 325)

Toloki's father Jwara retreats to his workshop for his rituals of creation. There is a sense of magic related to his person. "He [Nefolovhodwe] wondered how Jwara had managed to create all these works, and where he had got the iron and sometimes brass to make so many figurines. Or did they perhaps multiply on their own, giving birth to more metal monsters?" (WoD, 208) Also his death is followed by magical theories and speculations. "When Jwara was buried, no one wanted to be the Nurse. Everyone who was asked said, 'We cannot call upon ourselves the wrath of the ancestors by being witness to things we do not know. We do not know how Jwara died.'" (WoD, 111) Jwara is portrayed like a sorcerer, dangerous in a way, dedicating a lot of time to his "uncertain act[...] of creation" (Childs/Killick 1993, 325). "[M]etalworkers were often suspected of being

sorcerers or shamans themselves. In fact, some took up their speciality because of demands by spirits in dreams.” (Childs/Killick 1993, 327-328) This is exactly where the blacksmith Jwara is said to get his ideas for the figurines from. “Sometimes new shapes would visit him in his dreams, and he would want to create them the next day. [...] [When] Jwara’s dreams had been particularly crowded the previous night, [...] he was unable to stop until he had reproduced all the strange creatures with which he had interacted in his sleep.” (WoD, 31)

4.3.2.2.2. The figurines in *Ways of Dying*: symbols of transition and re-birth

Forging the figurines, he is alone in his workshop; alone except for one person, without whom the project does not work.

On those days [of creation] he got that stuck-up bitch, Noria, to sing while he shaped the red-hot iron and brass into images of strange people and animals that he had seen in his dreams. Noria was ten years old, but considered herself very special, for she sang for the spirits that gave Jwara the power to create the figurines. [...] We came and gathered around the workshop, and solemnly listened to her never-changing song. Even the birds forgot about the beetles, and joined the bees hovering over the workshop, making buzzing and chirping sounds in harmony with Noria’s song. (WoD, 29)

She evokes the spirits that are traditionally supposed to be involved in processes of smelting and forging, by means of her song, which seems to have the power to create peace and harmony. “It was as though they were possessed by the powerful spirits that made them create the figurines.” (WoD, 30) The spirits are also referred to when Noria tells Toloki that “the figurines are not ugly. Remember that my spirit is in them too.” (WoD, 209)

Why does Noria possess the power to call upon the ancestral spirits to foster the process of creation, “to change mediocre artisans into artists of genius” (WoD, 31)? Noria has always been ascribed an aura of magic. As a child, she is said to be able to influence people’s emotions, to make them laugh (with the help of her own beautiful laughter) or to make them cry (when being sad). (cf. WoD, 32) An adult, she gives birth to a son (Vutha) after having carried him in her womb for fifteen months. After Vutha’s father kills him by tying him to a pole near the water and forgetting about him, leaving him to the power of the flood, Noria gives birth to a second child (Vutha, the Second), again

being pregnant for fifteen months. She believes that she has magically re-born him.¹⁹ In addition to that, Noria's mother is said to have special powers and to create love potions and medicines to heal the sick. The involvement with magical powers (and the power to heal) might thus have been passed on to Noria.

As mentioned by Childs and Killick, “two axes of fundamental human experience, gender and age, provide a framework that structured behavior in the production of iron, and quite likely, other metals in Africa. Gender involves an interplay between males and females through the human life cycle.” (Childs/Killick 1993, 325) Historically, iron smelting was considered “analogous to gestation and birth” (ibid., 326), with “men bring[ing] iron into the world by appropriating, through symbol and metaphor, the reproductive power of women.” (ibid.) Smelting was basically compared to the sexual act. Smiths were often not allowed to engage in any worldly sexual activities during the time of smelting and the furnace used for the operations was often modelled according to a woman's body. (cf. Ibid., 327) Women are said to have often been excluded from metalwork. Sometimes “only prepubescent girls or postmenopausal women” (ibid.) were involved with the workers during the smelting process (e.g. bringing them food). Having started at the age of five, Noria is still a child when she assists Jwara.

The axis of age also shows regarding the belief in the involvement of ancestral spirits. “The oldest and most powerful of all in many societies are the deceased ancestors, who have the power to assure success or failure in any enterprise [...]. The favor of the ancestors was courted through specific rituals and taboos that were an integral and essential part of metal technologies.” (ibid., 326) In *Ways of Dying*, Jwara and Noria have found their ritual, without which the forging of the figurines cannot be successful.

Interestingly, Childs and Killick state that metalworking was and is generally linked to transformation and renewal (of people or whole societies). Birth and death are closely linked to the process of forging, as, for example, in West Africa, ironworkers are often those who also have the “rights to perform other transformative acts, notably circumcision and burial” (ibid., 330) Furthermore, “[a] common use of metal objects in many societies is to mark major changes in a person's life cycle.” In Togo, “elaborate iron jewelry [are used] at the naming ceremony of a newborn to symbolize the

¹⁹ Vutha, the Second, also dies (or: dies again), which is said to be at least partly due to the meaning of his name, considering that “the meanings of names are fulfilled” (WoD, 83).

connections to the infant's ancestors, as well as familial continuity through rebirth [...].” (ibid., 332) Metal objects are also involved in ceremonies aiming at the renewal of society (cf. Ibid., 333) and therefore also possess some relevance in the political arena.

The concepts of transformation, renewal and rebirth are of great importance in *Ways of Dying*. Toloki finds himself in a process of transformation, as does the whole country he lives in. The process of collective mourning has led to some kind of catharsis, which has made people's minds open to new ideas and creative thinking. A wave of creation and change has begun. The figurines equally symbolize the transformation and thriving of society – standing for some kind of renewal (“‘Happe-e-e-e New Year!’” (WoD, 211)) – as well as the memories of the past, which have come to the fore again. Toloki has connected with a ‘they’ and a general sense of ‘togetherness’ has developed. People reunite and grow strong, glowing in the darkness, like the figurines are said to glow. (cf. WoD, 212) At the end there is laughter, echoing from a well of happiness. (cf. WoD, 210)

5. Rachel Zadok's *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*

5.1. Trauma and dissociation (or *amafufunyana*)

Rachel Zadok's farm novel *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* is centered on Faith, a young girl spending the first years of her life on a farm in South Africa (still dominated by the apartheid system) together with her mother Bella (Isabella) English and her father Marius Steenkamp. Life is tough in the absence of rain which has forced her father to take a job as a salesman in the city, only returning home for the weekends; something which proves to be the highlight of the week for both Faith and Bella. When Marius suddenly stops his visits (because he has a love affair) the parents' ever-growing disagreements culminate. Faith has to watch a violent conversation between her parents and even has her mother, completely out of her mind, attack her with a gun. “‘That’s it. I can’t fucking do this any more. You fired a gun at your own child.’” (Marius in GST, 49) Her father leaves them and Faith is left at the mercy of her mother and her increasing craze and decay, retreating more and more to her fairy-world – which Faith has been told about and made to believe in since she was born –, dragging the girl with her, who is not able to cope with the ever-growing distress and starts losing grip on reality.²⁰ Tannie Hettie tries to help Faith and Bella by sending Nomsa, a black maid, to give them assistance. While Faith attaches quite strongly to her new and only true friend, her mother faces Nomsa with disregard and suspicion, telling Faith that she would drive her fairies away and thus not contribute to her health, but foster her downfall. More and more confused, Faith does not know what to believe in and whom to trust anymore. Her whole life goes to pieces, a tragedy that reaches its peak with Nomsa being shot dead in her room in the middle of one crucial night in the year 1985. Bella is arrested and Faith, aged seven at the time, gets to live with Mia – a (former) friend of her mother’s – and her daughter Molly in Johannesburg, feeling nothing but hatred for her mother, the alleged, insane murderess.

Not consciously recalling some essential experiences (due to some kind of psychological dissociation), Faith finds out the truth about that very night and the part she has played in it only much later. It is a *truth* thoroughly locked away into the deepest, unconscious abyss of her young soul, where it is not open to access for ages; too heavy and opaque to be contained, though re-surfacing from time to time in various

²⁰ At least that is one way of understanding it, as will be shown further down.

disguises, haunting her continuously. Only much later she puts together the missing bits and pieces and finally sees the whole picture – in a way that challenges Westernized thinking. For there is more to *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* than one might think at first.

5.1.1. The phenomenon of dissociation

Dissociation may be of an everyday type (e.g., daydreaming), which does not imply the formation of disconnected memories, and which would better be labeled absorption, or it may be of a qualitatively different and pathological type [...], which is characterized by the formation of dissociative memory structures [...]. While this distinction has not consistently been made, many authors have hypothesized that dissociation reaching pathological proportions is trauma-induced as a rule [...]. (Nijenhuis et al. 1998, 712)

Waller et al. basically refer to psychological dissociation as “a failure to integrate cognitive, behavioural and emotional aspects of experience.” (Waller et al. 2001, 82) Like trauma itself, dissociation is said to have the quality to destroy the ‘victim’s’ experience of holism regarding his/her identity and personality structure. (cf. Fiedler 2002, 1) As stated by Waller et al., “[p]sychological dissociation has a range of cognitive, affective and behavioural manifestations, including amnesia, depersonalization, derealization, identity confusion, loss of control over behaviour, and identity alteration [...]” (Waller et al. 2001, 83) These might be temporary or chronic and occur together with other psychological disorders following traumatic experience, such as phobias, PTSD, depression, schizophrenia or borderline personality disorder. (cf. Fiedler 2002, 1) The following dissociative disorders described are classified in ‘DSM-IV’ of the American Psychological/Psychiatric Association and ‘ICD-10’ of the WHO. (cf. *ibid.*)

5.1.1.1. Derealization and depersonalization

According to Fiedler, derealization and depersonalization, which are often both described in the category of ‘depersonalization’, are the most common dissociative disorders. (cf. Fiedler et al. 2002, 5) “*Depersonalisation* im engeren Sinne kennzeichnet eine Erfahrung, in der es zu einem subjektiven Gefühl von Fremdheit, Irrealität, Abtrennung und Ungewohntheit dem eigenen Selbst, seinen Handlungen und seiner Umgebung gegenüber kommt.” (*ibid.*) In this case, the dissociative experience concerns

the way the ‘victim’ perceives himself/herself, making the person feel somehow alien (or detached). It might involve feeling robotic or in a daze, a dream-like state. (cf. *ibid.*) On the contrary, derealization “beinhaltet die subjektive Erfahrung von Veränderungen in den räumlichen und zeitlichen Beziehungen der Umgebung gegenüber” (*ibid.*). As a consequence, an actually neutral place might suddenly seem particularly well-known (an experience which is described as ‘*déjà-vu*’) or unusually unfamiliar. (cf. *ibid.*) The alienating change in perception thus relates to the environment in this case. In both, ‘depersonalization’ and ‘derealization’, the person's reality awareness is still given. (cf. *ibid.*)

5.1.1.2. Dissociative amnesia

Dissociative amnesia basically means that the person in question is unable to remember some important pieces of information regarding a (most often) traumatic experience. (cf. Fiedler 2002, 2) These can include aspects taking place before, during or after the respective event. (cf. *ibid.*, 2-3) In most cases the ‘victim’ is not initially aware of lacking any information and might only find out through other people that something important is missing. (cf. *ibid.*, 4) Fiedler states that dissociative amnesia does not generally deserve to be labeled ‘disorder’. “Tritt die dissoziative Amnesie solitär und ohne weitere psychische Komplikationen auf, gilt sie zugleich als die am wenigsten gravierende Störung. Das Erinnerungsvermögen stellt sich vielfach sehr spontan und zumeist vollständig wieder ein.” (*ibid.*) Only in case of a lasting memory loss and related suffering it is to be termed ‘disorder’. (cf. *ibid.*)²¹

5.1.1.3. Dissociative identity disorder

Formerly referred to as ‘multiple personality disorder’, this dissociative disorder describes a person’s showing different identity structures and changing states of personality (including personality traits). The patient's self appears to be fragmented. (cf. *ibid.*, 10-11)

²¹ For a detailed account concerning the different kinds of dissociative amnesia, see Fiedler et al. 2002, 2-4.

5.1.1.4. Dissociative trance and possession trance

‘Dissociative trance’ refers to a person's temporary change in his/her consciousness or usual feeling for and perception of his/her identity. (cf. Fiedler 2002, 9) “Dieser Zustand ist üblicherweise verbunden mit einer Einengung der Wahrnehmung der unmittelbaren Umgebung oder mit einer ungewöhnlich eingengten und selektiven Fokussierung auf Umgebungsreize.” (ibid.) Concerning ‘dissociative possession trance’, the person’s state of mind is often said to be changed by an ‘external’ entity, such as a spiritual force. (cf. ibid.) “Einerseits lassen sich stereotypisierte und kulturell festgelegte Verhaltensweisen oder Bewegungen beobachten, die als unter der Kontrolle des Besessenheits-Agens stehend erlebt werden. Andererseits folgt der Besessenheits-Trance eine vollständige oder partielle Amnesie für das Ereignis.“ (ibid.) Fiedler emphasizes the fact that these kinds of dissociation can only be regarded as ‘disorders’, if they 1) are not accepted as part of cultural or religious rituals, or 2) create suffering in the person experiencing them. (cf. ibid.) As shall be shown, regarding *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* the situation is still a little more complex than this.

5.1.2. Dissociation as culture-bound phenomenon: a matter of belief systems

In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, Rachel Zadok plays with different belief systems, emphasizing the contrasting views regarding ‘modern’ Westernized thinking and ‘traditional’ African beliefs.²² This contrast is shown throughout the novel and especially obvious in Faith's final healing process. From a cultural point of view, ‘dissociation’ also is not the clear-cut phenomenon generalized Western thinking takes it to be. “Interpreting native manifestations of ASC [= altered states of consciousness] in terms of psychiatric classification systems could be an overextension of Western psychiatry and an unwarranted ethnocentric intimation of inherent pathology. Such pathologization is particularly dubious in light of empirically documented nonpathologic dissociative phenomena in the scientific literature (eg, nonvolition in hypnosis [...]).” (Somer 2006, 215) In some societies dissociative phenomena are not

²² The terms ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ prove to be quite ‘fuzzy’. Here ‘modern’ is supposed to refer to the thinking common in Western spheres today, whereas ‘traditional’ is used with regard to African beliefs that have developed throughout history and are still somewhat independent from Western influences.

considered pathologic events and sometimes even caused for the purpose of healing. “Much culture-bound dissociation in nonpossession trance states is considered normal. *Inasmuch as it does not lead to distress or impairment*, it often arises in willing subjects in appropriate [...] contexts, and is commonly experienced as beneficial.” (ibid., 217; own emphasis)

This might also be influenced by the respective dominating concept of ‘identity’. In the western world, due to a general process of individualization, individual identity is viewed as totally separate from others, whereas “[i]n many traditional communities, individuals are enmeshed in the collective identities of their families and tribes and see themselves as extensions of a collective core identity [...]” (ibid., 218) There might thus be a greater acceptance of shifting or fluid identities and a less “hostile [stance] to[wards] polypsychic views of the human experience.” (ibid., 221) In addition to ‘nonpossession trance’ phenomena, Somer refers to ‘possession trance’, which is also commonly noticed in non-western spheres.

Possession trance is defined as a single or episodic alteration in the state of consciousness characterized by the replacement of customary sense of personal identity with a new identity. This kind of trance is attributed to the influence of a spirit, power, deity, or other person [...] [,] representing a range of experience spanning from the socially sanctioned, construed, learned, and ritually controllable possession by revered deities [...] to the unauthorized, unruly, and threatening occurrences of demonic possession (ibid., 219).

The latter are said to be untolerated by society and responsible for a lot of distress and suffering in the respective person. (cf. ibid.)

As much as our socio-cultural environment shapes the way we perceive reality, it provides us with the categories of what can be considered ‘healthy’ (or at least harmless) or pathological. (cf. ibid., 221) *Reality* indeed proves to be highly subjective and culture-dependent, which is emphasized by Zadok’s use of ‘magic realism’ in her novel. There is no such thing as one truly objective reality. What is considered ‘real’ in one cultural sphere is never generally acknowledged. As has already been discussed with regard to Zakes Mda’s *Ways of Dying* (see chapter 4 of this thesis), what is called *magic* constitutes a vital part of (South) African everyday life. It can thus not be seen as truly distinct from reality, but rather as something that shapes the way it is perceived. One case is the occurrence of ancestral spirits which are often said to be able to communicate with and to strongly influence the living, being responsible for their

fortune or misfortune. Common modern Western thinking²³ often finds it hard to tolerate these views.

Keeping this in mind, *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* can be read in different ways. What is for sure is that Faith's dissociation can be seen in a negative sense. The assumption of how it is brought about, however, might vary according to the cultural standpoint from which one looks at her case.

5.1.3. Fragmenting 'Faith'

What Faith does not know and only finds out at the end of the novel, when having reassembled the pieces of her shattered past, is that she is the one who has shot Nomsa in an episode of dissociation and that she does not remember it because of the dissociative amnesia that has followed. Waking up in the middle of the decisive night in 1985, she hears some desperate cries for help coming from Nomsa's room. Following the crying and opening the door to Nomsa's room, Faith is forced to watch Oom Piet rape the maid. In the heat of the moment and completely overwhelmed by the situation, she fetches her parents' rifle – having found the key to the forbidden, locked cupboard the night before –, willing to kill the intruder, but accidentally pointing it at Nomsa and shooting her. (cf. GST, 316)

Due to her dissociative amnesia all these details are thoroughly locked away from her conscious mind, too enormous to hold them there. The dissociative experiences – her derealizing and fainting more and more often – have, however, already begun earlier.

Mother's room was hot and stuffy; I was finding it difficult to breathe. Heat flushed up my neck and into my head, my ears rang with an electric hum. My head felt like it was underwater. All I could hear was a loud buzzing but I knew Mother was talking because her lips were moving. I focused on her face, struggling to make out what she was telling me. Everything around her disappeared into darkness until her face was the only light left in the surrounding black, then the dots swarmed in and covered her up.

Damp seeped through the dark nothing, wet against my skin. It must be raining. In the periphery of my vision I could see the heads of the bad fairies that crowded into the room through holes they had gnawed in the floorboards. They bowed down, ducking their

²³ The 'common' is meant to refer to the beliefs based on 'empirical' data and 'scientific' verification. Furthermore, there is still the case of religious thinking in Western spheres, showing that people sometimes find themselves outside of what can be termed the realm of empirically verified objective. However, the spiritual activities that will be pointed to in this analysis can be considered distinct from religious beliefs.

jaundiced heads under the fragmented edges of the wooden boards. I heard Mother's voice, soothing them: 'Come back, come back to me.'

No, I wanted to cry out, but my tongue felt too thick to speak, swollen by their poison. No, Ma, don't call them. All around I saw them, nesting in their holes and under the house, little tar-black babies clutched to turmeric breasts, swarming, like wasps in a hive, crawling over each other in their eagerness to get closer to Mother.

'No, Ma.'

My body jerked, forcing my vision to a brighter place. Mother's blue eyes hovered over me, her hand pressed down on my forehead. She smiled, 'No what, Faith? Were you dreaming?' (GST, 79-80)

As has been mentioned before, what reasons one makes responsible for her showing dissociative symptoms more and more frequently might be influenced by the way the book is read, the cultural background or standpoint one holds. On the one hand, and compatible with modern Western ways of thinking, her dissociation can be considered the result of unbearable traumatizing life stressors, especially regarding the growing rupture between her parents, their sudden separation and the increasing mental breakdown of her mother. It might all have begun with her father serving in the army and suppressing his traumatic experiences ("Sometimes he'd come back a different person, quiet and moody, other times he would be the same, just not laugh as much as usual. Always, he was glad to be home." (GST, 156-157)), or even before, for her parents seem to have never truly fit together ("Marius Albert Steenkamp and Isabel English, even their names seem mismatched" (GST, 239)). It might also have developed out of her mother's betrayal of Marius, who is obviously not Faith's biological father (cf. GST, 128; 132). Whatever the true cause/s for the parental disagreements, the violence that has spread from them is visible to Faith in all its cruel details.

Papa stumbled backwards out of the shed, doubled over and holding his temple. I didn't notice Mother, standing in the doorway holding a large spanner, until Papa stood upright. His face contorted with rage, he walked towards her, one hand reaching out, as if trying to placate her. Mother didn't move and for a long time they stood, a foot apart, staring at each other, saying nothing. I could see a bright red trickle tracing its way down Papa's face, dripping off his chin on to his shirt, where red flowers bloomed on the white cotton. Finally he placed one hand on her shoulder and, leaning into her, he whispered in her ear. Then he pulled back and with one quick flow he punched her squarely in the face. (GST, 50)

What follows her father's leaving is a steadily increasing absorption of her mother by the fairy-world. Of course, her mother's fairy-stories (which are nothing but mere stories from *one* point of view) play an important role. "I'd lived on the farm from the day I was born, and as long as I could remember, I'd been surrounded by fairies. They lived

on the peripheries of my vision, well hidden from my curious eyes, but I knew they were there. Mother was forever warning me about the dangers of bad fairies: 'Don't go into the orchard alone, Tit Tit Tay will steal you and turn you into a monkey child.'" (GST, 7) Faith has always been told about the fairies, told to respect them and to fear them as well, but on the other hand she has also been left with a lot of confusion regarding these 'creatures'. On the one hand, they are portrayed by her mother not as mere creations of the mind, but as really existing entities that are said to live "in the orchard" (GST, 141). Facts are explained to Faith making references to the fairies, for example, the Tokoloshe, which is one of them. "He'd once stolen the bricks that raised Moses' bed off the floor, making it low enough for the Tokoloshe to get him. That's what Mother had told me when Moses disappeared last year, after Papa went on the road." (GST, 10) When Faith, however, does not want to go to get some tomatoes from the cellar, because Mary, a former housemaid, has told her about the Tokoloshe living there, her mother seems to write off this apparently childish way of thinking as sheer nonsense. She accompanies Faith into the cellar, shows her that what she makes out as Tokoloshe is only an illusion and tells her to protect herself with gem squash, in order to make her eat this despised meal more willingly. (cf. GST, 24) She contributes to confusing 'Faith' (which is to be understood in more than one way).

What is even more relevant is the way the girl is taught to handle her emotions. Even though she is always told to beware of the – partly very dangerous – fairies, she is similarly told not to be afraid, not to be a "cry-baby" (GST, 53). Faith is caught in a classical 'double-bind'-situation. "The essential hypothesis of the double bind theory [originally invented by Bateson in the 1950s] is that the 'victim' – the person who becomes psychotically unwell – finds him or herself in a communicational matrix, in which messages contradict each other, the contradiction is not able to be communicated on and the unwell person is not able to leave the field of interaction." (Gibney 2006, 50) Basically it involves a message that conveys some kind of threat and another one that directly contradicts it. Of course, this is not meant to be a single occurrence. "The situation is not a single trauma, rather a repetitive activity that creates an habitual expectation." (ibid.) In addition to that, the situation can be very subtle, not easily noticed at first. For the victim, there is often no escape, especially if the 'double bind'-situation is part of a child-parent-relationship. (cf. ibid.) Faith's only real attachment figure seems to be her mother, whom she, still being very young, basically needs for survival. Her father might have been some kind of stabilizing entity, but with him

having left, she is completely at her mother's mercy. Bella systematically destroys every reminder of Marius (in this way further fragmenting Faith's world), trying to 'erase' him. Her father is gone – a sudden loss too huge to bear for Faith – and her only attachment person appears to be more and more losing her mind. Then Nomsa turns up and develops a new important attachment figure, who seems to understand Faith and care for her. Bella pretends to mean well by her on the surface, but as soon as Faith has connected with Nomsa, she tells her to get rid of her, because she drives the fairies away, who are – though dangerous – portrayed as those who keep her mother alive. Faith is thus sent another confusing message, which produces doubts in her regarding her new attachment person. Another safe haven is lost. "She felt like the only solid thing in the world." (GST, 109) It is assumed that people who are caught in a 'double bind'-situation might lose their grip on reality and develop psychotic tendencies. In fact, the 'double bind'-theory was initially used to describe the development of schizophrenia. (cf. Gibney 2006, 50-51) In Faith's case, even the messages themselves revolve around the distinction between reality and fantasy.

Emotions generally never seem to have been enforced or tolerated by her mother. Crying, for example, is rather perceived as a sign of weakness by her. The first time ever Faith sees her mother cry, shakes her worldview even more.

Her chest heaved, sending little shudders through her. Mother was crying. I had never seen her cry before. She didn't cry when they phoned to say Grandma English was dead, or when Papa dropped the cake we baked for the competition in the church hall, or even when Papa left to go on the road. Seeing her cry made my stomach twist. I stared at her, unsure of myself. I considered reaching out and ruffling her hair and saying 'Don't be a cry-baby,' the way she did to me, but it didn't seem right. (ibid., 53)

Left alone with her desperate mother's breakdown, all the responsibility in this world seems to have suddenly been put onto her shoulders; a weight too heavy for her to carry.

This is one way of looking at Faith's increasing dissociative condition and entirely compatible with modern Western thinking and the "existing Western paradigm of intrapsychic dissociation" (Krüger et al. 2007, 17). There might, however, be another explanation, which rather bears on 'traditional' African beliefs²⁴ and seems very plausible regarding the further development of the story and especially Faith's final

²⁴ This is also a very generalizing term as Africa consists of numerous different belief systems.

healing. First, an old blind woman comes up with the diagnosis that she is influenced by evil (ancestral) spirits that make her ill. (cf. GST, 230) Secondly, she is healed by getting rid of these creatures. (cf. GST, 323) Of course, the spirits might just be seen as symbolizing the traumatic memories Faith keeps buried inside her. On the contrary, keeping the fact in mind that in ‘traditional’ African philosophy spirits are seen as really existing entities, there might be a different interpretation as well, which considers dissociation (or rather a condition similar to what is termed ‘dissociation’ in Western spheres) as caused by the actual involvement of these ‘creatures’. Krüger et al. refer to the diagnosis of *amafufunyana* in South Africa, which “may correspond to various DSM-IV disorders, depending on its exact clinical presentation, e.g. dissociative disorder, adjustment disorder, or schizophrenia.” (Krüger et al., 17)

[T]he term *amafufunyana* literally means 'the evil spirits'. The cause is thought to be the anger of the ancestors, which leads to their angry spirits entering the patient. The syndrome usually starts with an emotional disturbance such as social withdrawal. This may be followed by somatic symptoms such as listlessness and loss of appetite, and next by behavioural disturbances such as grunting, falling down, and aggressive behaviour. This phase of behavioural disturbance may resemble 'switching' behaviour. Subsequently, verbalisations may follow in which the *amafufunyana* speak. These voices may speak in a foreign language and may belong to someone of the opposite sex. The patient is seen to undergo an altered state of consciousness and is amnesic regarding the event. (ibid.)

“‘There are many restless spirits around you, child. [...] Some are ancestors, but there are others. Some very bad.’” (Mrs. Mabutu (a ‘traditional’ healer) in GST, 230) From this perspective Faith might be considered as possessed by (ancestral) evil spirits, who act through her, steering her, making her feel dizzy and puke (somatic symptoms), faint (some kind of ‘falling’) and finally shoot Nomsa. Also the *voice* of the ancestors is referred to in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, as well as a loss of appetite, like stated in Krüger et al. above. “[S]he hears only the voices of her ancestors. She cannot eat anything. I try to give her soup, but she spits it out like poison.” (A ‘traditional’ healer in GST, 320) The actual symptoms are the same as stated in the Western DSM-IV category, only the causes for them are located somewhere else in this explanation and lead to different assumptions regarding healing procedures.

The two belief systems are somehow interwoven in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*. Actually, one gets the impression that Rachel Zadok initially appeals to the Western reader’s worldview, then tries to deconstruct it by introducing him/her to a belief system less

familiar (if not totally unfamiliar) and finally lets the two systems flow into each other to paint a more holistic picture; and to make one question one's 'faith'²⁵. On the other hand, the novel might also be consciously addressed to people of different belief systems, who are free to read the story in their own way and are thus individually able to connect with it and to make sense of it. Whatever the author's true motivation, the duality mentioned can also be made out regarding Faith's identity formation. Two realities merge into one. One might simply call it 'magic realism', but actually there is more to it, as the 'magical' element *becomes* 'real' when putting aside the Western worldview and recognizing the fact that there is not one objective reality.

5.2. An *uncanny* identity: the outcome of unhealthy 'prosthetic' relationships

Identity formation constitutes a significant issue throughout Zadok's novel, developing from a process controlled by an external power into one that is finally self-regulated. Based on the duality referred to above, two different unfavorable 'prosthetic' relationships might be considered responsible for the formation of Faith's identity. Growing up on a farm remote from the city and with her father being frequently away to serve the army and to work as a salesman, Faith is almost exclusively subjected to the ideas and beliefs of her mother. On the other hand, and from a 'traditional' African perspective, Faith might be seen as influenced by the ancestral spirits Mrs. Mabutu refers to in the novel. What is certain is that one cannot draw a clear dividing line between these two possibilities. From both perspectives, the fairy pictures, which – painted by her mother and modeled on Faith – have constituted a vital part of Faith's life ever since she was born, can be seen as representing her heteronomous, distorted and highly *uncanny* identity; an identity she finally rids herself of in order to paint her own picture, to create her *own* identity; "a blank canvas, and the only one who can scar my surface with paint is me." (GST, 323)

5.2.1. The power of others: 'prosthetic' relationships and their consequences

When Kirby Farrell refers to 'prosthetic relationships', he basically points to our cultural "voice[s] in the head" (Farrell 1996, 214) and the cultural ideas that we are

²⁵ The name 'Faith' is of great importance and there is more than one meaning involved when saying that 'Faith' gets confused and is shattered.

informed by and that we rely on for our process of self-substantiation. (cf. *ibid.*) He begins his “meditation on cultural fantasy” (*ibid.*, 213) by describing a dream of his four-year-old daughter, in which he, or to be more precise, his voice, teaches her to drive. “The dream points to a culturally authorized ‘voice in the head’ – presumably one of many – to explain how she knows what she knows, and why she does what she does. The dream uses the voice of a parent – the representation of a parent – to locate the ground of her personality and to substantiate her in the world.” (*ibid.*, 214) The voice basically represents an extension of the child that guides her in making sense of her world and influences the process of identity development. (cf. *ibid.*) In this regard, not only parental voices are worth recognizing. There are many other kinds of prosthetic extensions, which largely depend on the respective socio-cultural context a person lives in. “The archaic Greeks commonly reported volition as the experience of a materialized voice. In a moment of decision the Homeric warrior hallucinates the goddess Athena, who commands his limbs to act.” (*ibid.*) Modernity is not immune to such prosthetic relationships, as “prayer may still take the form of intrusive voices[...] [and] [i]n the computer age popular culture preserves a host of supernatural voices, from belief in angels and the occult counsel of psychics to anxieties about the insinuations of Satan.” (*ibid.*, 215) The voices can thus be internalized ones stemming from significant (living) persons or such that do not belong to human beings of the closer social environment, but might have various sources, dependent on the cultural beliefs one is shaped by. These things considered, Faith can be seen as being in an important prosthetic relationship with 1) her mother (the living) and 2) the ancestral spirits (the dead), as they exist in ‘traditional’ African philosophy,²⁶ both of which prove to be negative for her self-substantiation and the formation of her identity.

5.2.1.1. Shaped by the living: misled maternal identity formation

“Everyone needs to confirm identity in mirroring and prosthetic relationships.” (Farrell 1996, 233) Faith’s primary ‘mirror’ consists in her mother, her sometimes threatening, but always powerful and beautiful first attachment figure. “In all the time I had been her daughter I’d been quiet and obedient, looking up to her like she was the Fairy Queen.”

²⁶ Her mother actually belongs to both ‘realms’, not only because she transcends the world of the living and is then part of that of the dead; she is also said to have ‘called’ the ancestral spirits. “Your mother collected these spirits around her, they brought sickness to your house.” (Mrs. Mabutu in GST, 230)

(GST, 101) Faith has internalized her mother's 'voice', incorporated her ideas about the world; she basically perceives reality the way it is reflected by her mother, by her 'looking glass'²⁷. Also her self-perception develops within this frame, which is the reason why Faith cannot establish a true sense of self. In fact, she is getting more and more confused regarding her identity, not sure of herself anymore in the reality painted by her "fairy-sick" (GST, 127) mother, within which she is portrayed as "a child of the fairies" (GST, 129).

By constituting her as a fairy-child, her mother tries to cover a very important detail concerning Faith's identity, which she is not supposed to find out. "I think the fairies gave you your hair, Faith, you're a child of the fairies." (Bella in GST, 129) The child notices that her hair neither resembles that of her mother nor that of her father (cf. GST, 128), which, of course, has to make her suspicious regarding her true descent. Her eyes are also said to be different from the ones of her supposed parents. "Blue eyes stared intently back out at me. Where did they come from? I wondered. Mother's eyes were a deeper blue, more intense, nothing like the pale eyes that looked out at me. And Papa's? Papa had brown eyes." (GST, 132) As a consequence, for Faith the fairy-identity construed by her mother seems to make more sense. "[T]he internalized voices can be a source of paranoia as well as ecstasy." (Farrell 1996, 220) Faith does not know what to believe in anymore. Having lost her 'faith', she perceives herself as alien, different from everyone else, at least from everyone human.

I [...] tried to clear my head of the crowding thoughts. I must have imagined it, I told myself. Dead Rex looked nothing like me. His face was horrible, twisted and evil. I opened the compact again and pulled my face into what I thought was an expression like his. I scrunched my nose, creased my brow and narrowed my eyes. See, I told myself, I look nothing like him. I closed the compact, feeling slightly better. For a moment I looked at the dull metal object in my hand, then my focus shifted. There was a knob that stuck out on my wrist – everyone had it, I knew, but mine had always protruded more than other people's. Like my knees were knobbly, so was my wristbone. I got up and walked closer to the painting, not too close though, not close enough for him to grab me, but close enough to get a better view of his hands. I held my hand up and looked at his hand. The certainty I'd felt moments before that I looked nothing like Dead Rex disappeared. There, in the painting, were the same long fingers, the same knuckles, the same knobbly wristbone. Even the tiny freckle between the knuckle of my little finger and my ring finger was mimicked on his hand, on the hand of the most terrible fairy. (GST, 133)

²⁷ There is a very suitable intertextual reference to *Alice in Wonderland* in Zadok's novel.

Young Faith bears a most uncanny resemblance to the most terrible fairy her mother has ever told her about: Dead Rex. This seems enough proof for her to suspect that she is not from this world, that she is hateful and disgusting; and consequently, she starts blaming herself for everything that has happened to her and her mother.

I back away slowly, not willing to believe what my eyes were telling me. My whole life was a lie. I wasn't even a person like other people were. I was something else, a halfling, a changeling. I knew from the fairy stories Mother read to me that people hated halflings, left them in the woods to die. That was probably why Papa had left, because he knew and he hated me, why everyone in the market looked at us funny, why Sannie du Toit and her friends always bullied me. They all knew. And if they knew, then Tannie Hettie knew. Tannie Hettie pretended she was my friend, but in all the time she'd known me, she'd only ever touched me once. Now, I knew why. (ibid., 133-134)

She has always felt like *Alice*, too huge, too small, unfitting in this world. "I feel smaller than her [= the reflection in the mirror], feel like what I am should take up less space than my framed reflection. My mirror image is a reminder that I don't fit, that this life is not mine. I'm like Alice, grown too big." (GST, 242) Faith has always been caught in a set of contradictions ('double binds') that seem to nullify her.

5.2.1.2. Haunted by the dead: the workings of ancestral spirits

Secondly, and based on 'traditional' African beliefs, one can detect a prosthetic relationship between Faith and the ancestral spirits referred to by Mrs. Mabutu and the 'traditional' healer who helps her to get rid of them in the end. (cf. GST, 320) As prosthetic entities²⁸ they are the 'voices' that shape and guide Faith, steering and controlling her every move. They are said to have been evoked or called by her mother and have consequently spread misfortune on them.

Her mother is the one who has brought Oom Piet into their house, who, most likely being Faith's biological father, carries within him the evil that the spirits can thrive on, paving the way for their hatred and devastation. That he somehow attracts the evil spirits can be seen from the description of the horrible night where he rapes Nomsa, which is written in what could be called 'traditional' African orature-style. Dead Rex "seen that man on other days, he been before to this place. Pretending he kind. Dead

²⁸ They are the ones from her past and can thus also be seen as her inherited past issues.

Rex seen into his dark place, he been expecting him, fresh rot.” (GST, 2) Past evil (the deeds of the ancestors) and the suffering and pain of the past find a new ground and flourish again. “Dead Rex is forgotten, long gone from man’s memory in this place. No one remember the soul stealer, no one appease him, no one protect himself, no more.” (GST, 1) To be more precise, from this point of view, the ‘voice’ of Dead Rex, the worst of all the spirits that come up in her mother’s stories, seems to influence Faith the most, merging with her and constituting her identity. “Mosetsana [=Faith] sleep. Easy he slip under the covers and into her bed. He stroke her hair, run knuckle-twigg fingers through fine tangles, he like mosetsana, she be still pure, blank canvas, torment not yet painted her soul.” (GST, 2) Here it is Dead Rex, the evil spirit, who destroys the ‘blank canvas’ and paints her in an unfavorable way.²⁹ The ‘dead king’³⁰ has come to reign again.

That is where a, somehow daring but also interesting, parallel to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* can be discovered. Like in Elizabethan society (cf. Horvath 2012; Lathem 1930), in ‘traditional’ African philosophy, spirits, ghosts and fairies were/are largely perceived as really existing entities. As stated by Farrell, Shakespeare’s Danish prince is in an important relationship with a prosthetic other. This prosthetic other is the ghost of his dead father, the ‘dead king’. “[T]he crucial voice is a poisoned father, who turns out to be not corroborative but nihilistic, so that the play dramatizes a desperate effort to ground the self – to be or not to be – in a disintegrated culture.” (Farrell 1996, 220) His father’s ghost actually speaks and acts through him and thus makes him his puppet, destroying his own identity and preventing his self-regulated self-substantiation. The situation is similar for Faith and her ‘dead king’ (representing all the (ancestral) spirits haunting her). Also functioning as a prosthetic other, he distorts Faith’s identity, making her a tool for him, as is shown in the following passage.

From shadow to shadow he follow her [...]. She listen, he listen with her. [...]
 'Open the door,' Dead Rex whisper in mosetsana's ear, 'open.' She be shaking now, her heart double beating, she feel a wrong thing her. [...]
 'Push harder.' [...] 'Push, push,' he hiss. She lean her whole self into the door. The slice grow bigger, big enough for mosetsana to look in. [...]
 Dead Rex feel mosetsana panic, feel mosetsana pain, feel fear, feel confusion. Her soul scream what her body hold frozen. She want to run away. 'He be hurting her,' Dead Rex whisper. 'Hurt him back.'
 (GST, 2-3)

²⁹ In the prosthetic relationship with her mother, described before, the “blank canvas” is destroyed by her covering up Faith’s true identity, portraying her as a fairy-child in her paintings.

³⁰ ‘Rex’ means king. There is an evil living ‘baas’ (Oom Piet) and an evil, haunting dead ‘king’ (Dead Rex) in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*.

Interestingly, in Elizabethan beliefs, spirits and fairies seem to have been closely associated with the Devil.³¹ In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, Dead Rex leads Faith to Oom Piet, who is unmistakably depicted as a devilish creature. There are several parts in the novel that underline this. When Dead Rex finds Faith he is said to notice “[h]ot wet goat smells” (GST, 1); and when in the end Faith finds the paintings in the shed³² and Oom Piet turns up, she comes across a dead goat's body before. “The remains of a goat lie, partly obscured, at the foot of a tree” (GST, 293). “The traditional [...] animal [...] of demonic persecution is of course the goat.” (Farrell 1996, 230) The goat is an important symbol relating to devilish actions. There is no doubt that the goat, and therefore also the Devil, is directly associated with Oom Piet. He represents the Devil, the ultimate personification of evil.

Referring to the way rape victim's experiences and feelings of dissociation and detachment are portrayed in some novels (cf. Farrell 1996, 229ff.), Farrell mentions another association with the Devil that is often made. “[B]odily disconnection unwittingly draws on traditional fantasies of the Devil's fury – Faust, you recall, is torn to pieces.” (ibid., 230) Based on this ‘traditional’ point of view, Faith's dissociative experiences – tearing her apart – might be understood as the workings of a devilish creature.

Concerning Hamlet's case, Farrell observes that “Hamlet's dreamlike recovery of a father's voice reveals how treacherously equivocal prosthetic relationships can be. Living through his son, the ghostly father would nullify him.” (ibid., 221) Faith is equally captured by the prosthetic voice of Dead Rex; and by the one of her mother, constructing a fairy world where she and Faith are caught with the fairies, different from everyone else, alien, and where the fairies are their only company. “‘We’re alone, Faith,’ she said, ‘all alone in the world.’” (Bella in GST, 159) In both cases, Faith's identity is distorted, shattered, nullified. “The fear of that nullity registers in Hamlet's cry of self-disgust when he cannot invent a meaningful role for himself: ‘O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I’ (2.2.560)” (Farrell 1996, 222) In the end, when the evil spirits as well as her mother's influence are gone, Faith is set free from that slavery, able to establish her own identity, to decide for herself who she really wants to be. “They’re

³¹ Lathem refers to the “English and Scottish law of fairies as spirits of the devil” (Lathem 1930, 34) and that fairies “were known to belong to the rank of evil spirits and devils” (ibid., 36).

³² The painting of Dead Rex is not among them, but waits for her in Nomsa's room. (cf. GST, 290)

gone, for the first time I can remember they are not there and I'm alone. I'm an empty shell, hollow and vacant, yet somehow I feel free. I am no longer a creature of their design, no longer their puppet." (GST, 323)

Prosthetic relationships can be truly 'exploitative' and the reference to slavery is highly appropriate regarding not only the personal but also the national level. In apartheid South Africa, those in power (the white ones) – the masters ('baas') like Oom Piet in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* – used to exploit the oppressed, making them serve their purpose, depriving them of their own identity. They were forced to act in order to guarantee the social uplift of their prosthetic others, caught in a prosthetic relationship as described by Farrell (cf. *ibid.*, 222).³³ "I had been exposed to something that made no sense, that had no reason to be the way it was. It was an unfathomable thing, made up of tenuous strands that had to fit together, if only I knew how to place them. Yet, even as I grappled with the threads of it, trying to weave them together into a solid idea, I knew that what I would find when I finally managed was *something rotten*." (GST, 96; own emphasis) That is the way Faith perceives the racism in apartheid South Africa. In *Hamlet*, "[s]omething is rotten in the state of Denmark."³⁴ (*Hamlet*, 1.4.90) Something used to be rotten in the South African state as well.

5.2.2. 'Das Un-heimliche' in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*

Faith's true identity is distorted by the two prosthetic relationships described above; a distortion that is visualized by the pictures painted by her mother. "Unheimlich sei alles, was ein Geheimnis, im Verborgenen bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist." (Freud 1919,

³³ Based on Farrell's theory, one could also consider the *novel* as 'prosthetic' for society, for a nation. According to Farrell, a theater play (like story-telling in general) is prosthetic in that it shapes people (the audience) and is also shaped by them. (cf. Farrell 1996, 224) Elaborating on this idea, the novel could be regarded as a prosthetic extension of society's voice, expressing the unspoken and in return functioning as a means to help people deal with their past and to contribute to their healing, to "shape and reshape identity" (*ibid.*, 224) in a process of reciprocity on the level of the nation state. The novel's purpose might also be to dismantle common beliefs. Farrell sees the same interaction regarding Elizabethan society and the plays by Shakespeare whose "characteristic maneuver is to invoke a ground, then expose it as a culturally generated illusion." (*ibid.*, 217) In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, beliefs are getting blurred and turned upside-down. In addition to that, the warning is uttered that evil still exists and might flourish wherever it is provided with a fertile soil.

³⁴ Mabillard, Amanda. *Quick Quote: Something is rotten in the state of Denmark*, <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/quickquote/quickquotehamletdenmark.html>, [24/01/2013].

249)³⁵ The prefix ‘un’ in ‘un-heimlich’ emphasizes this. “Die Vorsilbe ‘un’ an diesem Worte ist [...] die Marke der Verdrängung.” (ibid., 267) In addition to that, when one feels at home with something, one is able to make sense of it and consequently is not afraid; “es ist mir heimlich, wohl, frei von furcht” (ibid.). Faith seems to sense that there is more to the pictures – that there is something hidden from her –, but she cannot put her finger on it. What is left is a feeling of sheer uncanniness. The fact that the paintings appear to be alive at times contributes further to this impression, because, according to Freud, the uncanny often shows when there is some doubt of whether an object is inanimate or alive; when there is some kind of “Zweifel an der Beseelung eines anscheinend lebendigen Wesens und umgekehrt darüber, ob ein lebloser Gegenstand nicht etwa beseelt sei.” (ibid., 250)

I knew the fairies could hide inside Mother’s paintings, pretending they were just pictures until I wasn’t looking. Then they would slowly move towards me, wanting to steal me away to whatever horror they felt up to that day. [...] (GST, 10)

I guided myself down the passage, keeping one hand on the wall, low enough so I wouldn’t touch any of the fairy paintings. If they were asleep, I didn’t want to risk waking them up by bumping the frames. I kept my eyes wide, trying to make out any unusual shapes that might move.” (GST, 154)

The above passages are proof of the uncanniness the pictures hold for Faith. The uncanny can, however, also be detected in relation to objects other than the paintings. When Faith arrives at the old farm house, after having been away for fifteen long years, she discovers two ‘humanoid’ objects in her mother’s room, wondering what they might be.

[A]ll the furniture in here has been covered with sheets. Two of the sheets hang strange and tall over objects I don’t recall. They look like they could conceal something humanoid, and the memories of being afraid of fairies hiding almost anywhere resurfaces and sends a shiver down my spine. Determined not to let Mother’s flights of fancy affect me any more, I take an end of one of the sheets with nervous bravado and tug sharply, pulling the covering off in one go. A frightened shriek escapes me and I stumble backwards into the other covered humanoid shape, sending it crashing to the floor. (GST, 264-265)

³⁵ One has to be aware of the fact that Freud’s theory of the ‘Un-heimliche’, which is used here, is a Western concept, based on Eurocentric ideas.

The two objects, one a lamp and the other one a mirror³⁶, prove to be uncanny as they seem to be between the ‘humanoid’ and the ‘artificial’, between the animate and the inanimate. They appear to be familiar, yet somehow distorted and therefore fill Faith with fear. According to Freud, before the ‘modern’ era people were quite used to animistic thinking, mixing what he calls *reality* and *magic*. He further states that having transcended this way of thinking, the uncanny often shows when these old beliefs come to the fore and seem to be verified again. (cf. Freud 1919, 270) This clearly shows Freud’s Eurocentric perspective, as he only refers to the Western world and establishes the ‘modern’ Western belief system as the unquestionable standard. His theory should therefore be met with an appropriate amount of suspicion on the part of the reader.

Nevertheless, there is further proof of the ‘Un-heimliche’ in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*. “You go burn in flame, mosetsana. It’s the Sandman’s voice.” (GST, 227) In his description of the uncanny, Freud takes E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *Der Sandmann* as an example of a tale in which reality is distorted and blurred and the reader is left to speculate what is real and what is subject to the (apparently psychotic) mind of the main character Nathaniel. (cf. Freud 1919, 251) The whole story revolves around the “Motiv des *Sandmannes*, der den Kindern die Augen ausreißt.” (ibid.) When Nathaniel is still a child, his mother always tells him stories about the ‘Sandmann’ when sending him to bed; telling him to beware of the evil creature. “Die Mutter, nach dem Sandmann befragt, leugnet dann zwar, daß ein solcher anders denn als Redensart existiert, aber eine Kinderfrau weiß greifbare Auskunft zu geben” (ibid.). The situation proves similar to that of Faith, who is told by her mother to fear the fairies. When Faith refuses to go into the cellar, being afraid of the Tokoloshe living down there, her mother assures her that there is no such thing. Later on, when already living in Johannesburg, Faith and Molly are told by a nanny that the creature actually exists. “‘There is such a thing as a Tokoloshe,’ she said. ‘Faith is right. In fact,’ she [=Beauty] continued after a considered pause, ‘there are many Tokoloshi.’” (GST, 196) The Tokoloshe is depicted equally uncanny as the Sandman in Hoffmann’s tale. In addition to that, he seems to stand for everything evil, emphasizing that there are many evil persons (and creatures) out there.

³⁶ The choice of a mirror and a lamp might remind one of M.H.Abrams’ book *The Mirror and the Lamp* (http://ia600709.us.archive.org/13/items/TheMirrorAndTheLampRomanticTheoryAndCriticalTradition/MirrorAndTheLamp-Abrams_text.pdf, [24/01/2013]) and could point once more to the fact that the ‘truth’ depends on one’s own perspective and is bound to one’s individual understanding and interpretation. Interestingly, also the reference to *Alice in Wonderland* would fit in here, considering that Alice (cf. GST, 149, 242) looks behind the ‘mirror’.

In the end, the uncanniness of the paintings – except for the one of Dead Rex – is resolved. Found by Faith in the shed, they are old and shabby (cf. GST, 290) and she finds out the truth that they have been modeled on her. From another perspective, however, the pictures can be seen as showing the evil spirits hiding in her, possessing her. And indeed, Faith is still far from being healed.

5.3. Healing Faith or ‘faith healing’

Gem Squash Tokoloshe consists of two main parts, one focusing on the year 1985 and telling the story of Faith's childhood (until she is seven years old), the other one taking place fifteen years later, when grown-up Faith lives in Johannesburg with Mia and Molly and begins to discover her past. The second part starts at New Year's Eve 1998/1999 – the start of a new period is being heralded. Faith learns that her mother has finally died. First, she pretends not to care about her mother's death, but soon it becomes obvious that she does. When having to choose a coffin and willing to take the cheapest and most ‘rustic’ one,³⁷ Faith still manages to hide the emotions stirring inside her. In her opinion, her mother is nothing more than the mad murderess responsible for the death of her closest childhood friend: Nomsa. “She looked like Dead Rex, or his wife.”³⁸ (GST, 177) Motionless and cold, her mother seems “weirdly disconnected from anything real.” (GST, 176) At the funeral, however, Faith shows the first new signs of distress. “But I don’t scream. I just smile, a watery, pathetic smile because everyone is looking at me [...]” (GST, 178) She does not scream, she does not cry, she just feels exhausted by having to deal with her past anew.

I sit down on the grass, I’m exhausted suddenly, I feel like I can’t stand upright any longer. I adjust my skirt so it covers as much of my legs as it can, lean back against the tree and close my eyes.

I don’t know how long I’ve been there, in the shaded serenity of the tree, lost in the dappled light that plays against my eyelids, in the occasional birdsong, in the distant buzz of traffic. I don’t know how long she’s been standing over me before I notice her, or why I notice her – perhaps she blocked out the light with her shadow – but she’s there and I don’t need to open my eyes to know it’s her.

‘Mol,’ I whisper. She says nothing; she doesn’t need to. (GST, 179)

³⁷ “I already know which one I’ll choose. It’s the plain pine one, the one with rope for handles and nails to fix the lid on. The cheapest one. Not because it suits our pockets, as the man put it with such practiced discretion, although it does, but because I can see no reason to spend most of my hard-earned cash on a pretty box to burn Mother in. If it were up to me, I would have let the state bury her in one of those prisoner graves marked with a concrete slab and a number.” (GST, 175)

³⁸ The “Fairy Queen” (GST, 101) has found the ‘dead king’.

Mia and Molly are the only people who know her; especially Molly, who is like a sibling to Faith, as they are both somehow alone in this world. “I was the child she was afraid of becoming, the motherless child. Like me, her father was absent, far away and uninterested [...]. [S]he was just hurt and afraid, like me.” (GST, 183) What started as great rivalry, with Molly forced to basically share her whole life with Faith and to endure her horrible nightmares (intrusions), on the one hand, and unbearable silence, on the other hand (cf. GST, 181), has developed into a very close friendship. Molly has helped Faith to give way to her emotions for the first time, to scream out what has always been buried deep inside her soul. Frustrated by Faith's behavior, Molly attacks her teddy bear, an ‘object of transition’ that Faith has kept since she was very little, with a knife, stabbing and stirring a part of and in her.

Each time she stabbed him, she screamed in frustration, and each scream penetrated that place where I had buried myself like the blade penetrated the soft body of the bear. It loosened the hold I had over my pain and fear until it boiled over and exploded out of me. I screamed. It's impossible for me to tell how long I screamed, it could have been hours, or minutes, or even seconds, but at some point that scream turned into sobbing which turned into words. Words of rage, at Molly, at Mother, at Nomsa for being dead. (GST, 183)

With her mother's death, Faith's memories come to the fore again and bring new nightmares with them.

[T]he nightmares have started again. I can feel it when I wake up, that sense of futility, that there is nothing to live for, that everything is lost. Sometimes there are snatches when I wake up in the morning, images. When I was little I used to think I saw Mother, a glimpse of long white hair turning a corner on a crowded Saturday morning as we shopped in Eloff Street, or Nomsa, scarf wrapped around her head, laughing in a small crowd of nannies gathered on the corner. My heart would skip a beat and then speed up and drum out a rhythm of hope. But they were ghosts, briefly possessing strangers. The remnants of the dreams are like those ghosts, tantalizing images that slip away before I have time to fully grasp them. I haven't had the nightmares in years. Perhaps Mother's causing them from the grave, unwilling to be forgotten and left to rot. The thought chills me. (GST, 187)

Apart from the nightmares, there are also some dissociative symptoms that resurface in Faith. When wandering around, she “walk[s] without seeing” (GST, 188), somehow derealizing her surroundings; and after having met an old, blind woman (together with a man called Joseph) willing to pray and sing for her and telling her to “[g]o home” (GST, 192), her world seems to be shattered again. “The sky looks more fragmented than

usual, like the woman's wailing and Joseph's guitar have shattered whatever it is that holds things together, their noise has fractured the world." (GST, 192) Faith seems to be driven by something, childhood memories spinning around in her head, exhausting her, following her into her dreams (or dream-like states) in the form of Nomsa's accusatory voice ("*Look, look, mosetsana, look what you done.*" (GST, 201)). Furthermore, she most likely suffers from amnesic states again, which can be seen, for example, when she goes to the cash machine to get some money and is found by a friend (Ketso) after hours, hours that have been lost somehow. (cf. GST, 210) Finally, Faith finds herself in another "halfway world"³⁹.

'What's that smell?' Mia asks, opening the door. The odour of burnt hair and a spicy aroma that reminds me of making campfires out of blue-gum leaves clings to the dense heat inside the flat. I wrinkle my nose and follow Mia in.

The sight that greets me leaves me speechless. Sitting cross-legged on the floor is Molly. Her head droops forward and even from behind I can see she's not fully conscious. [...] But it's the woman sitting on the couch opposite Molly that disturbs me most; it's the blind woman from the day after the funeral.

I swallow hard.

'Molly!' I call out to her but she doesn't respond. Then I realize her name sounds strange, all wrong, like it's not her name at all, and my voice, it's alien, strangled. I turn to Mia. Her mouth is open, like she's about to speak but has forgotten what to say. As I look at her I realize there's something odd: she looks like Mia, but there is nothing familiar about her, it's like I've never seen her before.

The smell in the room is strong. I'm beginning to feel sick with it, dizzy and slow. Something in the air shifts and suddenly everything seems far away, like I'm looking at the room through a mirage of heat.

(GST, 226-227)

In what initially only seems like a state of total derealization and depersonalization leading on to a severe panic attack, memories flood back to the farm and to her mother. What Faith does not know at this point is that the creepy "blind woman" (GST, 226) is a *sangoma*⁴⁰, a 'traditional' (South) African healer. Keeping this in mind makes the reader, once again, see what is going on from another perspective.

³⁹ "Sleep, unsleep, a halfway world." (GST, 201) That is the way her dreamlike state is described.

⁴⁰ That Mrs. Mabutu is a *sangoma* is emphasized in the following passage. "Mrs Mabutu's face hardens until it looks like a tribal war mask. 'To our people, to insult a sangoma as you have insulted me,' she shakes her head, 'it would be extremely bad.'" (GST, 230)

5.3.1. The *sangoma*

'Her spirit is restless, she has buried it for too long in darkness. There are many restless spirits around you, child.' [...]

'[Y]our ancestors have spoken through me to try to help you. [...] I [...] cannot afford to ignore the ancestors, so I tell you this one final thing. Go home. It is only at your home that you will free your spirit.' [...]

At the door Mrs Mabutu pauses and without turning back she says, 'You cannot make a new home for yourself while your spirit is buried elsewhere. If you don't return home to free your spirit, you will get sick. You already are.'

Mrs Mabutu and her granddaughter disappear through the door without issuing any further prophecies. (GST, 230-231)

As a *sangoma*, Mrs. Mabutu represents some kind of medium that is able to communicate with Faith's ancestors. *Sangomas* constitute a vital part of African healing tradition.⁴¹ Robert Thornton refers to "three forms of healing [...] practised by African traditional healers and their clients" (Thornton 2009, 20). First, there are those healers who work with "herbal remedies (*inyangas*)" (ibid.). In addition to that, there is the "practice of faith healing in terms of one or other form of African syncretic Christianity by the *amaprofeti* (from the English word 'prophets')." (ibid.) The third form is made up by the *sangomas*, those trained in special schools, who have undergone a "period of tuition and self healing"⁴² (ibid.). These forms of healing are said to be most often thoroughly interwoven in different ways. A *sangoma's* practices include "counselling, divination/diagnostic, medical and other services" (ibid., 17) and are only very seldom restricted to physical illnesses. (cf. ibid.) "They prepare *muti* ('medicine') to protect clients from motor accidents, theft, witchcraft, infection, unemployment and loss of love, lovers or spouses. They relieve anxiety and depression, assist clients to make decisions and help to find lost or stolen objects." (ibid.) Mrs. Mabutu counsels Faith, sensing her (ancestral) spirits and telling her to go home in order to work through her trauma (Mrs. Mabutu does not diagnose a *physical* problem) and to get rid of them. To

⁴¹ The situation for the *sangomas* in South Africa turns out to be a difficult one. "For many, *sangomas* appear to preserve a sense of a distinctive 'African' identity in an increasingly globalized and 'Westernized' country." (Thornton 2009, 17) Even though explicitly mentioned in the *Traditional Health Practitioners Act* of 2004, they do not seem to be fully recognized for who they really are in the country that is increasingly dominated by Western thinking. (cf. ibid., 21) "Many *sangomas* do compare themselves with medical and other professionals, and believe that they should be treated in the same way and accorded similar respect, as well as appropriate remuneration." (ibid., 18) This proves difficult, as their practices are not favorable for the Eurocentric mind focused on empirical verification. Still, "70 to 80 per cent of all South Africans [are said to] avail themselves of the services of traditional healers." (ibid., 20)

⁴² "They undergo a rigorous and exhausting period of apprenticeship, *ukuthwasana*, and perform a 'graduation ceremony' – known as 'drinking the *intwaso*' – often lasting several days and nights, by which they pass into the full status of a *sangoma* and member of their teacher's school." (ibid., 20)

arrive at her diagnosis she uses the method of *divination*, which “is the most widely known of the practices of southern African traditional healers.” (Thornton 2009, 24) Some objects are arranged on a mat on the floor, their “position signify[ing] events, persons and relationships.” (ibid.) In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, this is described as follows.

[O]n the floor in front of Molly is a piece of cloth upon which four wooden rectangular objects appear to have been thrown. A spiral of pungent smoke rises out of a saucer that has a burning coal as a source of heat with what looks like some sort of dried leaves and twigs smouldering on top of it. (GST, 226)

As her words are also ‘prophetic’, Mrs. Mabutu's practices might include those that are ascribed to the category of ‘faith healing’. There is something else that points to her partly being a ‘faith healer’. When she first sings for Faith, the song is described as “the wailing kind you hear in *evangelical churches*, the pleading, *demon-exorcizing* kind of song.” (GST, 191, own emphasis) The singing, according to Thornton, expresses the “[e]xperience and knowledge of *ngoma* ('deep' embodied knowledge)” (Thornton 2009, 24) He states that together with *divination*, his experience of *ngoma* can be considered as two out of six disciplines, including different rituals, obvious in the *sangoma* tradition⁴³. Only rarely practised separately (cf. ibid., 23), the remaining four disciplines include “the knowledge of medical herbs and animal products” (ibid.), that “of Nguni ancestors (*emadloti*) and the methods [...] to communicate with them (*kupahla*)” (ibid., 24), that “of *ndzawe* spirits and *inzunzu*, the 'foreign' and water spirits, together with the ritual used to heal through their agency (*kufemba*)” (ibid.) and “[t]he relationship of *gobela* (teacher) and *lithwasana* (student) in the school (*mpandze*), together with systems of knowledge transfer and criticism” (ibid.). The ritual of *kufemba* will be of great importance regarding Faith's final healing.

As regards Mrs. Mabutu, the relationship she has with her “granddaughter” (GST, 231) is worth taking a look at. “The teacher-learner relationship is discussed [...] in a kinship idiom in which the teacher is addressed as *gogo*, 'grandparent' (never parent) to the student's 'grandchild' role until graduation.” (Thornton 2009, 29) In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, the girl says to Faith: “Gogo helped you this morning and then you ran away without paying.’ Her voice comes out a bitter hiss and suddenly I can see exactly who

⁴³ There are said to be great regional differences. (cf. ibid., 18) Thornton focuses on the Mpumalanga region. (cf. ibid., 23)

her gogo is in the flat expanse of her face. She is a young, unscarred version of the blind woman.” (GST, 206) The features mentioned indicate that she is Mrs. Mabutu's biological granddaughter; she might, however, also be her ‘student’ who addresses her as ‘gogo’. Again it is shown that the cultural background or knowledge one possesses shapes the way one reads the novel.

5.3.2. Returning back ‘home’ to discover the past

Returning back ‘home’ to the farm, Faith does not only listen to the diagnosis and advice of the *sangoma* Mrs. Mabutu, but also follows a long-felt want. “I never went back, though there had been so many times I’d longed to go home. [...] [P]erhaps there’s no going back, no regaining what’s been lost. When I think of going back I feel tight inside, like there’s something expanding in my body that I can’t physically contain.” (GST, 225) Of course, there is also a mundane obligation (having to deal with her mother’s legacy) that leads Faith back to the farm and to a process of active coping. The young woman suddenly feels the strong urge to return to where it all began and soon finds out that her choice has not been too bad.

Suddenly I feel happy and the feeling strikes me as being something alien, something I’ve not felt in a long time. It’s the simplicity of being, a non-thinking happiness that comes when you’ve blotted yourself out, when you are nothing. But it’s fleeting. As soon as I shift, even just to balance out my weight, the heat-haze-sleep-spell breaks and the reality of my situation floods the feeling out. [...] I laugh and laugh and then I cry and feel foolish and wipe my nose against my arm like a child and then I feel appalled and bereft and mad.
(GST, 254)

There is a spark of happiness lit in her heart when arriving in the once so familiar spheres she has grown up in. Nevertheless, her feelings are mixed. She does not know what to expect and how to proceed. Everything is still pretty much in the dark.

The people, who live on the farm now and are supposed to take care of it, do not greet her with a lot of warmth, seeing in her the white intruder coming back to claim her land. Petrus Kgatle, who has been there since 1987, is one of them and mainly responsible for running the farm. “Thirteen years [...] th[e] house has stood empty, and by the looks of it no one’s come near it in all that time. It strikes me as odd that Petrus wouldn’t have moved into the house.” (GST, 262) Petrus does not give her an answer to that question;

but the spirits haunting her as well as the house might be part of the explanation. Examining the house and taking in all the sensory impressions that – once forgotten – surround her again, she soon makes some revealing discoveries.

First, by means of a letter hidden away for too long, she finds out that her ‘father’ has obviously never loved her. Why else would he have stayed away despite knowing about the hardships faced by her and her mother? (cf. GST, 241) Before leaving, Mia has already revealed some previously unknown details about her ‘parents’ relationship to her, which seem to underline the fact that they have never truly been meant for each other. Moreover, Marius’ war trauma is made partly responsible for their troubles, for “[a]fter they married they swapped eyes. Like all the demons he’d brought back with him from Angola attached themselves to her [= Bella]. Started whispering.” (Mia in GST, 233) Piece by piece the truth is getting restored. When Faith discovers her mother’s paintings, which have been removed from the house, in a shed and Oom Piet suddenly turns up, his presence almost frightens her to death, causing her body to panic heavily; according to Faith, for no obvious reason. The situation is getting more and more confusing for her with the amount of apparently strange questions he asks her. “‘Tell me,’ he says after a significant pause, ‘how much do you remember, about that night, about when your ousie died?’” (Oom Piet in GST, 303) Is there anything she does not remember? Faith now starts to bother her head about it.

More about her parents is brought to the fore when she visits Tannie Hettie in the old people’s home. Aged and demented she does not seem to utter anything useful at first. “‘He’s a bad man, I told you that, Bella, he’s a bad man.’” (Tannie Hettie in GST, 306) Faith cannot make sense of this. Who is ‘bad’? A dream following this exhausting day suddenly brings clarity.

And I see her, I see the light dancing over Nomsa, body-broken, bent forward over the bed. Shadows lick legs hanging over the side, schoolgirl innocent, pigeon-toed feet only just touching the ground. Her pushed-up skirt sits bunched around her waist like a tyre. The light shadow plays over twisted arms, elbows on backwards, dances over open-wide eyes, all white. Licks her head. Part gone. Gore spread like finger-flicked spatter-paint on the wall behind her.

‘Nomsa,’ I whisper, ‘wake up.’

Her eyelids close and open, slow and sedated, and then fear-wide they’re alive and bright with terror her mouth twitches opens screams.

‘No, baas, no.’
(GST, 307)

“What if he killed Nomsa as well as raping her?” (GST, 315) In a dangerous maneuver, Faith confronts Oom Piet in his butchery, determined to tell him what she knows and to turn his life into a sheer horror. What she finds out in return, however, is nothing like she would have expected. “She [Bella] didn’t protect me, girlie, she protected you.” (Oom Piet to Faith in, GST 316) Now Faith knows the whole ghastly truth, knows that she has shot Nomsa in an attempt to save her, knows that *she* is the murderess, her mother only having covered up for her. Dead Rex, his painting waiting for her in Nomsa's room, is in full bloom. (cf. GST, 318)

Days blend, one into another, broken only by indigo nights which stretch eternally. I can no longer tell the difference between sleep and waking. I see them all the time, swirling around me in the dark, a thick and soupy vortex, pressing against my feverish retina in the light, the silvery eyes flash like darting fish, their magenta voices whispering, ‘Killer.’ (GST, 319)

5.3.3. Dead Rex's defeat: *cleansing* from unwanted past activities

The ancestral spirits have completely taken over Faith, Dead Rex's reign being absolute. “Sometimes it’s only me and him; the others can’t bear his company. [...] He sucks me down, into him [...]. But there is not enough space for me, I am still too whole, and the others push me out, forcing me up the tight passage and through the sharp teeth until I spill out, slick and gasping, back into the here.” (GST, 319) Faith finds herself in a psychotic state, episodically leaving and coming back to ‘reality’. The ancestral spirits have taken hold of her and she struggles to get free again; proving that the fight is not over yet. This is where another ‘traditional’ healer comes in, for no other doctor would be able to help her. (cf. GST, 320)

There is a new presence in the room, someone who has not been here before. The woman I know but cannot name has brought him. He is old and gnarled and brown and stooped and looks like a tree spirit but doesn’t feel like one of them. He moves around the room, hunched over, sprinkling powder that glows faintly as it hits the ground, then fades to nothing. His dry, papery skin brushes against me as he moves over me, pressing his hands over my swollen belly, probing me with knuckle-knotted fingers. His breath, sweet with age, hangs in the air, mingling with the smoky scent of the incense he’s lit and placed around the room.

They don't like him, I can feel it. They swarm around me, hissing, but part like the Red Sea to let him through, taking care not to touch him. Their anger beats the air like a drum. The thing that swells my belly responds, pulsing inside me, beating against my skin. (GST, 321)

There is a *thing* in Faith's *belly* and the healer, who is most likely a *sangoma* again, because he uses the rituals associated with them, strives to take it out of her. "Healing then, is often primarily about establishing an ancestry or re-establishing a relationship with living persons and with the ancestors (*emadloti*)" (Thornton 2009, 26).⁴⁴ This involves the healer's 'own' ancestors (*Nguni* spirits) as well as "foreign" ones (*Ndzawe*).

While the *Ndzawe* are foreign spirits, they teach and enable a 'technology' of healing called *kufemba*, 'to smell out'. The *femba* is a dramatic technique for identifying 'foreign bodies' in the body of the client using a short 'whisk' made of hyena hair and a small beaded ring made of ritual substances wrapped in cloth. With this, the healer literally 'smells' all over the body of the client, and occasionally 'identifies' some active entity – sometimes human, sometimes animal, sometimes some other substance – in the body of the client. The healer will then 'take out' this entity by allowing it to enter into his own body. (ibid., 27)

Before he starts this ritual, the *sangoma* comes up with a diagnosis by means of divination. "The old one spreads out a mat on the floor next to me and lays out his things, bones, powders, strange viscous liquids. I watch him out of the corner of my eyes that ache with the fevered effort. He prays and chants and mutters to himself" (GST, 322). Then the ritual of *kufemba* seems to begin. "The old one pulls back the sheet and lifts my shirt and spreads a cold black tar over my stomach. It sinks into me, coating the swelling thing, containing it." (GST, 322) Something is put onto Faith's belly in order to get hold of the *thing* in it.⁴⁵ "The old one digs his hands into my soft fleshy abdomen where the swelling thing lies, hard and dead now, and draws it out." (GST, 323) The other persons present have been told to leave the room, as the spirits might be angry and thus very dangerous for them. The *sangoma* might risk a lot by doing so, as "this method of healing is regarded as exceptionally powerful and dangerous. It is always performed with other healers in attendance who can assist in restoring the primary healer to his own senses at the end of the session." (Thornton 2009, 28) After three straining nights, Faith's healing ritual is completed, leaving her a 'blank canvas', free from the evil spirits that have haunted her for so long.

⁴⁴ "Healers are not 'possessed' by spirits, but rather claim to 'possess ancestors' or to *have* ancestors. [...] Learning to heal involves learning to use and to control the power of these ancestors." (ibid., 26)

⁴⁵ The *sangoma* does not use a whisk-like object, as mentioned by Thornton. However, as rituals have been said to vary from region to region, there might be some change in objects and materials used in them.

I look up at the old man, who hovers over me like a concerned parent. His face is mapped with wrinkles, his eyes shine out from between folds of skin. I feel we have spent an eternity together in this room and I know he has seen the things that I have seen. We have a shared past, yet I have never seen him properly before, never looked at his face and seen the features that distinguish him from every other creature that walks this earth.

I open my mouth to speak, but my tongue is swollen, my lips cracked and dry; I can't form words, but he seems to understand. He reaches out with his gnarled hand and pats me on the forehead.

I watch him gather his things, roll up his mat, pack away the three bottles of medicine he has fed me from over the past nights, black, then red, then white, and he leaves me, completely alone, for the first time ever. (GST, 323-324)

Faith and the healer have something in common (“a shared past” (ibid., 323)); they have seen and experienced the same things. The healer is said to take over the evil entity into his own body, in order to communicate with and through it. (cf. Thornton 2009, 28) He can be seen as really having looked into Faith, into her past. Furthermore, the *sangoma*, when still a student, is said to contribute to his/her own healing by learning the rituals. “Learning as healing/healing the learner” (ibid., 30) This might also be a connection Faith feels.

As can be seen, the healer uses “three bottles of medicine” (GST, 324) and thus also makes use of herbs when healing. “The system of medicinal herbs is often used, taught and learned with divination – for instance, when a healer divines a particular cause for a problem or a diagnosis for a disease. He may then prescribe a selection of herbs or a mixture of herbs (such as leaves, bark, seeds, roots, bracts, corns) and/or animal products (such as bone, teeth, fats, burnt skin).” (Thornton 2009, 25) These herbs are referred to as ‘muti’, which means plant or tree. (cf. ibid.)

Dead Rex reach down with bony-fingered hand, extend easily all the way to the root, and lift up hard-swollen-black. He hold it to his nose. Sniff. Sniff. The shell of sangoma muti contains it well, no smell escape.

He drop down and open wide, wider than eating a man, and place hard-swollen-black between his teeth. He bite. The shell crack and like juicy bird egg the nourishment leak out. He lick it, like it be sweet flower nectar. [...]

Hard-swollen-black be almost empty now. He savour each drop, stop the last hate juice from the crack out flowing with his finger bones. It be long time since he ate such things, long time since this place began to change and the fear-hate eased and hope came.

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

Mosetsana's fear-hate be finished now. Dead Rex drop the hard shell to the ground, crush it under splayed foot into tiny bits that disperse like dust on the wind.

(GST, 328)

Faith's healing process is not only one restricted to her own. As has been shown, the social and personal level are thoroughly interwoven in the African philosophy of 'ubuntu' ("A person is a person through other people." (Thornton 2009, 19 footnote)).⁴⁶ Her having successfully worked through her traumatic experience/s and having been cleansed from the ancestral spirits thus also symbolizes some kind of social healing.

5.3.4. The evil 'kings' are gone

Thornton refers to the fact that the duty of 'traditional healers' is also seen in 'cleansing' the nation from its traumatic past regarding the apartheid regime. (cf. Thornton 2009, 18) "This discourse of 'healing the nation' attributes political and social problems of today to the political 'ancestors' of the current 'dispensation'. [...] On the other hand, the past is also held to be the source of true healing and health." (ibid., 19) One has to dig into the past to get rid of 'ancestral demons' in order to start anew. It is a quest for empowerment, to create one's own identity, free from evil and hatred; to arise anew as a "blank canvas", ready to be painted. Evil and hatred might re-surface again, but with 'hope' having arisen, it is more difficult for them to gain hold and to spread uncontrolled. Faith now knows where her 'home' is and goes back to Mia and Molly in order to re-build her social life; inspired by a new 'faith' – her *own*.

The tears flow easily for Papa and Mother and Nomsa, for Ouma and Grandma English and Tannie Hettie, for Boesman, for Molly, for the fairies, and finally for my small self that died with Nomsa. My grief pours from me, making the first marks on my fresh soul, and outside it begins to rain. (GST, 324)

⁴⁶ "All ['traditional healers'] share a common philosophy in understanding political *and* personal (psychological or somatic) illness, pain and misfortune as similarly rooted in the complexities of social interaction in the past." (ibid., 19)

6. Susan Mann's *Quarter Tones*

6.1. Between worlds: home and 'exile' in *Quarter Tones*

Again at night the field of burning flowers. Burning in the yellow glare of noon, just burning, no smoke, never dying. Till the image sings the membrane between sleep and non-sleep. She does not open her eyes, does not move a muscle. Hoping that if she lies still enough, curled like a shell, she might float in this fluid between dark and light, yesterday and today, sea and earth. *Between*. Waiting. Till she hears again the voices she carries in her skin. Before the day breaks open and spills into what people call *the real world*. (QT, 1)

'Sleep – non-sleep', 'dark – light' – Susan Mann's novel *Quarter Tones* (2007) is a work based on oppositions. It contains a set of conflicting concepts, ideas, beliefs and 'realities', all of which are arranged around one central dichotomy made up by the two competing components *exile* and *home*. There is no doubt that they are at the heart of *Quarter Tones*, outlining the novel's basic structure and in addition to that functioning as a core theme in it. Together with the further oppositions that spread from it in multiple layers, this basic dichotomy forms a structure within which the characters are thoroughly positioned.

The meaning of neither *exile* nor *home* is clear-cut. There are no straightforward definitions of these two. What is understood by *home* and *exile* respectively depends on the individual, the ideals a person holds, the set of individual experiences these are based on. The experience of *exile* – the loss of (physical) *home* – can function as traumatizing event and negatively affect a person's identity, whereas for others it might appear to be an opportunity to positively change one's life. Similarly, not every traumatizing event needs to have a negative effect on a person's life. In some people a situation of adversity can even trigger off a process of PTG.

All this primarily depends on a person's ability to *consciously* locate himself/herself within the net of possibilities. The individual's task is to pick from them the most appealing to enrich his/her individual identity; guided by a thorough understanding of "the rhythms of the past" (QT, 193) and with careful regard to "the slow beat of tomorrow" (QT, 193).

Like in *Gem Squash Tokoloshe*, going back *home*, in order to actively work through one's trauma and give way to a process of healing, represents a central theme in the

following novel to be discussed. *Home* is where it all started; *home* is where it will come back to. Traumatizing incidences as well as healing are both embedded in the beautiful, yet sometimes merciless country of South Africa. An individual's coping process is intertwined with the process of working through trauma of a whole nation. The *individual* and the *social* once again flow into each other. People are shaped by their country and responsible for shaping it in return. In *Quarter Tones*, the protagonist shows signs of Post Traumatic Growth in the end and provides the hopeful outlook into a better future for a country that has gone through so much pain and hatred in its past and strives to create its own, new identity.

6.1.1. *Exile* or “the pervasive metanarrative of migration”⁴⁷

To define the constituents of the central binary opposition, *exile* and *home*, is not an easy task, as there is no universal definition of neither of these two entities. Paul Gready basically considers the former as cruelly overshadowed by what he terms “the pervasive metanarrative of migration” (Gready 2003, 135) in postcolonial discourse. With its concept of the 'migrant', *postcolonialism* – the theoretical field that officially looks down disdainfully on every essentialist notion – is said to have created a metanarrative of its own; a “post-colonial blur” (ibid., 136), in which there seems to exist only one form of displacement and mobility and all “specificities of variation and locality” (ibid.) are blurred. This tendency to deny differences, to generalize and to nurture global assimilation and therefore also exclusion, is something post-colonialism actually strongly criticizes. With its “tendency to equate the [...] characteristics of all displaced and mobile people, be they exiles, refugees, migrants, expatriates, or simply travellers, under the umbrella of migrancy or diaspora” (ibid.), it betrays itself in a way, proudly announcing the end of the 'metanarrative', but keeping it up nevertheless in its basic terminology. This is, however, only one of the numerous self-betrays obvious in our modern, globalized world.

Rather in favor of the project of *deconstructing* what is simply too huge a construct to let the individual's voice be heard, seems to be Abdul JanMohamed's concept of the “four different modes of ‘border-crossings’” (Songolo 1997, 115). In his definition he clearly states that not every person leaves his/her (physical) home voluntarily. Whereas

⁴⁷ Gready 2003, 135.

'the colonialist', 'the immigrant' and 'the scholar/anthropologist' (with the subcategories of the 'tourist' and the 'traveller') are in the new environment (more or less) voluntarily, the 'exile' is said to hold a critical stance towards his new situation. *Exile* is thus not a voluntarily chosen situation. (cf. *ibid.*)

This is exactly what presents itself in *Quarter Tones*, where Ana Luisa and Michael “had left South Africa [...] for Britain in 1989, after he had completed his Political Science degree and received his call-up papers for the army” (QT 17), which he would have joined by no means. It is a political decision to leave that the graduate of *political science* takes. He feels forced to do so, because for him participating in the project of those who “used the global fear of communism as a ruse to keep those in power at the helm” (QT, 18) would be “a betrayal of everything he stood for.” (QT, 18) Michael does not want to betray himself and therefore has to leave South Africa and the political system he cannot *cope* with behind.

Ana Luisa’s situation, on the other hand, is a bit more complex, because she would actually not be forced to leave South Africa for any political reasons. As a woman she would not have to join the army. However, as the story unfolds, it turns out that using the term 'exile' to describe her case seems to be rather justified than making use of it to define Michael’s situation. The case of the latter does not show what Edward Said calls “[...] the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home.” (Said in Songolo 1997, 113) In fact, Michael’s stance towards his new environment (London) changes over time, so that there is in a shift from being an 'exile' – who is *forced* to leave his country for political reasons – to being an 'expatriate'. Gready quotes Ignatieff, who states that he “wish[es] that more people understood that expatriation is not exile: it is merely the belonging of those who choose their home rather than inherit it” (Gready 2003, 137) and Ana confirms Michael’s status as 'ex-pat' in one of their telephone conversations.⁴⁸

“The exile [...] exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments,

⁴⁸ “You can’t trust everything you read on the Internet. [...] Naturally, he said. But who would go to all the trouble to make up something like that? I don’t know, she said. An ex-pat?” (QT, 140); “Michael was one of the editors of a website called expatSA.com. The site was a vibrant meeting spot of thousands of people who had left South Africa and were now living in various corners of the globe.” (QT, 139)

nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an *adept mimic or a secret outcast* on another.” (Said in Songolo 1997, 113) Edward Said describes the situation of the exile as a 'neither-nor'-status, being neither fully part of 'here' nor of 'there'. On the other hand, the expatriate experiences “a mobility of mind [...], a doubling instead of a split” (Gready 2003, 137), because he is privileged and willing to gain additional (cultural) knowledge. It needs, however, a certain way of thinking and a certain concept of *home* in order to (be able to) value such a *gain*; to recognize it as gain at all.

6.1.2. *Home – a place or a feeling?*

Home. Is it a place? A person? A feeling? Could this structure, this collection of bricks and blisters, beams and rust, smell of ozone, possibly be what she'd dreamt of all this time away? Or did it need her father, the penumbra of her mother, to be complete? (QT, 14)

In opposition to the concept of exile, theoretical discourse seems to rely rather on the realm of the 'poetic' and 'romantic' in order to try to define what is meant by 'home'.

Home is a function of place. There's no place like home; there's no home like place. Home is a function of time. Like so much in exile it is of the past and future not the present, a shadow country that might have been or might yet be, a territory of time. Home is fixed in time, defined in terms of time, a place set in time and a time set in place. And yet it evolves through forgetting and imagining, acquires the fragmentary accretions, learned from afar, of more recent history, of other times and other places. Between past and future, home and elsewhere, memory and forgetting, the imaginary and the real, lies the place called home. (Gready 2003, 220)

Home is the place that for the exile comes to be related with his/her past. It is a place of 'belonging', which is stored in memory, however, always facing the threat of being forgotten or distorted. The latter happens, as Gready states, when the person in exile starts to idealize home, to consider it as 'paradise', as it is vividly depicted in Breyten Breytenbach's *A Season in Paradise* (1985)⁴⁹. In his case *paradise* points to the fact that Breytenbach, who left South Africa for political reasons in 1960 to become an exile in Paris, associates home with the place “where one belonged naturally, functioned completely, fitted in instinctively, and enjoyed a shared and unquestioned sense of security.” (ibid., 189) He describes his later attempt to go back home for “cathartic closure, recollection and remembrance” (ibid., 193), which turned out to be

⁴⁹ Cf. Gready 2003, 193ff.

unsuccessful for the reason that his expectations could not be answered there. “Breytenbach’s private South Africa had an ugly public face. [...] [his] private South African paradise could not be separated from its public face.” (ibid., 194) The ‘public face’ is what is mentioned as the unfortunate political situation in South Africa – the security police, the controversies (“The word in the air was ‘reconciliation.’”, ibid.), the crime and the media dining on it.

Michael’s South Africa also has that ‘ugly public face’, a face that seems to obscure everything else. “It was exactly this, this daily violence that Michael wanted to leave behind” (QT, 69). It is the political situation back home that Michael cannot cope with. It is this ghastly ‘daily violence’ that alienates him from it; and it is his basic concept of home that motivates this process of alienation. “[...] Michael. For him, home was a concept, a political theory, his identity linked with its absence of meaning.” (QT, 15) By contrast, Ana’s identity is purely linked with its meaning and the idea that “[h]ome can be anything one wants it to be; it is in the eye of the beholder.” (Gready 2003, 222) In the case of Ana it is first and foremost ‘a relationship’, existing in the close connection to her father Sam and then vainly sought in the love to Michael.

According to that assumption, she can be considered as somehow ‘double-exiled’, when Michael gets promoted and leaves her alone in order to fulfil his professional duties and his craving for success and recognition. His decisions are purely *rational*ly steered, his identity seems to be rootless and personal fulfilment is achieved by him through his professional life. It is impossible for him – or better: it would be, if he tried⁵⁰ – to understand Ana’s way of thinking, the meaning she associates with home, the *emotional* tie that exists between her and South Africa and accusingly points to that fact by saying “You never were much hampered by logic, were you?” (QT, 77)

6.1.3. Reason vs. emotion and the quest of modernity

Keeping in mind this opposition between the ‘rational’ and the ‘emotional’ is crucial for an understanding of Michael’s and Ana’s reactions to leaving South Africa. Michael seems to possess a somewhat more flexible identity, which can therefore be considered a typical *modern identity*.

⁵⁰ That Michael does not even make an effort to understand her, is expressed in the following: “Well, why is it I [Michael] never seem to hear you [Ana]? Maybe you aren’t listening.” (QT, 17)

Peter Lohauß states with reference to Erik Erikson's *Schema der Entwicklung der Ich-Identität*⁵¹:

Die Bildung der Ich-Identität ist im einzelnen Lebenszyklus nie völlig abgeschlossen [...] Erikson verdeutlicht, daß die Entwicklung des Selbst mit der Adoleszenz nicht zum Abschluß gekommen ist. Die Beziehung zu Produktion und Reproduktion, zu Beruf und Familie ist das grundlegende Feld, auf dem die „Identitätssuche“ ausgetragen wird. Hinzu kommen die Einstellungen zu den frei gewählten, persönlichen und intimen Beziehungen und die selbstreflexive Vergewisserung über die eigene Biographie [...]. (Lohauß 1995, 44f.)

Identity is thus something that is – though its most important basis is laid in childhood⁵² – subject to continuous *gradual* development throughout an individual's whole life cycle. Each person is confronted with new challenges – new social roles that have to be successfully integrated by his/her 'Ich'⁵³. The individual's identity has to be seen as a product of its time and culture, as it is socioculturally shaped by the sets of values and world picture held by the society it is embedded in. Lohauß mentions that in 'modern' societies a split has occurred between the individual and its society, creating an opposition that is said to be closely linked to the one of 'reason' and 'emotion'.

Beide Gegensätze werden im modernen bürgerlichen Denken gebildet [...] in dem das Individuum [...] sich aus seiner Verwobenheit mit der traditionellen Gemeinschaft löst. Je mehr sich Menschen für unabhängig und autonom gegenüber den Denk- und Lebensformen ihrer Gemeinschaft halten, desto schärfer wollen sie ihr Innenleben von ihren äußeren Bindungen abgrenzen. [...] Gefühle und Leidenschaften [werden] quasi in das Innere zurückgezogen, um dem Verstand die Herrschaft über den Körper und die äußere Welt einzuräumen. (Lohauß 1995, 49f.)

The basis of this change consisted in a steady modification of the society's set of values and the growing demand to control one's feelings. These feelings should be kept more to oneself, forced to the inside. The individual's behavior came to be valued according

⁵¹ “Nach Erikson beruht das bewußte Gefühl, eine persönliche Identität zu besitzen, auf zwei gleichzeitigen Beobachtungen: der unmittelbaren Wahrnehmung der eigenen Gleichheit und Kontinuität in der Zeit und der damit verbundenen Wahrnehmung, daß auch andere diese Gleichheit und Kontinuität erkennen.” (Lohauß 1995, 30)

⁵² “Eine Schlüsselrolle spielt die Identifizierung mit vorgegebenen Rollen, Personen und Leitbildern, die bereits in der Kindheit einsetzt. Durch sie werden gesellschaftliche Leitbilder in die Ich-Bildung integriert, wobei das Ich aber nicht nur passiv aufnimmt, sondern aktiv zur Integration beitragen muß.” (ibid.)

⁵³ Cf. a description of Freud's principle of the ‘Ich – Es – Über-Ich’ and the task of the ‘Ich’ to basically guarantee for an equilibrium between ‘Es (drives)’ and ‘Über-Ich (culture)’, in: ibid., 20-26.

to a different set of criteria and to be judged primarily by its 'usefulness'.⁵⁴ 'Rationality' gained in importance. "Die Selbstkontrolle tritt in Gegensatz zu den eigenen Gefühlen." (ibid., 65) Lohauß adds to this the important fact that there could have also been observed what he calls a "Lockerung der Bindung [der 'Ich-Identität'] an bestimmte Orte, Zeitabläufe und Zeitspannen" (ibid., 72). Due to the changes in professional life (increased industrialization, division of labour), *spontaneity*, *autonomy* and *diligence* have become important qualities.

These are the core qualities assigned to what in neoclassical economics has come to be known as 'homo oeconomicus'. The *homo oeconomicus*, whom Andreas Novy defines as "Idealtypus des rational agierenden Individuums" (Novy 2005, 91-92) is a perfect machine, continuously striving to increase personal wealth and well-being (which he/she takes as a first step in order to increase general wealth). He/she is entirely concentrated on the present and said to have equally 'lost' his/her feeling for the past and his/her interest in the future. In addition to that, he/she considers his/her modern existence as the only appreciable way of being, condemning everything else as somewhat behind and apparently 'underdeveloped'.

After the failed job application in South Africa, IFDA promoted him [Michael], from programme manager to programme director, which meant a great deal more travelling, a sizeable pay increase, and a car. His job took him to many countries, sometimes for weeks at a time. (QT, 41)

I may go. It is my job, after all. But I never leave. (QT, 77)

[...]he rode wave after wave; as he was elected Student Representative Council President, completed his degree with distinction, worked his ways up at IFDA, won his way into the hearts of decision-makers and funders the world over. (QT, 103)

As has been referred to above, Michael undergoes some significant change. The shift from *exile* to *expatriate* goes hand in hand with his becoming a *homo oeconomicus*.⁵⁵ He has achieved what he finds most *valuable*, but which is not exactly what he originally planned to achieve.

For the first year they told each other that they were living in exile. It gave them a gravity, and even a certain cachet amongst their peers. They felt that even though they weren't

⁵⁴ Cf. ibid., 60ff.

⁵⁵ Ana notices that change, stating in a very poetic tone: "How far you've drifted from the blue-eyed boy I met with his surfboard here on Noordhoek Beach, she thought. The boy with the mouth wide and free as a bird in flight. The boy who knew how to play, to dream." (QT, 50)

directly involved in The Struggle, they were supporting it far more than if they had remained at home. It also served Michael well in the position he found for himself, as programme manager for an NGO, the Institute for Freedom and Democracy in Africa. IFDA was funded by several Scandinavian countries, and focused on projects aimed at bridging the digital divide. Michael found himself assisting the Director in their Programme for Media and Communications.

(QT, 18)

He painted a picture of living a bohemian lifestyle, with other artists, poets, musicians who were far from home, protesting against injustice. [...] By refusing to go to the army [...] he felt he had given the two of them the moral right to belong in such company.

(QT, 41)

The above quotations create the lively image of a young, determined rebel, who carries within him the hope for a better future in a new South Africa. However, this hope suddenly evaporates with his application for a job in South Africa being rejected because of affirmative action. After this incident South Africa does not constitute a part of his personal future anymore, but is taken by him rather as a dangerous country that has to be modified in order not to harm what can be called the *global community*; to become a respectable part of it. It should be turned from a corrupt, criminal, *underdeveloped* place that suffers from an enormous 'inferiority complex', into a place like London, which Michael considers to be full of new chances, dynamic and *simply developed*.

The dichotomy of 'developed – underdeveloped' seems to constitute Michael's basic attitude concerning South Africa and also points to a further opposition closely linked to it – that between 'modernity' and 'tradition', 'the *First World*' and 'the *Third World*'. His way of thinking compares to that typically ascribed to the representatives of 'modernization theory', the very basis of which can be seen in Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* and the system theory by Talcott Parsons (1951)⁵⁶. "Der Kapitalismus konnte sich – den Gedanken Max Webers folgend – nur durch eine Veränderung des Bewusstseins, getragen durch die protestantische Ethik, entwickeln. Erst die Abkehr vom Jenseits, Askese, eine positive Bewertung der Berufsarbeit und zweckrationales Handeln hätten zu Kapitalakkumulation geführt." (Kolland 2004, 87) Parsons' 'pattern variables' point to the (supposed) differences between countries considered *developed* and those labelled *underdeveloped*.⁵⁷ According to 'modernization theory', countries understood as

⁵⁶ Cf. Kolland 2004, 81-105.

⁵⁷ In order to describe the 'differences' between countries understood as developed and those considered underdeveloped, Talcott Parsons refers to five basic binary oppositions (the first part of each assigned to countries supposedly underdeveloped, the latter to those taken as developed): 1) Affektivität vs. affektive Neutralität, 2) Selbstorientierung vs. Kollektivorientierung, 3) Statuszuweisung vs. Leistungsorien-

showing characteristics related to *underdevelopment* should be helped to get rid of these and acquire qualities typically assigned to *developed societies*. The former should thus move from the status of the *traditional society* – with traditional ways of life being linked to *underdevelopment* – to that of the *modern, industrialized society*. The modernization process triggered off with the help of 'the West' is considered to be unilinear; all countries are seen as undergoing the same development stages, based on economic (increased industrialization), technological (integration of new technologies), political (establishment of democratic structures, 'good governance') and social (adoption of a Western lifestyle) changes.⁵⁸ Some countries are considered to be closer to the final stage (the *industrial nation*), whereas others would still have to catch up with them. This explains why the process is called 'nachholende Entwicklung' ('catch-up development').

You know, if all goes according to plan, Africa will be part of the Information Society by 2015. [...] there's massive funding. People seeing the big picture. Leap-frogging infrastructure problems, straight to other solutions – satellite, fibre optic cable, WIFI. (QT, 106)

ICTs for Africa [...] It's going to change the world. Had some excellent meetings today. The United Nations are on board too. [...] Want to set up a meeting with us soon. I'm part of something that's going to help alleviate poverty, provide education, provide health solutions for HIV Aids and TB. I feel like I'm really making a difference to the whole African continent, it's quite a thrill. [...] There'll be huge hurdles, naturally, he said. Bridging the *psychological* divide will probably be more difficult than sorting out the infrastructural challenges. (QT, 121f.)

Sometimes, things work. Even in South Africa. In fact, when it comes to ICTs I'm relieved to say that it's not a complete embarrassment. Compared with the rest of the continent, South Africa and Egypt are pretty far ahead of the game. (QT, 121)

Michael wants to change things from abroad, becoming what Masao Miyoshi (in Gready 2003, 139) calls the "postcolonial intellectual", who is involved in a process in which – according to Stuart Hall – the "global operates through, incorporates, and reworks the local, 'thereby weaving reformulated particularities into a broader frame'" (ibid., 140). It seems that Michael gets along very well with that task and is keen on mixing with those who are like him. "[...] Mikaela. She's a new intern, part-time at the

tierung, 4) Universalismus vs. Partikularismus, 5) diffuses vs. spezifisches Verhalten, cf. Kolland 2004, 88.

⁵⁸ Cf. a good introduction to 'modernization theory' in ibid., 84-91.

office. Swedish. A musician too, dying to meet you. Anyway, these writers, poets, violinists all get together once a week at different homes. [...] I think I've found our *tribe* at last." (QT, 106) It is certainly not by chance that his new 'colleague's name is *Mikaela*. Mikaela, a cosmopolitan like Michael; a *homo oeconomicus* par excellence, driven by the striving for success and defined by an incredible "flexibility" ("Speaks five different languages."; QT, 121). "Mikaela thinks she might be able to swing it that we have a conference in Moscow." (QT, 121) Michael has finally found his 'tribe', mingling with those for whom life seems to be 'rootless'. He has finally found those artists, writers, musicians that *play* like him; *global players* whose melodies are so fundamentally different from those Ana feels 'at home' with.

"He did like music, this was true, but mostly pop or rock. Anything that ventured beyond the familiar he would tend to switch off." (QT, 106) There are no alternatives in the world of the *homo oeconomicus*. There is only one way; the way of 'modernity'.

You know, you really need to get out of there. Get some perspective. South Africa [t]ends to suck you in, shows you the world through blinkers. Nothing ever seems possible when you're there. No wonder you have no confidence. No, not just you. People in general. It's oppressive.
(QT, 121f.)

Michael vainly tries to convince Ana, who has strong doubts concerning *his way*, of what is certain for him.

I've been wondering how people in far flung places are going to use computers when they can't even read? Touchscreen technology, he said. [...] Tele-kiosks everywhere, fully equipped with Internet, fax ... [...] Bill Gates in Africa, she smiled. Think it'll work? Actually, Bill Gates *is* making a big contribution. [...] I suppose he wants people to think that's philanthropic, she said. Yes, he sighed. It's not without its challenges, this project, but it's the only way [...] [f]or Africa not to be left behind in the digital divide, he explained. [I]t's also a way for Africa to *keep* its identity. Its cultural heritage. ICT – the Internet especially – is a perfect way to archive indigenous information. And have it plundered by everybody else, she pointed out.
(QT, 140f.)

In fact, what Ana refers to is the threat of what is called 'neo-colonialism' and she explicitly points out that there might be things even more dangerous than Michael's scapegoat South Africa.

[...] I'm not convinced it's that different from other countries. People kill one another all over the world, don't they? Only in other countries the equipment is often better, more technologically advanced. In first world countries killing is simply far more efficient. (QT, 124)

Ana speaks out against the process of global *assimilation*. She feels threatened by the noisy, crowded, impersonal, commodified, industrialized, too enormous, frightening atmosphere in London, but personally values the calm, 'melodic', natural, personal, sensuous and mysterious character of South Africa and explicitly notices a positive change as far as its political situation is concerned. Michael, however, degrades this view as fatal misperception.

I'd just like to know how informed you [Ana] are to make these sweeping utopian statements. [...] You don't have a clue. Just like half of South Africa. A country of ostriches. [...] I can't help noticing – and there are others, educated people, who agree – that it's far easier to preach platitudes than do anything real. At least I'm doing something. (QT, 123)

In his opinion, the *educated* – “[...] those who are born apparently knowing all the answers” (QT, 124) – are the ones who can tame South Africa; who *know* and can successfully intervene from the outside.

Subsumed under the opposition of 'modernity' and 'tradition', which is shown in the dichotomy 'exile – home' and closely linked to the distinction between the 'rational' and the 'emotional' and the contrasting pair 'developed – underdeveloped', is the struggle between 'globalization' and 'localization', 'universalism' and 'particularism'. All this is directly presented in the way the characters behave. Daniel, the isolated visual anthropologist, who tries to directly help people on the local level, appears as a contrast to Michael, the ambitious *homo oeconomicus* operating in the global arena. That the first has always been a dedicated communist comes with no surprise, as Michael shows clearly capitalist tendencies. Whereas the latter can be seen as representing a neo-liberalist, modernization theorist notion, Daniel can be called a representative of its opposite, 'dependency theory'⁵⁹, a body of theories that includes a Marxian school of thought and generally considers the influence from without as the cause of local inequalities and hardships. His position may be compared to the one of Ahmed Nara, the protagonist in *L'écart (The Rift)* – a novel by V. Y. Mudimbe, an exile writer from

⁵⁹ Cf. Kolland 2004, 94-100.

Zaire –, who “argues against European anthropologists and historians who project images of their own *ratio* on the surface of Africa as he himself seeks to be more directly engaged in the specificity of local knowledge and to be sensitive to it. Archives must not be limited to ‘the particular expressions actualized by the brief history of Europe.’” (Songolo 1997, 120f.)

This opinion also resembles that expressed by Ana, when she admits that “[t]here was so much about Indian music she did not know. Music at university had meant classical, what they called serious music. The rest – including Indian, Celtic, African and South American – was termed *anthropological*, and counted some five or ten per cent of the course. (QT, 135) Like Nara she finds that they “have [...] dismissed the norms of African tradition as primitive” (Songolo 1997, 121) or even excluded them from the curricula. That Ana values the local traditions of her (physical) home highly, can be seen in the fascination she expresses for her father Sam’s craft.

That she herself is, however, not immune to the danger of ‘Third-Worldism’⁶⁰ – a term coined by Aijaz Ahmad⁶¹ – becomes obvious from her conversation with Franz (who seems to be an outspoken critic of such stereotypes and essentialist notions) concerning her father’s insurance policy.

That was quick for the third world. I [Ana] wasn’t expecting to hear so soon. [...]
So, the third world, huh? he cocked his head and watched her as they waded through the grass to his house.
Third world? she said, aware that the hem of his suit pants were getting filthy from the wet grass.
You said the gentleman’s response was quick for the third world. I take it you find this country a little primitive?
Oh dear, did I say that? She tilted her head, trying to remember. Did I offend you? I’m sorry. [...] Actually, I don’t think that. I’m just very familiar with this expression. Especially when it comes to South Africa. [...]
(QT, 30f.)

⁶⁰ In her article *Conditions of the Third World*, Ola Rotimi offers a witty summary of the symptoms the so-called “Third World” has been diagnosed with: “worsening high blood pressure in illiteracy; acute diarrhea in population explosion; psychotic tendencies in human rights violations; technological epilepsy; scientific paralysis; industrial anemia; a recurrent state of political delirium; malignant tumors of ethnocentrism; sickle-cell religiosity; a ruptured hernia of corruption; and the ‘mother’ of all maladies: Acquired Immune Deficiency in Economic Growth”, in: Rotimi 1997, 126.

⁶¹ Cf. Gready 2003, 136.

After a decade in the so-called 'First World' and with Michael as her husband, it is quite understandable that she has become *familiar* with the idea of the 'Third World'. Ana has, however, another explanation for her using the term. "I think it makes you feel better when you're far away if you can say things like that, she continued. You know, to go on about the crime, the economy. It helps you cope." (QT, 31)

Consciously assigning negative attributes to something actually deeply loved helps coping with the loss of it. Does that strategy of *self-betrayal* really work? It definitely belongs to the category of 'avoidance coping'⁶² and will not be helpful in Ana's situation.

6.2. Exile as traumatizing event

6.2.1. Identification and Alienation

Identity of any kind requires steering a course between holding on and letting go. Identity is not composed of a fixed set of memories but lies in the dialectical, ceaseless activity of remembering and forgetting, assimilating and discarding. (Lambek; Antze, 1996: xxix)

That identity construction is a process that can never be considered as entirely complete is a fact that has already been referred to above. With regard to 'sociological role theory', the identity of a person can be described as a result of different social roles the individual had and has to deal with. "Für die soziologische Rollentheorie ist soziale Interaktion Rollenspiel, sofern vergesellschaftete Individuen als Träger von Rollen aufeinandertreffen, die sie im Rahmen gesellschaftlich vorgegebener 'Skripte', den gesellschaftlichen 'Rollenerwartungen', ausführen." (Jaeggi 2005, 95) Each individual is confronted with a number of different social roles, according to the different situations with other individuals it finds itself in. There are private as well as public social roles, some of which might overlap, whereas others might be quite distinct from each other. These various roles a person has to deal with, have to be successfully acquired, in order to integrate with the individual's identity. If a person does not succeed in acquiring a certain social role, if he/she cannot answer the social expectations connected with it, there might be the threat that the individual faces a process of 'alienation'. As Stanley I. Benn suggests in his *Theory of Freedom* (1988), an individual has to *identify* with a social role in order to be able to acquire it successfully.

⁶² Cf. chapter 1 of this thesis.

It has to make sense to a person; he/she has to find himself/herself in it. Fulfilling the role has to be considered part of his/her personality.

[...] when a role is truly a part of the self, what the role makes of it affects his consciousness of his identity; having the role is a necessary part of being the person that he is, and his performance counts for him as a stage in self-creation. (Benn in *ibid.*, 120)

Whether one can identify with the social role in question, depends on the various social roles an individual has acquired before in his/her life, because – as stated by Jaeggi – these roles cannot simply be taken off again. Each of them is said to fundamentally shape the individual's 'Ich'. “Rollen akkumulieren sich [...] und gehen in unterschiedlichen Individuen je verschiedene Konstellationen ein. Und, als Bildungsprozess betrachtet, ist jede Prägung durch eine Rolle Ausgangssituation für die nächste Rollenanforderung.” (*ibid.*, 121)

That explains why Ana and Michael can be considered rather emotional or rational, respectively. They have made different experiences in their lives, have been confronted with different social roles and expectations and therefore learned to cope with new social roles in their own way. Their personal experiences have shaped them differently. Jaeggi furthermore mentions that in 'modern' societies the individuals are usually confronted with role constellations that are far more complex than in 'traditional' societies, with more than one social role being active at a time. Some can deal with such a situation better than others, which is certainly due to a greater flexibility in their identity. Fact is, that some social roles can have an *alienating* effect in the individual, leading to his/her loss of 'self' and authenticity and consequently to a feeling of inner emptiness.⁶³

Knowing whether a social role is suitable for a person or not, requires a process of conscious consideration; or as Charles Taylor puts it: 'articulation'. He considers the creation of 'self' “als einen fortwährenden Artikulationsprozess [...] in dem wir uns über unsere Wünsche und Werthaltungen klar werden und ein dementsprechendes Selbstverständnis ausbilden.” (Taylor in *ibid.*, 194) However, these wishes and sets of values – although one can and should try to get hold of them – have also been shaped by previous experiences concerning the individual's relationships with the outside world. Keeping up these fundamental relations seems to guarantee for the individual's stability.

⁶³ Cf. Jaeggi 2005, 122.

“Entfremdung bezeichnet [...] eine Beziehungslosigkeit besonderer Art: Eine Trennung oder Separierung von etwas, das eigentlich zusammengehört, den Bezugsverlust zwischen Größen, die dennoch in einem Verhältnis zueinander stehen.“ (ibid., 43) *Alienation* thus means having distanced oneself from something that actually belongs – or at least should belong – to one’s ‘self’. It is not the same as ‘foreignness’, because the thing one alienates from is equally part of and estranged from one’s ‘self’. In a way it means a loss of ‘freedom’ – “positive freedom” (Isaiah Berlin)⁶⁴, which means the possibility and ability to achieve one’s aims, realize one’s desires and wishes and not merely the absence of coercion (‘negative freedom’).⁶⁵ The situation of loss of ‘positive freedom’ is presented in Ana’s case, who has left South Africa in order to be with Michael, to whom she seems to be some kind of personal prisoner. He does not listen to what she actually wants – probably for the reason that she cannot clearly *articulate* herself – and although “she wanted to go home, she missed her father, the open spaces, the light [...] Michael was adamant. [...] To stop her leaving, he married her.” (QT, 18) Ana’s reaction can be best described as resignation; she has let herself being imprisoned by “the dark and brooding Polyphemus” (QT, 181). “Eerie” (QT, 181), but only if one consciously recognizes it. In fact, Ana has been a prisoner all her life – to others as well as to herself.

6.2.2. *Exile* as betrayal of ‘self’

Entfremdung verweist auf ein ganzes Bündel miteinander verbundener Motive [...] bedeutet Indifferenz und Entzweiung, Machtlosigkeit und Beziehungslosigkeit sich selbst und einer als gleichgültig und fremd erfahrenen Welt gegenüber. Entfremdung ist das Unvermögen, sich zu anderen Menschen, zu Dingen, zu gesellschaftlichen Institutionen und damit auch [...] zu sich selbst in Beziehung zu setzen. Eine entfremdete Welt präsentiert sich dem Individuum als sinn- und bedeutungslos, erstarrt oder verarmt, als eine Welt, die nicht ‚die seine‘ ist, in der es nicht ‚zu Hause‘ ist oder auf die es keinen Einfluss nehmen kann. (Jaeggi 2005, 20)

Jaeggi, whose ideas are based on a theory by Harry Frankfurt, differentiates between two different kinds of ‘Selbstverlust’: the actual loss of something or someone that

⁶⁴ Cf. Jaeggi 2005., 53

⁶⁵ Robert Pippin describes this ‘positive freedom’ as follows: “Nur diejenigen Taten und Vorhaben, die ich ‚mit mir in Verbindung bringen kann, so dass sie mir zuschreibbar sind oder als die meinigen zählen, sind ‚Instanzen‘ der Freiheit”, in: ibid., 54.

cannot be prevented (*bereavement*), and the loss of something or someone that is actually still there, but which results from distancing oneself from it.

Im einen Fall ist das Objekt weg, die Bindung aber besteht weiter, und die Aufgabe desjenigen, der den Verlust erleidet, ist es, diese zu transformieren. Im anderen Fall (dem des vorgeblichen Selbstverrats) ist das Objekt noch vorhanden (die Revolution noch machbar, das Geliebte da), aber die Bindung an das Objekt ist verloren gegangen. (ibid., 207)

The situation that is presented in *Quarter Tones* is one consisting of both; it presents a lively pattern of multiply interwoven different 'kinds of losses'. Ana, who misses her most important attachment figure Sam when in London and vainly tries to compensate for that loss by trying to be close to Michael, finds herself in a kind of *conflict*. She utterly loves Sam, "the single inhabitant in her entire world" (QT, 63), but on the other hand she also feels that strong connection with Michael. "And then she'd wonder if it weren't the same with Michael; what she most wanted was her husband, and only him." (QT, 63) Ana wants two things at a time, which are in a way mutually exclusive. With reference to Jaeggi, one could thus say that her "volitional unity" (Jaeggi 2005, 208) has been split into two halves. On the one hand, Ana wants to be with Sam, whereas, on the other hand, she does not want to lose Michael. In order to be with the latter she has to leave South Africa and therefore Sam. She decides to leave Sam, but at the same time is aware of the fact that it is not what she actually desires. What she would prefer is to live in South Africa with both, Michael and Sam. However, the former would not listen to her greatest wish and – "at times when she was most honest" (QT, 108) – Ana tells herself that it might not be entirely negative to let go of Sam. "At times when she was most honest, she knew that it was a relief to leave that weight behind when she left for England." (QT, 108) That *weight* consists in the fact that she somehow senses that she is too close to Sam; that she functions as some kind of substitute for something else. For *someone* else. Getting rid of that weight would mean getting away from an *unconsciously* sensed set of expectations – which cannot be *consciously* 'articulated' – that she somehow knows she would never be able to fulfil.

It was then, in those brief moments of victory [winning music competitions], that a light would flare up in her father's eyes. She loved the flute, your mother. How she loved the flute. But she couldn't sustain it. Couldn't keep the joy from slipping away from him again, try as she might. (QT, 108)

Ana Louisa - “It’s your mother’s name, dear. The most beautiful name in the world.” (QT, 67) – cannot bring Sam ‘to live’; cannot make him escape from the realm of the ‘living dead’. *Unconsciously* she feels that she has to step out of a role that is actually not her own. “I want to change my name too, she says. [...] It’s *her* name. Not mine.” (QT, 67) These brief moments of *knowing* have always been rare and “[t]he relief was short-lived, the first guilt only to be replaced by the second; she [...] abandoned him” (QT, 108). The feeling of guilt is a result of her ‘having betrayed’ Sam. In fact, Ana has betrayed herself. She has left one prison for another; has tried to leave one role behind in order to find out that abroad there are no new roles that suit her and that even the only tie that seems to bind her ‘self’ together, can betray her, “that music too could forsake her. That success in a city such as Cape Town did not guarantee success in a place like London, where the competition was so much more intense and appointments mostly went to those with stronger qualifications.” (QT, 108)

There is this self-betrayal – which cannot be consciously understood – as well as the felt betrayal of another person. And there is the inability to deal with the new situation in a modern world of competing *homi oeconomici*, in which there are no suitable social roles for Ana. This fact strongly contributes to her further alienation process from her ‘true self’, her true – but not consciously ‘articulated’ – wishes and desires.

One needs other people in order to feel ‘at home’ with oneself. “Die Aufhebung von Entfremdung bedarf sozialer Rollenangebote und Institutionen, die Identifikation und Aneignung ermöglichen.” (Jaeggi 2005, 256) Ana does not find these in London; she cannot integrate the new social roles into her ‘Ich-Identität’. Not getting involved leads her into isolation. “Dinge, die wir lieben, mit denen wir uns identifizieren, die wir anstreben, sind das, was sie sind, erst vor dem Hintergrund sozial geprägter, geteilter Bedeutungen.” (ibid., 257) She does not share anything with the inhabitants of that modernized, market-steered and entirely commodified world and misses South Africa – its people, its myths, its space and light – as well as Sam. And *they* do not understand her; her musical talent, her life style.

The shops boasted every brand name she had ever seen, and many more she hadn’t. Designer labels, pick your look, be who you want to be. But who? The beach girl she’d left behind in Cape Town had no place in this grid. Her wraparound skirts, sarongs and kikoi, the cowrie anklet, floaty ponchos in the winter, could survive neither the weather nor the vortex of acceptable trends. (QT, 37)

“She loved it that he [Sam] never asked whether she’d found a job, kept the conversation uncomplicated.” (QT, 40) Being successful in the professional world has never really constituted a vital part in her relationship to Sam. “Those occasional days when he would allow her to stay home from school and potter round the house while he worked, that was how she liked it.” (QT, 63) This mentality is not the same people in a metropolis like London usually hold.

By contrast, Michael feels well in his new role as global citizen, as he is rationally oriented. Coming from a rational background – his training as political scientist –, he can successfully integrate his new roles and the expectations connected with them, keen on getting to know new people, on sharing their modern lifestyle. “I’m not a social animal, she’d said as a teenager [...] Well, mammals like mammals. That’s normal, he [Michael]’d said. Plain biology.” (QT, 107) Everything can be rationally explained – ‘plain biology’; everything acts according to clearly explicable natural laws. There is no difference. Mammals are mammals. Only that some of them still have to *learn* – or better have to be taught – how to behave according to the *norms*, which are universal, of course. A typically modernist notion.

6.2.3. Haunted by *ghosts*

“[I]t was largely the music that had isolated her.” (QT, 108). Largely but not only. The foundation for Ana’s isolation was laid long ago, consisting in the close relationship to a person for whom she functioned as a kind of compensation. A compensation for the hole left in that person’s heart after his bereavement of a beloved one. In fact, Sam can be seen as ‘cause’ of Ana’s isolation. After the death of her mother – who died giving birth to her – he finds in her some kind of substitute. He sees her mother in her. Sam is traumatized by his experience of bereavement, unable to successfully cope with that loss and passes on his feelings to his daughter. He passes his trauma on to her, making it her own; her ‘intergenerational trauma’. In a face-to-face situation, Sam enacts his own traumatic experience and lets Ana – *unconsciously*, of course – be contaminated by it. As an intergenerational ghost from the past, her mother’s death is transmitted from her father’s unconscious into her own. A ghost that “*fights back everyday*” (QT, 126). She therefore has to come to terms with her historical past and include it into her memory, which she successfully does in the end, as she *consciously* recalls her experiences. That

means that she has succeeded in including her ghost into her 'narrative memory'; in transforming her 'traumatic memory' into a 'narrative memory'.

Coming to terms with one's history is something a *homo oeconomicus* cannot do; simply for the reason that – as has been mentioned above – he knows no history and is only concerned with his present, neither with the past nor the future. He has to repress his ghosts in order to remain 'flexible', rational. *Pretence* is such a beautiful word. Has Michael really found his 'tribe'? He has certainly not found the bohemian lifestyle he actually wanted to live. Who knows how many ghosts are haunting him? The modern *homo oeconomicus* needs a scapegoat in order to be able to suppress his true feelings, his inherent longing for freedom. When Ana (back in South Africa) talks to Michael (busy in London) on the phone about Noordhoek Beach, she thinks she can hear his smile; a smile he would never directly show her. Instead, Michael is eagerly trying to distort his memories, to alienate himself from them; sacrificing his true emotions for the sake of rationality.

It is all about being *true* to one's 'self', about *knowing* one's ghosts and consciously integrating them into one's life. Some of them will certainly never be detected, there is no entire truth, as *meaning* is forever postponed (Derrida⁶⁶), kept in the multiple layers of embedded contexts. Kept there like the ghosts from the past, mutually entangled with each other; hidden in the realm of the unconscious. Ana *unconsciously* gets to know her primary ghost when she is in exile. It has been belated until then.

6.2.4. Exile as 'Spannungstrauma' and *uncanny* experience

Her first impression was of people walking, running, rush hour, a shiver of activity, a blur of legs and feet. [...] The size, the scale, of London made her panic. [...] When Michael went off to work, she walked and walked but somehow never arrived, never understood the maps, the maze of this heartbeat. (QT, 37)

Ana is *lost* in London – in the most literal sense of the word. Wandering about, completely disoriented. She does not fit in there, drowning in the enormous torrent of unfamiliar stimuli. Stimuli that flood into her mind and overflow her senses. An overstimulation with what is unknown to her. A culture shock.

⁶⁶ For Derrida's concept of 'différance' see Chapter 1 of this thesis.

“‘Culture shock’ refers to a normal human response to an alien cultural environment, which can be ‘disabling in some individuals’.” (Berg 2006, 11) A term going back to the anthropologist Kalervo Oberg⁶⁷, ‘Culture Shock’ is said to occur together with a ‘Role Shock’, the fact that “[t]he person moving to a new culture will experience the accumulated stress of ambiguous [sic!] expectations in every aspect of living.” (Oberg in *ibid.*, 16) These ambiguous expectations consist in the role change that is part of the transition process an exile or migrant undergoes; the social roles that have to be successfully integrated into the ‘Ich-Identität’.

Oberg differentiates between ‘Culture Shock’⁶⁸ and ‘Culture Fatigue’, the latter being “[m]uch less than a shock reaction, [...] arising from the partial adjustment required of [...] people who are aware they will soon be returning to their home culture.” (*ibid.*) Ana is not sure when she will be in South Africa again; “[s]he tried not to think of home, unsure when she and Michael would have enough money to be able to return for a visit.” (QT, 37) This uncertainty adds to her traumatic experience of exile.

For some it is difficult to understand how the experience of exile or migration could be considered a traumatic one, because it is what. Indeed, the term ‘culture *shock*’ might be misleading, because the traumatic experience of exile/migration is a ‘gradual’ one (‘Spannungstrauma’ or ‘akkumulatives Trauma’ (cf. Grinberg/Grinberg 1990, 10f.⁶⁹)). Grinberg and Grinberg mention that “[d]as Risiko [of experiencing migration as trauma] ist größer, wenn im Laufe der Kindheit wichtige Entbehrungs- und Trennungssituationen und darauf folgende Angst- und Verlassenheitserfahrungen erlitten wurden.” (*ibid.*, 12)

The trauma Ana has ‘inherited’ from her father – the death of her mother – is one such experience of bereavement and can be made responsible for the enormous ‘fear of loss’ she has had all her life; to be a bit more precise, the fear of losing her first attachment person Sam. This is the reason why, when involuntarily caught up in the Soweto riots, “far more terrifying than the tear gas, the police, the dogs, the screaming, was her separation from Sam” (QT, 63) and for the anxieties she feels inside when thinking her father could marry again. “What if you marry Shanti? [...] The anxieties she’d had about losing him. They’d begun as far back as then.” (QT, 66-67)

⁶⁷ Cf. Berg 2006, 14ff.

⁶⁸ Cf. the symptoms Oberg relates to ‘Culture Shock’ in: *ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁹ For an explanation see chapter 1 of this thesis.

Her traumatic experience of *exile* is thus in fact the '*uncanny* repetition' of another trauma. It is something she is not quite 'at home' with and that therefore appears to be 'un-heimlich' to her. What is 'un-heimlich' to Ana, are the bits and pieces of her repressed 'traumatic memory' that suddenly come to the fore. These bits and pieces have been part of her all her life; have shaped, guided her, guaranteed for her isolation. But they have never been consciously noticed. It is the uncanny that all of a sudden shows and lets Ana tremble with the loss she feels inside. It is bereavement that lets her shiver – bereavement from her past and bereavement in her present. Added to this is the loss of Michael, as he undergoes his change and alienates himself from her – physically as well as emotionally. "It was always like this, leaving. The last goodbye almost abrupt [...] worlds dividing and multiplying and a thousand spaces between [...] she'd still smell of him [...] and all too quickly he would have disappeared, transmuted once again into memory." (QT, 47-48) He leaves her alone in her misery, concentrating on his own duties.

Whereas he is successful and seems to enjoy his new existence, Ana does not find a place in this world. She is financially dependent on him, getting frustrated and developing symptoms of anxiety disorder and depression. Finally, she only wants to hide from everything and everyone.

[...] after the first year of auditions, her sense of failure was bigger than her motivation....She even took to popping beta-blockers that paralysed the symptoms of fear – hands perspiring so that her fingers kept sliding off the keys, mouth so dry and breath shallow. [...] She could already see the bare room, the singular music stand and the congenial but distant decision-makers, shaking their heads ever so slightly, occasionally smiling at her with a terrible kindness. She would leave the premises, scurry off to a remote café for a coffee, and with head bent staring at the design on the paper cup consider that the only thing worse than rejection was pity. [...] then she stopped going altogether. [...] she suspected that even the buskers, their upturned hats on street corners, were better than she. (QT, 50)

But now and then she would overhear an Irish accent, a stranger passing, and long to follow the voice – *stop, wait* – and hide for a minute in its ebb and flow. (QT, 37)

Even in crowds she moved like the wind, like a secret [...] to avoid the smallest threat of being noticed or seen [...] of leaving a stain on the universe. (QT, 16)

Hunted by *shame* – of not succeeding in the new environment – and *guilt* – because she feels she has betrayed Sam –, she gradually seems to resign. The reason for her resignation is not understood by Michael; partly because she does not – and cannot –

talk to him about it and maybe partly for the reason that “post-traumatic symptoms are so persistent and so wide-ranging, they may be mistaken for enduring characteristics of the victim’s personality.” (Herman 1997, 49) Her being no 'social animal' is certainly part of the canon of overlooked post-traumatic symptoms.

There is no doubt that it is of utmost importance to look at the individual, at the various factors that are mutually entangled with each other. When dealing with trauma, one has to try to uncover the numerous interrelated bits and pieces of the puzzle in order to get a *more* complete – it is always incomplete – picture. To do so, it is necessary to move away from rigid formulas or seemingly clear-cut theories claiming universal validity – “keeping history from being swallowed up by the power of abstraction.” (Caruth 1996, 74) No *mammal* is like the other; no matter what neo-liberalists claim.

6.3. Active Coping and Post Traumatic Growth (PTG): finally feeling 'at home'

6.3.1. Bereavement as triggering force

Strange, she thought, how one could wrestle with a life for over ten years. And then one shock, one phone call, can change it all, catapult you into the past and future, all at once. (QT, 26)

In the case of Ana, some positive outcome is triggered off by one more experience of bereavement; the sudden death of her father Sam. In fact, it is the most horrible of all the bereavements she has experienced. This time, however, she finds a way to successfully cope with it.

Ana's case is one of 'Post-traumatic Growth' (PTG)⁷⁰ – her father's sudden death letting her grow stronger than ever before in her whole life – and develops qualities she would have never expected in her. “Perhaps because of the challenges it presents, experiencing the death of a family member or friend can engender a personal metamorphosis.” (Schaefer; Moos 1998, 105) Empirical studies show that bereaved individuals can develop stronger personal resources (especially concerning wisdom and maturity) and notice changes in their perspective on life. They often discover new personal strengths,

⁷⁰ For details regarding PTG see chapter 2 of this thesis.

become less dependent on others, more compassionate and emotionally stronger. People may also become more self-reliant, purposeful and determined to live life to its fullest.⁷¹ Ana clearly shows what Carver (1998, 6) calls “differentiation in one's ability to deal with the world at large.” When she learns about her father's death, she does not hesitate for a second to leave London and take the next plane to South Africa – without having called Michael and told him about her plan. This is something she would have never done before. She finally gets active. When she arrives at her father's house – “this little shack shrouded in a net of rain, like some frail hermit hiding from the world” (QT, 3) – and sees her reflection in the mirror, she notices who she has become for the first time. “You've lost too much weight, she knew her father would have said” (QT, 13) She recognizes her frailty; becomes aware of the fact that she has become weak – physically and emotionally. Then, decisively, she goes into the bathroom, as if willing to wash all her troubles away – to wash her ‘self’ away –, and, without much consideration, cuts her hair short.

It was the birds that woke her. Starlings. Either that or the silence, she couldn't decide which. Or perhaps not silence [...] but more absence of city noise [...]
No more London, she thought, squirming deep under the blankets. No more red-brick flat in Barnes, Mr. Sinclair next door with his CD player, washing that smells of damp, feet scuffing the pavements rushing for the tube, no more weekly weddings at the Presbyterian church below, no more Michael. No more waiting for him to come home, staring out of the window at the cars moving below in the rain, glow worms crawling through the silver. The street filling, emptying. No more waiting. (QT, 14)

When she wakes up with the birds the next morning, her life seems to have changed. As if she was an entirely different person, she finally starts working things out. Busily working in the garden and trying to renovate the house, she has now found something to do; something that gives her *self-confidence*. “The garden needed work, possibly a complete reinvention, since her arrival, plants growing wild, alien vegetation springing up all over, weeds and creepers running riot.” (QT, 127f.)

What is equally important is the fact that Ana begins to interact with people who are like her, establishing new social ties and turning to others for help ('problem-focused coping'⁷²). The most important new relationship is certainly the one with Daniel, with whom she shares her traumatic experience. He has also lost a beloved person and for

⁷¹ Cf. Tedeschi et al. 1998, 10ff.

⁷² For more information on 'problem-focused coping' see chapter 2 of this thesis.

that reason the two of them seem to understand each other, even beyond words. Their music helps them to grow together. They meet in their melodies and engage in collective mourning, which, according to Herman, is the second step in a person's recovery from trauma (after the re-establishment of safety).⁷³ Daniel and Ana are decided to build something up again ("Don't forget, she added. It's my wall too"; QT, 90); putting bits and pieces together, completing what has been shattered into parts. In addition to that, Ana has found an *empathic* listener in Franz, who is the first one to directly confront her with her trauma ("It's understandable, you've had a big shock, he offered"; QT, 21).

"Gelingende Trauerarbeit zeichnet sich [...] durch eine selektive Introjektion der geliebten Person aus, in der Teile der geliebten Person in die eigene übernommen werden." (Lohauß 1995, 206) Ana learns to deal with her father's death, to face her destiny. Feelings of guilt slowly evaporate as more and more *conscious* memories come to the fore. It is now possible for her to make sense of her past, to put together the formerly missing pieces and make *meaning* out of the picture that presents itself to her. She dares to open the door to Sam's room, to confront her past; to put on his clothes and *re-member* what has been lost for so long.

Conscious of her new existence, of her strengthened identity, she decides to once and for all state clearly where she wants to position herself. All doubts have faded away. Ana consciously knows that she also has to let go of 'parts' of her father. "It's time, Sam, she thought. Time to put some of your things away. You can drink a memory dry. Till it curls up like a leaf in winter, and keeps breaking into tinier pieces. It's time to look up." (QT, 186)

"Was this the true meaning of the Afrikaans word for complete, *volledig*? Fullempty?" (Mann 2007, 136) Not even atrocities like the attack on her or Tapiwa's death seem to shake her conviction. It is in fact a typical *symptom* of PTG that the person who has successfully coped with the adversity is then better prepared to face new challenges. Dealing with upcoming hardships is thus easier for a person experiencing PTG.

⁷³ Cf. Herman 1997, 175ff.

6.3.2. *Emancipation and cathartic closure*

According to existential philosophy – that has “long recognized opportunities for growth in trauma and suffering” (Tedeschi et al. 1998, 4) – this new positive stance towards life in general

[...] is the result of the stripping away of the inauthentic in the crucible of trauma, in coming face-to-face with nonbeing. [...] One of the ways people are compelled to create more meaningful lives is by the recognition that they sell themselves short, play it safe, and suffer ontological guilt as a result. [...] Traumatic events can reveal the uselessness of attempting to create security, and the possibility that life might be lived to its fullest. (ibid.)

Nietzsche, who is considered as one of the pioneers of this school of thought, can, as stated by Lohauß⁷⁴, also be seen as the founder of the concept of 'Selbsterfindung'. As opposition to the idea of 'Selbstfindung', Nietzsche claims that a person does not *find* his/her 'self', but actually *creates* it on his/her own. “[U]ns selber machen, aus allen Elementen eine Form gestalten – ist die Aufgabe! Immer die eines Bildhauers! Eines produktiven Menschen!“ (Nietzsche in Lohauß 1995, 222) When Ana starts building the mermaid, she knows where she belongs to. She is aware of the fact that she has the power to 'shape' her life the way she wants it to be and she expresses that awareness in an act of 'poiesis'.

The idea that the individual might constitute him/her “self” through art is a very common one. Foucault also holds the opinion that every person can be considered an artist, in that art serves as the medium through which he/she creates his/her 'self'. (Schmid 1992, 308-316) According to him there are different possibilities for the individual, different techniques to choose from. Using the example of 'scripture' he says that – like it is with a 'mirror' – one can see one's 'self' in another place (another 'room') when looking at the 'picture' that appears. Looking at one's 'self' from a distance, looking at life from another perspective, is also something that is frequently mentioned with regard to *exile literature*. (cf. ibid.)

Art is indeed a perfect way to express one's wishes as well as one's critique towards certain matters. There is definitely a political statement incorporated in Ana's sculpturing. She has finally freed herself from Michael, the giant *Polyphemus*. Like Ulysses she has found a way to escape from him. Michael, who used to call her his *mermaid*; the mermaid, who has finally positioned herself where *she* feels most 'at

⁷⁴ Cf. Lohauß 1995, 222f.

home'. "Her life with Michael so far had been exactly that – she was a willing and supportive audience, watching from a distance, from a rock where he had placed her" (QT, 103). Ana does not depend on him anymore and dares to tell him straightaway that he has never really been there for her. "When she rose from the water a line of blood ran like a tear to her foot." (QT, 191) In the end she is *whole* again, feeling like a true, independent and strong woman.

In the theories of Georg Lukács (cf. Funk 2007, 32f.) art is also seen as an attempt to act against the increasing 'objectification' ('Verdinglichung') and simultaneous 'disenchantment' ('Entzauberung') of our modern world. With reference to the binary opposition "modernity – tradition", one could also consider Ana's art as expression of the wish to resist global assimilation; to live *her* life, even if people like Michael consider this lifestyle as rather primitive. She has emancipated herself from both, Michael as well as a world she does not belong to. In both cases, Shanti – who appears to embody the 'mystical' – might have inspired her. "So do you want to be good? [...] Or do you want to be true? They're not always the same thing." (QT, 166)

According to Lukács (cf. Funk 2007, 32f.), art also possesses a *cathartic* function. This is definitively true for Ana, who – in opposition to Breytenbach – has found her personal 'cathartic closure' in coming 'home' again. She has found *her* story. "And you know [...] when you find a story – that one that is yours – then you will know you are home." (QT, 191)

"I just don't think it's that black and white." (QT, 70) Yes, it is a life between binary oppositions – 'black' and 'white', 'modern' and 'traditional', 'rational' and 'emotional', 'foreign' and 'native'; between 'exile' and 'home'. One has to find one's place – the place one feels 'at home' with. It may be a physical place, a person, a taste, a song, a feeling. Whatever it might be, it is vital to look beyond rigid dichotomies. Beyond the *norms*, the *ordinary*.

Ana has developed from a dependent "good kid" (Michael in QT, 148) with low self-esteem into a woman, who consciously knows where she belongs. She has negotiated her position, tried to arrive at a *compromise* with Michael ('Paris' (cf. QT, 42-43)). They have never arrived at such a compromise. However, with her *hope* ("Hôtel de l'Espoir" (QT, 42)) never truly fading, she has finally arrived 'at home'; rising like the phoenix

out of the *fire*⁷⁵, growing like a *flower*, a *wildflower*. A *quarter tone*. Between lives.
Between.

⁷⁵ A great *fire* “leaping like rabid dogs across streets and through the valleys, devouring mile after mile of vegetation.” (QT, 4)

7. Conclusion: Coping with a nation's burden, re-writing its people's lives

The phenomenon of trauma turns out to be able to take on various forms. Often the trauma 'victim' neither knows the source of his/her 'traumatic stress' nor understands the symptoms showing. Reuben's (*A Quilt of Dreams*) and Ana's (*Quarter Tones*) intergenerational traumata are buried in the silence spread by his grandparents and her father, respectively. Faith's (*Gem Squash Tokoloshe*) dissociative amnesia makes her forget about a vital piece of her past. With the source hidden in the dark, the symptoms (intrusions) do not make any sense. *Meaning* has gone lost with the fragments of their life stories and *truth* cannot exist as long as they are unable to bring the bits and pieces back together. Some trauma 'victims' may have to return to where it all began and dig in the grounds of their *home* country to pick them up (Ana, Faith); others might cling to a certain object or person in order to trigger off a process of consciously remembering their past. Suddenly realizing that something has gone terribly wrong in their lives, they turn to other people to seek help in an effort of 'active coping'. The *other person* might be an *empathic listener* in the form of a psychotherapist, who is officially acknowledged in western spheres, or some 'traditional' healer, who is familiar with another *magic* of healing. One can get hold of the demons and ghosts from the past in more than one way. It is just about taking the first step into the right direction. Instead of doing so, many 'victims' avoid tackling the questions of their past, fearing the repressed monsters to come back to the fore again. Some of them consider themselves lucky to find a 'sibling in the same darkness', who introduces them to the healing power of *mourning* (Toloki) and shows them that life is what they make of it *together*. Successful coping turns out to be a *social* process, one of collectively re-establishing safety, of mourning for what has been lost and re-building a life with united forces. This is what the African philosophy of 'ubuntu' is all about. "A person is a person through other people." (Thornton 2009, 19 footnote) Only then one will be able to lead a life worth living, to create one's self anew in an act of *poiesis*. In South Africa, collective coping with trauma seems to have triggered off a process of nationwide *poiesis*, of almost unstoppable creativity; some kind of post-traumatic growth itself, which illustrates new possibilities and widens the scope for identity formation again. The contemporary South African novel equally mirrors this process and constitutes a vital part in it.

Ana, Faith and Toloki finally know where and with whom they belong. Reuben has found out that he has to leave in order to settle down somewhere else. The novels are accounts of a new start; of a better life. In a *new* South Africa.

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10. German abstract

Das Apartheidsystem in Südafrika (1948-1991⁷⁶), mit seiner zutiefst menschenfeindlichen Politik, kann als traumatisierendes Ereignis für das gesamte Land sowie für seine Bevölkerung betrachtet werden. Noch immer sind die Folgen der organisierten Gewalt und Diskriminierung deutlich zu erkennen. Umso bedeutender ist es, das Geschehene nicht in Schweigen zu hüllen, sondern die Gräueltaten erneut ins Bewusstsein zu rufen und gezielt aufzuarbeiten. Der zeitgenössische südafrikanische Roman leistet dabei seinen ganz eigenen Beitrag. Indem er die verdrängte Vergangenheit hemmungslos und unverblümt in die Gegenwart zurückholt, trägt er einerseits zur allgemeinen Bewusstseinsbildung bei und beteiligt sich zudem an einem kollektiven, aktiven Traumaverarbeitungsprozess.

Diese Diplomarbeit befasst sich damit, wie ‚Traumaverarbeitung‘ (‚Coping‘) im zeitgenössischen südafrikanischen Roman zum Tragen kommt. Hierzu werden zunächst in einem einführenden Teil die Phänomene ‚Trauma‘ und ‚Coping‘ theoretisch fundiert und ihr Zusammenhang mit menschlicher Identität/dem menschlichen Selbst sowie mit Literatur (unter spezieller Berücksichtigung des ‚Romans‘) diskutiert. In den weiteren Kapiteln wird je ein südafrikanischer Roman, basierend auf dem zuvor dargelegten Theoriengut, diskutiert und analysiert. Die vier zu diesem Zwecke gewählten Romane sind *A Quilt of Dreams* (Patricia Schonstein), *Ways of Dying* (Zakes Mda), *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* (Rachel Zadok) und *Quarter Tones* (Susan Mann). Den Werken ist gemein, dass sie sich mit der Zeit der südafrikanischen Apartheid (bzw. Post-Apartheid) befassen. Ihnen allen ist die Geschichte eines/einer (fiktiven) Traumaüberlebenden in den Mittelpunkt gestellt, wobei jeweils die Vergangenheit der Person als auch ihre gegenwärtige Situation beleuchtet wird. Der Traumaverarbeitungsprozess des/der Einzelnen ist hierbei stets als mit dem sozialen Umfeld und den Ereignissen auf nationaler Ebene verwoben dargestellt. Die einzelnen mit dem ‚Coping‘-Prozess in Zusammenhang stehenden Themen zeigen sich ob ihrer Vielfalt nahezu unerschöpflich und erweisen sich teilweise als Herausforderung für den/die ‚westlich‘ geprägte/n Leser/in. In dieser Diplomarbeit wurden je nach Werk bestimmte Schwerpunkte gesetzt. So wird im Falle von *A Quilt of Dreams* der Fokus, unter anderem, auf das Phänomen des ‚intergenerationellen Traumas‘ und den Zusammenhang von ‚Coping und Substanzmissbrauch‘ gelegt,

⁷⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/apartheid>, [30.01.2013].

während die Analyse von *Ways of Dying* den ‚kollektiven Trauerprozess‘ und den ‚gemeinschaftlichen Wiederaufbau‘ in den Mittelpunkt stellt. In *Gem Squash Tokoloshe* präsentiert sich das Thema der ‚Dissoziation‘, welches von einem ‚modern‘-westlichen und einem ‚traditionell‘-afrikanischen Standpunkt her unterschiedlich zu betrachten ist, womit die Frage aufgeworfen wird, inwieweit eine objektive Realität (eine objektive ‚Wahrheit‘) gegeben bzw. erkennbar ist. Die magische Komponente, die in den Heilungsprozess der Protagonistin deutlich miteinfließt, betont die Tatsache eines subjektiven, soziokulturell geformten Blickes noch stärker. Bei *Quarter Tones* wird letztendlich der binäre Gegensatz von ‚Exil‘ und ‚Heimat‘, wie er in zahlreichen zeitgenössischen südafrikanischen Romanen vorkommt, besonders genau betrachtet und die Rückkehr – das Heimkommen (nicht im rein physischen Sinne) – ins Südafrika der Postapartheid im Zusammenhang mit der Neukonstituierung von Selbst und nationaler Identität als Thema aufgegriffen.

Das Erschaffen einer neuen ‚wahren‘ individuellen sowie kollektiven Identität, nach den identitätsvernichtenden Erfahrungen im Zusammenhang mit dem Apartheidsregime, spielt allgemein eine bedeutsame Rolle in den Romanen. Was im Zeitraum der Apartheid rücksichtslos zunichte gemacht wurde, soll wieder auferstehen und – ganz im Sinne eines ‚posttraumatischen Wachstums‘ – in neuem Glanz und seiner ganzen, ursprünglichen Vielfalt erstrahlen. Der südafrikanische Roman der Gegenwart erweist sich als ein Medium der Traumaverarbeitung, indem er Möglichkeiten zur Identifikation mit den dargestellten fiktiven Traumaüberlebenden bietet und sich zudem ein Publikum ‚empathischer ZuhörerInnen‘ (oder besser: einer „empathischen Leserschaft“) schafft, welches ein offenes ‚Ohr‘ für die geschilderten traumatischen Erfahrungen zeigt. Er bietet den von den Auswirkungen der Apartheid Betroffenen die Möglichkeit zu erkennen, dass sie mit dem Erlebten nicht alleine sind und ruft weiters zu dem oben erwähnten emanzipatorischen Prozess auf, indem er ein Bild der Hoffnung zeigt; eine positive Vorausschau in eine bessere Zukunft im neuen Südafrika.

11. Appendix

Symptoms of ‘intrusion’ according to Horowitz and Kaltreider:

Pangs of emotion. A 'spell,' episode, or wave of feeling that has a quality of increasing and then decreasing, rather than being a prevailing mood or subjective tone.

Rumination or preoccupation. Continuous conscious awareness about the event and associations to the event beyond that involved in ordinary thinking through a problem or situation to a point of decision or completion. It has a sense of uncontrolled repetition to it.

Fear of losing bodily control, or hyperactivity in any bodily system. Includes subjective sensations of urinating, defecating without will; fears of being unable to control vocalization, arm movements; hiding; running; obvious somatic responses such as excessive sweating, diarrhea, tachycardia.

Intrusive ideas in word form. Thoughts that pop into the mind suddenly and unbidden.

Difficulty in dispelling ideas. Once an idea has come to mind, even if thinking about it were deliberate, the person cannot stop awareness of the idea or topic. Emotions and moods that cannot be stopped are included.

Hypervigilance. The person is excessively alert, overly scanning the surrounding environment, too aroused in the sense of perceptual search, tensely expectant, or more driven toward obtaining stimuli than normal.

Reenactments. Any behavior that repeats any aspect of the serious life event, from minor ticlike movements and gestures to acting out in major movements and sequences. Includes enactments of personal responses to the life event, whether or not they were part of the real action surrounding the event.

Bad dreams. Any dream with unpleasant subjective experience, not just the classical nightmare with anxious awakenings.

Intrusive thoughts or images while trying to sleep. [...]

Intrusive images. Unbidden sensations in any modality. Any hallucination or pseudohallucination would be scored here as well if it came to mind in a nonvolitional manner. The emphasis here is on sensory quality, which, however similar to that of ordinary thought images, may be more intense and occur as a sudden, unwanted entry into awareness.

Startle reactions. Flinching after noises, unusual orienting reactions, blanching, or otherwise reacting to stimuli that usually do not warrant such responses.

Illusions. A misperception in which a person, object, or scene is misappraised as something else; for example, a bush is seen for a moment as a person, or a person is misrecognized as someone else.

Hallucinations, pseudohallucinations. An imaginary or fantasy-based emotional reaction as if it were real, whether or not the person intellectually thinks it is real. Includes 'felt presences' of others in the room. Smell, taste, touch, movement, auditory, and visual sensations are included.

(Horowitz/Kaltreider 1995, 236)

Symptoms of 'numbing' as listed by Horowitz and Kaltreider:

Avoidance of associational connections. Inhibiting expectable and fairly obvious personal or general continuations of meaning, implications, contingencies.

Numbness. A present subjective sense of not having feelings or of feeling 'benumbed.' Includes a sense that one is not having potential emotions, when it is a sense, however intuitive, rather than a pure intellectualization.

Reduced level of feeling responses to outer stimuli. Includes flatness of expected emotional responses, constriction.

Rigidly role-adherent or stereotyped. Carrying on by playing a part, socially automatic response sets.

Loss of appropriateness of thought to reality by changing attitudes. Going from strong to weak, good to bad, active to passive, liking to disliking, or other changes to the degree that thought about any one meaning or implication is blunted and confused.

Unrealistic narrowing of attention, vagueness, or disavowal of stimuli. Includes flexibility of attention deployment, lack of centering on a focus, and avoidances of certain otherwise likely perceptual information. Includes insensitivity to changes in body.

Inattention, daze. Includes staring off into space, failure to determine significance of stimuli, clouding of alertness.

Inflexibility or constriction of thought. Failure to explore relatively obvious or likely avenues of meaning other than the theme under contemplation.

Loss of train of thought. Temporary or micromomentary lapses in continuation of a communicative experience, or reports of similar inability to concentrate on a line of inner processing of information.

Loss of appropriateness of thought to reality by sliding meanings. Distorting, minimizing, or exaggerating to the point where real meanings are clouded over.

Memory failure. Inability to recall details or sequences of events, amnesic areas, inability to remember in the usually expected manner.

Loss of appropriateness of thought to reality by use of disavowal. Saying to oneself or others that some meanings, that are or would be fairly obvious, are not so.

Warding off trains of reality-oriented thought by use of fantasy. Excessive focus on what might have been, what could be, or imaginative stories as a way of not facing realistic consequences or implications.

(Horowitz/Kaltreider 234)

Source: Horowitz, M.J. and Kaltreider, N.B. "Brief Therapy of the Stress Response Syndrome." In: Everly, G.S. and Lating, J.M. (eds.) *Psychotraumatology*. New York: Plenum, 1995, 231-244.

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