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1. Introduction

Every country is shaped by its history. Taking into consideration the events in South Africa's history, however, the meaning of the term "shaped" takes on an entirely different dimension. In the South African context the word does not only connote "influenced" or "marked" but also, primarily, "injured" and "traumatised". This is all too obvious considering the centuries-long oppression, expropriation and discrimination of the black population including state-sponsored violence as well as atrocities committed during the apartheid era.

As a consequence, otherness and the clear-cut separation of groups of people, such as blacks and whites or victims and perpetrators have structured societal attitudes even until today. On the one hand, from today's perspective differentiating is essential as the cruelties inflicted largely on black South Africans, are not to be equated with the trauma white people have gone through. On the other hand, adhering to the idea of categorising people into distinct groups which are irreconcilable can also be seen as an obstacle when it comes to considering all South Africans as equal members of one and the same society. This problematic issue has led Sarah Nuttall to introduce the term *entanglement* into the studies of South African literature and culture (1). The approach affords a new way of looking at the seemingly independent categories people are assigned to by focusing on their commonalities rather than their differences. If all people and their stories are seen as entangled, deadlocked thought patterns can be dissolved in order that the idea of a unified South African society is brought to the fore.

The omnipresent categorical thinking is inextricably linked with South African traumata which are equally caused by the segregationist structures of the past. In the aftermath of apartheid, major attention is paid to these traumatisations and South Africans are given the opportunity to attend to their relatively recent wounds for the first time. However, with the rising importance of trauma discourse in South Africa it becomes increasingly clear that the Western approach to trauma is incompatible with the problems people are confronted with in the country. The reason for this is that in the West trauma is understood to be a single shocking event triggering specific post-traumatic psychological symptoms which appear in linear succession. This does not hold true for the collective traumata people were going through over decades in the course of South African history.

In response to this problem Michela Borzaga emphasises the necessity to establish entanglement as a key concept in South African trauma discourse (“Trauma in the Postcolony” 89). According to her, trauma is then no longer to be seen as a single shattering event, but as a set of various unintended entanglements between people, the past and the present as well as of the self. As with Sarah Nuttall’s concept of entanglement, this approach to trauma seeks to bring interconnections to the fore and to break up clear-cut dichotomies. Thus, people are enabled to develop a deeper understanding of how their complex traumata are created and, as a further consequence, to dissolve traumatic bonds.

Based on this theoretical framework the thesis deals with ubiquitous traumatic entanglements displayed in the contemporary South African novel. The works chosen are Gillian Slovo’s *Red Dust*, Jann Turner’s *Southern Cross* and Michiel Heyns’ *Lost Ground*. Even though they address different main issues they all have one theme in common: the complexity of South African trauma.

The paper comprises two main sections. The first part emphasises the relevance of the concept of entanglement in the South African context and gives an overview of traditional trauma discourse. Further, reasons for the incompatibility between Western theories and traumata in South Africa are given in order to point out that an entanglement approach is more appropriate for analysing trauma in the country today. The remaining part of the thesis examines how this approach is reflected in contemporary South African literature. This is done by highlighting the traumatic interconnections and overlaps between the categories black and white, victim and perpetrator, past and present as well as home and exile.

2. Entanglement

The usage of the verb “to entangle”, similar to the one that will be relevant in this thesis, dates back to the sixteenth century. Since then it has carried the meaning “[t]o make tangled; to twist, interlace, or mix up in such a manner that a separation cannot easily be made” (“entangle”). Due to the rather general definition of the verb *to entangle* it stands to reason that ever since the term *entanglement* has come into use in various scientific fields. For instance, in 1935 it proved useful to describe a specific phenomenon occurring in quantum mechanics called *Quantum Entanglement* which refers to the connection between two distinct particles:

[I]f two particles interact at some point in time then the properties of these particles will remain connected at future times. A consequence of this is that determining the quantum state of one of the particles simultaneously determines the quantum state of the other particle, even if the two particles are long way apart. (“Quantum Entanglement”)

In other words, once related to each other the particles will always remain connected and will in fact mutually influence their features even though they are apparently two separate entities. However, the concept of entanglement has not only been investigated in the field of physical science but it is also to be found with reference to interpersonal relations: “It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness” (Nuttall 1). Carrying this meaning, it has also become relevant in the fields of “anthropology, history, sociology and literary studies” (1).

2.1 Entanglement in the South African Context

Until today, characteristics such as separation, difference and categorisation of specific groups of people according to their cultural backgrounds and skin colours have been deeply rooted in the history of South Africa. This ideology that contributed to dispossession, exploitation, war, oppression or discrimination, for example, originated in the seventeenth century, when Dutch settlers arrived at the Cape (R. Ross 21). As soon as the Cape Colony was established, Europeans were considered the superior race, an ideology that has been engraved into the memories of South Africans living in that colony (Maylam 32). Thus, from the start, white and black people were considered to belong to two different categories: On the one hand the

well-mannered and economically superior Europeans, and on the other hand, the indigenous Khoikhoi which were regarded as “dull, stupid, [...] lazy, stinking people” by the colonisers (qtd. in MacCrone 22). However, by a more detailed examination of the historical events occurring in colonial times, it becomes apparent that these categories are proving problematic since their boundaries were blurring. One example of such a historical moment creating ambiguity was the conquest of the Cape Colony by the British in 1795 (R. Ross 35). Suddenly the Dutch colonial power had to give way for another, more powerful one and was therefore oppressed by Europeans that were originally considered to belong to the same category of “white Europeans”. Hence, as a matter of fact, the dichotomy of oppressed and oppressor was not clear without ambiguity any longer.

During apartheid the systematic grouping of South Africans into categories on the basis of their skin colours was severely aggravated since the ideology was established by law. In 1950, for example, the Population Registration Act formed the legal basis for the categorisation of people living in South Africa, and through the Mixed Marriages Act from 1949 as well as the Immorality Act from 1950 (R. Ross 116), which interdicted marriages and sexual intercourse between people of different ethnicities, respectively (Maylam 183-84), the state was, “in theory, freezing these categories for all time” (R. Ross 116). Since the repeal of the Population Registration Act in 1991 and therefore the end of deprivation of rights according to racial categorisation, the latter has no longer been statutory (185). However, the division of people into specific groups and the generalisation of attributes associated with them did not merely disappear because of political and legislative changes. Neither has the economic situation of blacks and whites, respectively, changed substantially since the official end of apartheid. For instance, the number of white people working in top management positions as well as the average salary of whites is still significantly higher than that of black people (Davis).

On grounds of these characteristics of South African history and its present as well as the fact that nowadays studies about contemporary South Africa for the most part are based and focus on the difference of ethnic groups of people, Sarah Nuttall suggested that the concept of entanglement is well suited to approach South African pasts and presents from a new perspective. She therefore adapted it to the cultural

and literary theories predominant in South Africa at the present day and offers an extensive overview of the term's potential concerning this matter in her recently published work *Entanglement*. In the introduction she addresses the necessity to seize the concept of entanglement claiming that "[s]o often the story of post-apartheid has been told in the register of difference – frequently for good reason, but often, too, ignoring the intricate overlaps that mark the present and, at times, and in important ways, the past, as well" (1). She therefore does not use the idea of entanglement to the end that material and epistemological segregation and difference in the South African past and present should be denied, but with the aim to focus mainly on the implicit overlappings and common features of the entities and spaces which were and for the most part are still regarded as separate in the past and the present (20). Basically, the author postulates that the idea of entanglement provides a theoretical framework for reconciling three seemingly irreconcilable pairs of oppositional categories, namely, that of black versus white people, victims versus perpetrators and oppression versus resistance (31). In addition, interpreting contemporary South African culture as a composition of entanglements, she claims, helps to bring to the fore what has not yet been taken into account, namely the possibility of renewal and change (11). According to the author, intersections and consequently also the potential for overcoming ostensibly clear-cut dichotomies are most likely to be found in connection with race, a phenomenon which she calls "racial entanglement". However, they also occur with reference to "ways of being, modes of identity making and of material life" (2).

Referring to race she claims that the majority of South African and international studies conducted during the last decades considered blacks and whites as two different groups of people who do not share commonalities or similitudes (32). She therefore tries to pay particular attention to the latter on the grounds that the concept of entanglement helps to understand that the increasing number of "racial boundaries" in South Africa inevitably led to their "transgressions without which everyday life for oppressor and oppressed would have been impossible." As a consequence, also in the case of racial entanglement, the focus of investigation should be on the "set of relations" between ethnic groups (12). The origins of such racial entanglements and the fact that they have always been a permanent feature of South African society will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter.

At this point another suggestion regarding ethnicity, namely the idea of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa is to be emphasised. During apartheid being white meant to be economically and politically privileged. While the economic superiority of white South Africans continues, they had to give up political power and in that way also part of their identity. In their survey about Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa Verwey and Quayle state that “Afrikaner nationalism was instrumental in constructing Afrikaner identity as the most powerful ethnic identity in Apartheid South Africa” (556). Thus, the end of apartheid partly also resulted in a crisis of identity for the country’s white population. In this context Nuttall analyses the “representation of whiteness” in texts written by white South Africans in the period shortly after the end of apartheid (58). Contrary to the theoretical approach to entanglement outlined so far, by reference to the texts, the concept proves to be applicable in terms of renewal and the “remaking of race” (13). Thus, according to Nuttall, entanglement can also be defined as a process of change, “of becoming someone you were not in the beginning” (58). Further, she asserts that this process of change and renewal simultaneously signifies the abolishment of former notions of whiteness. Thus, people do not exclusively get entangled with new images but necessarily also get disentangled from their old ones: “The work of entanglement is also, in part, the work of disentanglement - from whiteness in its official fictions and material trajectories, its privileges and access to power, now in an emerging context of black political power in South Africa – in order to become something, someone different” (59).

2.1.1 Historical Entanglement

Taking into consideration the South African past, entanglement was an unperceived integral part of the country’s history already at the beginning of the colonial period. In this context Nuttall refers to suggestions of C W de Kiewiet who claims that the colonisers and the colonised in South Africa were never really independent of each other since white people were reliant on black labour and consequently blacks became dependent on whites. The resulting “loss of independence” of native South African workers, which was known but refused to be acknowledged by the whites, led to the colonisers’ desire “to preserve their difference through ideology – racism” (qtd. in Nuttall 2). Otherwise put, according to C W de Kiewiet racial segregation in the

history of South Africa only emerged due to the inevitable entanglement between the colonisers and the colonised.

Another author who considers the relations between the latter is the Tunisian sociologist Albert Memmi who surveyed the psychological reasons for the behaviour of the colonisers as well as that of the colonised. Even though he did not directly address the situation in South Africa, his suggestions were referred to colonised countries all over the world (Memmi ix). Regarding the ideas and intentions of the colonisers before they were actually moving to the colony, the author argues that a relation between the local inhabitants and themselves had been beyond their imagination. However, as soon as they arrived at their adopted homeland they found themselves entangled with the colonised:

Suddenly these men were no longer a simple component of geographical or historical décor. They assumed a place in [the colonizer's] life. He cannot even resolve to avoid them. He must constantly live in relation to them, for it is this very alliance which enables him to lead the life which he decided to look for in the colonies;[...] He finds himself on one side of a scale, the other side of which bears the colonized man. If his living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low. (Memmi 7-8)

Hence, similar to de Kiewiet, also Memmi is of the opinion that from the very beginning colonisers and colonised were entangled with each other. Additionally, Memmi emphasises the fact that the poverty of local inhabitants preserved the privileges of the colonisers.

Incidentally, there arises the question how the colonisers were capable of reconciling the fact with their consciousness that they were to blame for the miserable living conditions of the indigenous population? According to Achille Mbembe a possible explanation of the colonisers' behaviour can be given by means of a fundamental attitude towards the colonised predominant in colonies, namely that a native was considered "the prototype of the *animal*" (26). This way of thinking which also "constituted the *credo* of power in the colony", led to two modes of behaviour on the part of the coloniser.

The first one refers to the colonisers' perception that the indigenous people were completely different from themselves in the sense that "the native subjected to power and to the colonial state could in no way be another "myself"." Thus, from the

colonisers' point of view, the natives' "manner of seeing the world" as well as their "manner of being" varied significantly from their own ones. Furthermore, to the colonised only "a bundle of drives, but not of *capacities*" was attributed and therefore "the only possible relationship with [them] was one of violence and domination" (26). Additionally, the assumption that natives were animals rather than human beings, implies that they were accounted part of a different category, namely that of "the *sphere of objects*" (27). Hence, they were also treated like animals and what happened or was done to them, as evidenced by the cruelties committed to black people in South Africa during apartheid for example, was considered morally inoffensive.

However, indifference towards the torments or death of a native was not the only feeling a coloniser could have in this respect. According to Mbembe a second way of behaving, "that tested on the idea that, as with an animal, one could *sympathize* with the colonized", was developed by the colonisers (27). This was the case when indigenous people, in their function as slaves, participated in the whites' domesticity. In the role of family members, similar to that of a domestic animal, they were even "loved" but "the masters'/mistresses' affection for the animal presented itself as an inner force that should govern the animal" (27). Hence, the previously discussed problematic situation of the colonisers with regards to their unwanted entanglement with natives, was resolved with the aid of the notion that an inhuman treatment of colonised was justifiable since they were equated with animals and subordinate by nature.

2.1.2 "Time of Entanglement"

In addition to the various studies which were implicitly or explicitly concerned with interpersonal and racial entanglement that since the early colonial period has always been an essential element of South African society, as of late, particular attention was paid to the reformulation of time in reference to the concept of entanglement. Until recently, in African studies the common understanding of time in Western societies was regarded as generally valid (Mbembe 17). Among other things this idea of temporality is characterised by its linearity, which implies that past, present and future take place in succession, each period being clearly separated from the

previous and/or following one. As such, it is accounted a self-enclosed entity that is “independent of mind and consciousness” and therefore exists “out there” (Bracken 76). Complex developments, including renewal, progress but also regress, as well as the way how people perceive them, especially in postcolonial countries, are not taken into account in this Western model of time. Thus, to see South African time as an entanglement of different temporalities, rather than a series of independent moments, proves to be an adequate approach in order to analyse the age termed Post-Apartheid. As will be discussed more explicitly in chapter 3.1.2 this notion of temporality differing considerably from the Western, linear perception of time, is significant with regards to present traumatic entanglements in South Africa as well.

The first to mention the necessity of a distinct approach for “thinking about time” in postcolonial studies was Achille Mbembe in his publication *On the Postcolony* (14). He emphasises that Western linear models of time cannot be applied to Africa, a country which has been characterised by colonisation for centuries, and to postcolonial studies because, “[a]s an age, the postcolony encloses multiple *durées* made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another, and envelope one another: an entanglement” (qtd. in Borzaga 10; Nuttall 4). In order to be able to speak about “*time of entanglement*”, that is also termed “*time of existence and experience*” by the author, he proceeds on the following assumptions: Firstly, the “time of African existence” is not a succession of single moments, the main feature of which is that they “efface [], annul [] and replace []” the preceding ones as soon as the country has officially entered a new age. “This time is not a series but an *interlocking* of presents, pasts and futures, each age bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous ones” (*On the Postcolony* 16). However, as the author points out in the article “The Colony: Its Guilty Secret and Its Accursed Share”, the fact that different periods are entwined with each other does not mean “that the distinction between before and after, past and future, does not exist. The present, being the present, pulls in two directions, the past and the future, or, more radically, attempts to abolish both” (37). Secondly, it is characterised by unexpected occurrences as well as inconstancies which, contrary to common assertions, are “not necessarily resulting in chaos and anarchy” or in “erratic and unpredictable behaviours on the actors’ part.” Mbembe’s third basic assumption is that the “*time of entanglement*” “is not irreversible”, a fact that becomes clear when

the time's "real patterns of ebbs and flows" are taken into consideration (*On the Postcolony* 16).

Furthermore, Mbembe does not only convey the idea that western perceptions of time prove inappropriate for the analysis of temporality in South Africa, but also that so far, studies about Africa have failed to take complex "non-linear phenomena" into consideration (*On the Postcolony* 17). In this sense, he does not refer to time as a self-contained physical quantity but, as implicated by "*time of existence and experience*", to the fact that people individually "*accomplish the age*" (17). Hence, as he amplifies in the article, time always has to be seen as closely related to subjectivity and is thus created by mental processes. Considered strictly, "there is no time in itself" ("The Colony", 36). Consequently, the western understanding of time, being a "'thing' existing in the world", stands in complete contradiction to the concept of time of entanglement which is characterised by a strong dependence of temporality on people's consciousness (Bracken 76).

As an example of time of entanglement in the context of post-apartheid South Africa the disparity of different developments with respect to social and political concerns, may be cited. While from a political point of view, apartheid and racial segregation are consigned to the past, they are still part of everyday life in the present. Sarah Nuttall terms this kind of entangled time "social time":

In such a time politics and culture play at different temporal levels, in a shifting terrain of desegregation and re-segregation, [...] in which some things change at a furious pace, others slowly, others not at all. What is so widely referred to post-apartheid present is probably more accurately composed, simultaneously, of modes of nostalgia and melancholia, of inertia and stasis [...], modes of equilibrium, and of invention [...] – in other words, a highly complex timescape of entangled and bifurcating layers. (155-56)

Hence, it can be concluded that post-apartheid is neither an isolated age that exists independently of the previous and the following ones, nor does it have homogeneous features, like, for example, a specific ideology that is generally valid.

3. Trauma

3.1 Western Concepts of Trauma

With the intention of establishing a link between the concept of entanglement and ubiquitous traumatisations in South Africa, specific characteristics and fundamental ideas of the internationally prevailing trauma discourse originating in the West, will be outlined in the present chapter.

A central figure in the Eurocentric understanding of trauma is Cathy Caruth according to whom “trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (11). More precisely, with the term “trauma” she makes reference to psychological trauma, which is different from the physical one in so far as it is regarded “as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind.” In addition, this wound is distinct in its properties, including a delayed onset of symptoms and indefinite prospects for healing, attributable to the inability to mentally process and understand the overwhelming experience (3). As a result, memories of that tragic event are repressed and either reappear unwantedly in form of nightmares or flashbacks for example, or trigger avoidance symptoms as for instance emotional numbing. However, in any case the symptoms are indicative of what Ruth Leys refers to as a “disorder of memory” (2) and what is termed a “disorder of time” by Christopher Colvin (224). To be exact, the distortion of memory and time arises due to the fact that “[t]he experience of trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually re-experienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present” (Leys 2).

As a basic definition of psychic trauma the idea of a mental wound was first theorised by Freud in the 1920s and still has a great impact on the contemporary understanding of trauma. However, it was not until the moment when the vast number of severely traumatised combat veterans returned to the US from the Vietnam War that trauma and its effects, termed posttraumatic stress, were officially recognised as a serious psychological problem (Leys 5). With respect to the way traumatised people were considered before this formal acknowledgement Colvin emphasises that “[u]ntil then, those suffering from [posttraumatic stress] after violent events were more likely to be thought of, even in psychiatry, as weak-willed and of a

poor nervous 'character', than to be seen as innocent sufferers of a psychiatric condition" (225). Only when the American Psychiatric Association, in consequence of the rising social need in the post-war period, included posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1980, psychological trauma was accepted as a psychiatric injury caused externally that could concern everybody and not only those deemed mentally fragile. From that moment an increasing number of experiences, such as "incest", "sexual abuse", "domestic violence", "terrorism", "criminal violence", as well as "natural disasters" was added to the list of traumatic events causing PTSD (Massicotte 490). Besides, in the course of years, this western idea of trauma has been adopted internationally as well as cross-culturally, not only in the field of psychiatry but also relating to its presence in daily life. Regarding this, Colvin argues that "this discourse of trauma is now part of a global cultural complex" (226).

The contemporary Western understanding of trauma is, among others, reflected in the fifth edition of the DSM published in 2013 where characteristic features of PTSD are listed. Firstly, in its most general terms, the illness is always caused by a traumatic event that is understood as such when people are exposed "to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence". Secondly, after the traumatic event(s) took place, "intrusion symptoms associated with the traumatic event(s)" occur. The symptoms might include "[r]ecurrent, involuntary and distressing memories" and -dreams "of the traumatic event", "flashbacks", "psychological distress" as well as "[m]arked physiological reactions to internal or external cues that symbolize [...] an aspect of the traumatic event(s)." A further set of symptoms that is profoundly different from the previous ones concerns "[p]ersistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event(s)", including "[a]voidance of [...] distressing memories, thoughts or feelings about [...] the traumatic event(s)." Additionally, a number of "[n]egative alterations in cognitions and mood", such as "dissociative amnesia", "persistent negative emotional state" or "persistent inability to experience positive emotions" as well as "[m]arked alterations in arousal and reactivity" like "angry outbursts", "hypervigilance" or "sleep disturbance" for instance, could occur. Generally, all these symptoms appear for at least one month (271-72).

In *Trauma – Culture, Meaning and Philosophy*, Patrick Bracken emphasises that the aforementioned symptoms of PTSD "are now widely accepted as defining the

essential elements of human reactions to trauma” (49). Besides, they are universally recognised “and not associated with any particular cultural situation” (47).

3.1.1 Western Trauma and Philosophy

With the aim of emphasising that trauma theory did not develop independent of any pre-existing body of thought, Patrick Bracken outlines fundamental ideas that had a great impact on modern psychology and psychiatry in Western societies.

He claims that in approaching core concepts of the predominant trauma discourse in Western countries the focus on philosophy is indispensable. More specifically, the author makes reference to two philosophical currents, Cartesianism and Cognitivism, upon which notions of trauma are predicated.

The first is concerned with the philosophy of Renè Decartes which starts from the premise that the mind of a person and the world surrounding it are two separate “things”:

Cartesianism operates on the fundamental distinction between the ‘inner’ world of the mind and the ‘outer’ world with which it is in contact. This separation of the inner and the outer is predicated upon Decartes’ ontological separation of the world into two kinds of substance [“things”], so-called Cartesian dualism. (Bracken 22)

In addition, he did not only distinguish between the substances world and mind but he also “separated out the soul from the material body in which it resided.” Fundamentally, Decartes proceeded on the pre-Enlightenment notion that things consist of two components: a substance, which is basically the thing’s material cover, and its distinctive features (22). In particular, he postulated that “thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, desires and other mental phenomena are attributes, or properties, which inhere within the mind.” Thus, thinking is “the inner functioning” of a subject. Additionally, “[t]his subject is in contact with an outside world and has knowledge of it through sensation and through the representations it has of it.” However, even if a relationship between the inside of a subject and the occurrences outside of it exist, a person’s mind is still understood as a characteristic of humans that is separate from the world surrounding it. “Thus, there is an epistemological separation of mind from world”, a notion arising from the ontological Cartesian dualism. Until today it represents a paradigm in psychology as well as in trauma theory and forms the foundation for the “representational theory of mind and thought”

(23). Hence, within trauma discourse it is suggested that PTSD is a psychological disorder which concerns first and foremost the individual, the mind of which can be analysed independently of the outer world.

The second major approach providing philosophical background for contemporary Western trauma theory is Cognitivism. One of the main assertions upon which this philosophical current is built is concerned with the fact “that human experiences are understood through information-processing faculties.” More specifically, parallels are drawn between the human mind and computer programs, whereby specific cognitive schemata are the equivalent of such programs. Schemas help to categorise and give meaning to experiences and new information, similar to the software of a computer (Reuther 439). Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that, whereas a person’s mind is comparable to a computer software, the brain represents the hardware. Within Cognitivism the main focus is on the mind and the ways information is processed in the programs (Bracken 34). With reference to a cognitivist approach to trauma, it is assumed that information cannot be processed adequately when a shocking event occurs (54). As a consequence, schemata “are overwhelmed” and no meaning can be given to what was happening (Reuther 439).

Essential in this regard is also one major insight of Cognitivism, namely that even though the information stored within the mind is culturally determined, all human beings share the same fundamental structure of programmes and schemata. The philosophical current therefore “also involves adherence to a model of psychological universalism in which thought and emotion are understood to involve similar basic elements and structures cross-culturally” (Bracken 34-35).

3.1.2 The Linearity of Trauma

A further fundamental hypothesis of traditional trauma theory relates to the linearity of time, a notion already mentioned briefly in chapter 2.1.2. As shown in that section, Western ways of thinking about time are based on two basic assumptions. Firstly, that time exists independently of a person’s consciousness and secondly, that time passes in a linear fashion, whereby past, present and future are three distinct entities.

However, a question that remains unanswered in this respect is how the first assumption can be reconciled with human memory, which essentially is the existence of temporality in a person's mind. Drawing on Slife, Bracken points out that in psychology and, more precisely within trauma discourse, like time, memory is also thought of as a 'thing' "existing in the world" that "can be measured and analysed" (76). It is only the ability of the brain to store and recall memories of events that happened in the past. More precisely, memory "is the matrix in which past and present are related" (42). Thus, Western trauma theory is based on the notion that time exists as a self-enclosed entity and memory is simply the capacity to process it.

That the linear conception of time is a fundamental notion in trauma discourse is evidenced by the features of PTSD. Concerning this matter Bracken states that "[t]he basic theory of PTSD is premised upon this way of thinking about time. The separation of past and present is *built* into the diagnosis. If we use the diagnosis of PTSD we are implicitly making a strong case for this separation: it simply doesn't work without it!" (76-77). For example, as outlined earlier, characteristic symptoms of the psychological disorder stand all in close relation to the traumatic event(s). However, in any case the latter occurred in the past and does not happen in the present anymore. Posttraumatic symptoms such as intrusion for example, are simply considered to arise as a consequence of "a disordered interaction of past and present" (42).

The linearity of time also implies a linearity of causality in connection with trauma. In addition to the features of the linear time model outlined above, cognitivist theories propose that time as a linear succession of moments is perceived in a special way. To be more exact, in the human mind each moment is processed differently and "involves a particular intentional state of mind" that can be described and analysed in psychological terms. Therefore, it is concluded that this is also possible if a "change from one state to another" occurs, whereby the analysis is based on laws that are causal in nature (Bracken, 42). That this basic notion became a crucial aspect in trauma discourse is evidenced by the current understanding of PTSD. In particular, like the separation of past and present, also the idea of linear causality is included in the description of PTSD, a fact that becomes apparent if closer attention is paid to how trauma and its symptoms are ordered. It shows that a traumatic event is always preceding the symptoms of posttraumatic stress. Hence, the disorder is strictly

“defined as a syndrome in which symptoms flow *from* the event”, and the possibility that they might occur before a trauma happens is not taken into consideration (79).

In general, what the ideas presented in this chapter indicate is that the theory of psychological trauma, as it is known and applied globally, emerged from a Western context in which specific assumptions regarding mental processes exist. That is, in order to make PTSD as a mental illness more measurable, strict differentiation between inner and outer world or past and present is made. Simply put, binary oppositions are fundamental components of Western trauma theory.

3.2 Trauma and Entanglement in South Africa

Considering the atrocities the South African black and coloured population was subjected to, especially during apartheid, it is obvious that trauma discourse has become of substantial importance in the country these days. It is probable that the moment when South Africans were familiarised with it for the first time was the debut of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1995 (Colvin 226). In that regard Mengel and Borzaga quote an important statement of Archbishop Desmond Tutu made in his introductory speech to the TRC: “every South African has to some extent or other been traumatised. We are wounded people [...] we all stand in the need of healing” (vii) From that time onward, trauma theory has increasingly gained in importance in post-apartheid South Africa, a development that represented a major step forward since traumatised people were taken seriously and officially had the right to claim different kinds of treatment for the first time. Besides, “[t]his new development [...] could also be of broad legal, political and financial benefit”, when the PTSD of victims was considered to have been caused by effects of political decisions (Colvin 229).

However, the adaptability of western trauma theories to traumatisations in South Africa has been increasingly questioned in recent years. One point of criticism concerns the fundamental assumption that trauma is one single and distinctive event experienced by an individual. Taking into consideration apartheid in South Africa and the violence that was consequently exerted on whole groups of people over decades, this definition seems to be more than insufficient. Criticising the event-centeredness of common notions of trauma, Colvin (230) points out that “[t]hose trying to use the

idea of trauma to fight apartheid came to realise that many of the violences of apartheid were systematic and structural, lived everyday as part of the basic conditions of 'normal' life, rather than an unusual event that shook one out of daily life." In contrast to individually committed violence, "structural violence" is perpetrated "by a structure or structures, created or perpetuated by custom or by law." (qtd. in Olivier 415). However, despite numerous attempts to rename posttraumatic stress disorder "'continuous traumatic stress disorder' or 'ongoing traumatic stress disorder'" with regards to the situation in South Africa, the theory has failed to become established within traditional trauma discourse since it would have called the fundamental concept of trauma, as a single incident, into question (Colvin 230).

On the other hand, the basic assumptions of the theory were critically questioned in view of the fact that the individualised Western model of trauma proved incompatible with the structural violence in South Africa, causing traumata of a vast number of people, as well (Mengel and Borzaga xi). In this case critique is directed at its focus on the notion that only individuals suffer from traumatic experiences even if in fact whole groups are affected by it in South Africa. This situation has been increasingly taken into account in recent years and ultimately the term "collective trauma" was introduced. According to its definition the characteristics of collective trauma are on the one hand that it "occur[s] as a result of an enduring structural oppression of a group" and on the other hand that the feelings evoked by such living conditions are shared by the whole community (Massicotte 493).

In addition, Colvin expands on the fact that traditional trauma theory tends to "'medicalise[]" and 'privatise[]' suffering" to the extent that the consequences of traumata are considered as exclusively medical problems of individual people while they actually "also represent social, moral, political, economic and even spiritual problems for both, individuals and communities" (230).

To medicalise a problem is to turn it first and foremost into a medical problem when it is in fact much more. Similarly, to privatise suffering is to understand suffering as a problem of the individual sufferer, rather than of some broader community as well. In both cases, suffering is depoliticised, removed from the world of political and moral debate, and isolated safely in the realm of technical, individual medical intervention. (Colvin 230)

Otherwise put, when dealing with the traumata of South African society, caused by constant systematic and structural violence, oppression, discrimination, perpetual

fear or poverty for example, taking also into account the country's political and cultural background is indispensable. Therefore, in this case collective trauma proves to be the more appropriate term too. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out here that this does not mean that all South Africans living under similar conditions were and are still traumatised to the same extent and in the same way. It goes without saying that every person perceives, and experiences past and present in a different way, but the main statement of the critique of "event-centred" and "individual-centred" as well as privatising and medicalising Western model of trauma lies in the simplification and isolation of the causes of trauma as well as of the individual traumatised people themselves (229). Therefore, the mere fact that traumata in South Africa can never be regarded as separate and isolated psychological phenomena implies that they must be made up of complex experiences, interpersonal relations and memories that contribute to the various psychological conditions of individuals. In other words, they are composed of entanglements on different levels.

Besides, these multi-layered entanglements are not only to be found with regards to the causes of trauma, but also in connection with its symptoms and the coping strategies of traumatised people. Concerning this matter Colvin (231) claims that western trauma theory "has the tendency to neglect the agency, resistance, resilience and creativity of [...] individuals and communities as they work to improve their lives" (231). With this statement he refers to the presupposition of traditional trauma discourse that after being traumatised each individual displays similar symptoms of traumatic stress and to the fact that consequently insufficient account is taken for ways of coping with trauma differing from conventional medical treatment. However, some persons do not necessarily have to call upon psychological support to overcome the effects of negative experiences, since individual healing strategies, like "social and political activism" or the production of art, for example, are successfully developed by themselves. Colvin also claims that apart from the fact that a wide range of coping strategies exists beyond those defined by Western trauma theory a considerable number of traumatised people does not actually "suffer symptoms of traumatic stress." Even if it is true that traumata cause "short-term symptoms of shock, disbelief, anxiety, anger or helplessness [...] for most, these symptoms soon disappear" (231).

Thus, the psychological effects of traumatic experiences as well as their severities vary widely and have to be analysed with regards to people's social environment and the coping strategies they develop in this context. Likewise, in this case the traumatised person is not seen as a subject isolated from the world and therefore taking into consideration the concept of entanglement also proves to be suitable for the analysis of a person's mental condition.

Some of the above-named disadvantages concerning trauma therapy in post-apartheid South Africa based on assumptions of trauma theory from the West prompted Michela Borzaga to investigate a new theoretical approach in this field of study. Drawing on Sarah Nuttall's concept of entanglement in South African literary and cultural studies, she claims that "it is important to re-theorize trauma in terms of *entanglement*." By this means it is possible to shift the focus of attention from the traditional notion of trauma as an illness characterised by "repetition compulsion" and being stuck in the past to a new perspective where "growth, change or renewal" are at the forefront ("Trauma in the Postcolony" 89).

In addition to the criticism that western trauma theory proceeds on the assumptions that all human beings are isolated individuals and that cultural, social and political backgrounds do not necessarily have to be considered in trauma therapy, she points out further aspects of traditional trauma discourse in her paper "Trauma as Entanglement", in order to give reasons for the assertion that the concept of entanglement should be integrated into the common notion of trauma.

Firstly, she emphasises that the latter "draws [...] on Cartesian, dualistic conceptions, the most problematical being that of separating mind from the body & the self from the world" ("Trauma as Entanglement 6). Hence, according to the author, trauma theories based on Cartesian dualism (see chapter 3.1.1) cannot be applied in the South African context since the human body and mind are two indivisible entities and therefore no clear distinction between psychological and physical trauma can be made either. In this respect she asks the following question: "How is it possible to theorise trauma only as an insular psychic conflict in a country where so much pain and trauma has been inflicted on the body through racism, deprivation, dispossession, poverty, hunger, migration, and violence?"(7). Referring to Roberto Beneduce, Borzaga advocates the idea "of the body as *living memorial site*", a notion that has been hardly approached in trauma theory but which is

indispensable for the theorisation of trauma in South Africa (qtd. in “Trauma in the Postcolony” 87). If for example wounds were inflicted on the body during apartheid the remaining scars would always remind the person of that time, and in a manner of speaking the trauma is permanently carried around (87). In this sense, the question arises to what extent conventional methods of healing traumata, like talking to the therapist for example, can help physically and therefore also psychologically traumatised people to get closure with terrible experiences from the past.

The second aspect criticised by Borzaga is that the Western trauma paradigm “creates a mono-causal, static world of excised time drawing on linear and simple models of time” (“Trauma as Entanglement 6). Achille Mbembe’s theory of thinking about time as entanglement in postcolonial studies, which was outlined in chapter 2.1.2, is crucial to Borzaga’s relational approach to trauma. She pays particular attention to Mbembe’s idea about the interrelatedness of time and subjectivity which she considers as the basic prerequisite for a new understanding of trauma:

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

Thus, trauma, its effects and the healing process neither proceed in a linear manner, nor are they independent of and isolated from each other.

Apart from the complicated hardly graspable process of trauma and the symptoms related to it, a further suggestion speaking especially against the linear causal nature of traumatisations is made by Borzaga. She claims that structural violence and continuous oppression of black people in South Africa rather caused “pre-traumatic stress disorder[s]” because the oppressed were suffering from anxiety about imminent, even more severe acts of violence perpetrated by the oppressors. In the author’s account this persistent fear is to be understood as “a paralyzing condition, where all the psyche’s and body’s energies are invested in avoiding [...] actions which could bring down punishment or, in the worst case, death” (“Trauma in the Postcolony” 86).

Besides the different aspects of traditional trauma discourse that turned out to be problematic regarding traumatisations in South Africa, a further important issue that needs to be analysed on the basis of an entanglement approach to trauma is the question of who is considered a traumatised person in post-apartheid South Africa. Obviously those affected are black and coloured people, since they were exposed to extremely traumatising living conditions for decades. However, using the concept of entanglement, which is also based on the idea that commonalities and points of intersection exist on different levels and in various fields of life, not only black trauma but that of all South Africans has to be included in the analysis of traumata in the country. In chapter 2.1 the problematic issue of being white in contemporary South Africa was already illustrated briefly. As for the analysis of traumatic entanglements, traumatisations of a number of white South Africans also play a determining role. In this regard Mengel and Borzaga point out that “their witnessing of what they believed to be the shame of their nation” is one decisive factor for their suffering (xi). Taking into consideration not only black, but also white trauma is one way to look at the present situation in South Africa from a different perspective, an approach that is based on the idea of entanglement. However, as soon as the fact is taken into account that different groups of people are traumatised, it becomes apparent that they, in turn, are entwined as well. “This white trauma – which is certainly different from black trauma – is nevertheless and unavoidably ‘entangled’ with black trauma” (xi). Therefore, between the two forms of trauma no clear line can be drawn either. Consequently, analysing traumatisations which were caused by rules and living conditions based on the idea of black and white being two irreconcilable categories rather turns out to be the work of looking beyond the obvious in order to break with old traditions and to gain a deeper understanding of South African society as a whole.

In summary, it can be stated that,

[f]or our theorisation of trauma, it follows that we have to move from the concept of trauma as an insular, individual psychic-conflict, that concerns fore and foremost the individual in its insularity, and to shift the site of trauma to the ‘in-between’, to shift the site of trauma to the site of intersubjectivity, to the active co-constitution and rewriting or repetitions that relations, encounters with the other create. Trauma is thus a conflict, that has an intersubjective, social stage, it is embedded in everyday ordinary activities, encounters, exchanges. It is a living, dynamic site, constantly on the move.

[...] Trauma in South Africa has its own rhythms and works with very mobile spatiality and time lines. ("Trauma as Entanglement" 9)

To put it another way, trauma in South Africa is omnipresent and in the course of the centuries has become part of the society. On the basis of this theorisation of trauma, entanglements are to be found on numerous levels, interpersonally or related to time and space or also with reference to body and mind. In the following chapters the main focus will be on the analysis of the representation of trauma and its inherent entanglements in three contemporary South African novels. From the theoretical background illustrated in the present chapter, specific seemingly antithetical conceptual pairings that play a decisive role in trauma theory can be deduced and reinterpreted in terms of entanglement: past and present, victim and perpetrator, the multiplicity of trauma (black and white) as well as home and exile. Additionally, the plot structure of Michiel Heyns' *Lost Ground* turns out to be entangled itself.

4. Gillian Slovo's *Red Dust*

In *Red Dust* trauma in post-apartheid South Africa is presented as a series of entanglements in terms of complex interpersonal relations, of black and white traumata and of a search for identity. The story is constructed around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings taking place in Smitsrivier a fictional town in the Eastern Cape. Different versions of the truth about crimes committed and torments suffered during apartheid are brought to light, which eventually turn out to be crucial to the disclosure of numerous traumatic interconnections. Additionally, throughout the novel the personalities of both, victims and perpetrators are shown from various perspectives, which makes the distinction between good and evil even more difficult.

By gaining an insight into the complexities of traumata in contemporary South Africa the audience, which is supposed to be primarily Western¹, also becomes acquainted with inexplicable processes a whole nation is forced to undergo in order to come to terms with the cruelties of its past. For the reader difficulties arise in understanding the way the past is accounted for at the TRC hearings. Among other things, this is due to the fact that in contrast to Western methods of dealing with crimes, the TRC is primarily aiming at the revelation of the truth instead of the attainment of justice. As a consequence, situations in which what is wrong seem to be easily distinguishable from what is right are not as unambiguous as they appear at first sight. The truth rather turns out to be multi-layered and resulting from an ungraspable set of traumatic entanglements.

In this courtroom novel, culturally determined attitudes of the western readership are probably most often reflected by one of the main characters, Sarah Barcant, an ambitious lawyer returning to South Africa after having spent fourteen years in New York. She is summoned to small-town Smitsrivier by her former mentor Ben Hoffman because he considers her the right person to appear for the headmaster James Sizela and his wife, who want to find the body of their son Steve that disappeared in 1985.

By that point, getting at the truth becomes increasingly complex since various people are involved in the case. The main suspect for Steve's murder is the ex-policeman Pieter Muller. However, he refuses to apply for amnesty from the TRC, the rules of

¹ This point is emphasised by Gillian Slovo in a 2009 interview on BBC Radio 4

which would force him to tell the truth about Sizela's disappearance. Thus, in order to pressurise Muller into confessing his deed, two other people are needed.

On the one hand, Muller's former colleague, Dirk Hendricks, and on the other hand, Alex Mpondo, who was imprisoned during apartheid together with Steve. They were arrested because of their work for the anti-apartheid movement at about the same time when Sarah left the country and the two police officers were in charge of them. When Dirk Hendricks applies for amnesty for having tortured Alex Mpondo, Ben and Anna hope that the latter could elicit some crucial information regarding Steve Sizela's whereabouts from the ex-policeman. Thus, the cross-examination of Dirk Hendricks represents the only possibility to intimidate Pieter Muller into applying for amnesty and consequently into disclosing what happened to Steve Sizela.

4.1 Entanglement of Victim and Perpetrator: The TRC

Among the multiple entanglements readers come across in the novel, it is that between victims and perpetrators which is most prominent. This stands to reason since most of the action takes place at the TRC hearings where victims and perpetrators are at the centre of attention.

Established in 1995 the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was regarded as highly innovative because "it linked the 'truth' and 'reconciliation', the latter being considered necessary to overcoming division and creating a new national identity" (F. Ross 236). In order to attain that objective the Commission tried to establish

as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature and extent of the gross violations of human rights which were committed during the period of 1 March 1960 to the cut-off date, including the antecedents, circumstances, factors and context of such violations, as well as the perspectives of the victims and the motives and perspectives of the persons responsible for the commission of the violations, by conducting investigations and holding hearings ("Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995").

In other words, the TRC hearings provided an opportunity for victims and perpetrators to tell their stories to the end that after decades-long racial segregation all South Africans could be finally regarded as part of one and the same society. For this purpose three closely related committees with different jurisdictions were set up:

firstly, the Human Rights Violations Committee, responsible for gathering information from victims and witnesses, secondly, the Amnesty Committee charged with amnesty applications of perpetrators and finally the Reparations and Rehabilitations Committee that was conceiving a “reparations program” (Hayner 41-42). Hence, the separation between victims and perpetrators was already reinforced by the basic structure of the Commission.

The personal concerns of victims, and implicitly also those of perpetrators, were of equal importance. For instance, as pointed out by Hayner “[t]ruth commissions can offer victims a safe environment in which to relate their experiences” (137). Such a setting in which people traumatised by apartheid atrocities feel free and safe to tell the truth about what happened to them turned out to be of vital significance for the healing processes of many victims (134). As was the case for James Sizela and his wife, a large number of victims also went to TRC hearings in the hope of obtaining information about the facts behind the disappearance of relatives during apartheid.

Truth commissions primarily focus on the needs of victims. However, the South African TRC was unique in that it also indirectly addressed the needs of perpetrators by offering individualised amnesty to those who fully disclosed their actions. The main purpose of this strategy was not so much to attend to perpetrators’ wishes but rather to “lure some [of them] into giving full and public accounts of their abuses”. However, the Commission was nevertheless accommodating them with that way of proceeding (Hayner 16). It eventually went so far that in retrospect it was rather the perpetrators who benefitted from the decisions made by the Amnesty Committee, while numerous victims were left in the dark about the whereabouts of family members.

This fact was also criticised by Archbishop Desmond Tutu at an event held in honour of the tenth anniversary of the TRC in 2006. Within this framework he emphasised that the results brought about by the TRC were not to the benefit of a considerable number of victims. In this regard he claims that “[t]he apartheid government was very adept at hiding and destroying evidence. Cases go on for a long time and then people are acquitted and I fear it is traumatising for the victims”. According to him, perpetrators, on the other hand, were given preferential treatment since “amnesty was granted with immediate effect” (Breytenbach). However, the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission still marked an important step towards unifying

racially segregated societies, as the atrocities of South Africa's past were directly addressed at the hearings for the first time.

What this brief outline of objectives, structure and ways of proceeding of the TRC aims to illustrate is that perpetrators and victims were basically treated as two homogenous groups of people. This notion is also supported by Tristan Anne Borer who points out that these distinct categories are frequently created "in a situation of Gross Violations of Human rights (GVHR)." In addition, she claims that "[i]n the worst cases, the two are set up as diametrically opposed – i.e. victims versus perpetrators." This was particularly apparent in the case of "the debate surrounding amnesty in South Africa", concerned with the question of which of the groups benefitted more from the decisions made by the TRC (1089).

However, she asserts that the assignment of individuals to one group or the other frequently turned out to be not as clear cut as it might have appeared at first sight. In fact, from the information revealed at the TRC hearings it becomes evident that the borders between the two opposing groups were frequently blurred as some people corresponded to the profiles of both, victims and perpetrators (1089). Thus, on the other hand, the TRC also made an important contribution to illustrating and making people aware of these ambiguities. In *Red Dust* this objective is emphasised when Ben tries to explain how the Commission came into existence: "You forget that in 1990 there were two opposing sides. Call them what you will: the torturer and the freedom fighter, or the law abiding policeman and the terrorist. They were at war with each other and they need to negotiate a piece. That's how the Truth Commission came about" (Slovo 38).

4.1.1 The Victim as Perpetrator, the Perpetrator as Victim

Taking into consideration numerous entanglements occurring between victims and perpetrators, the ambiguities concerning identities and roles assigned to people represent one crucial element of *Red Dust*. This fact is supported by the insight readers gain into different facets of characters in the novel. The first person who cannot be identified exclusively as victim, even though officially classified as such at the hearing is Alex Mpondo:

When I go to the hearing, I sit in the victim's seat my lawyer,' he gestured at Sarah, 'is known as the victim's lawyer. If I want to go somewhere private during the hearing, to get away from the crowd, I must go to the place reserved for Truth Commission officials and for victims.'[...] And when the Commission publishes its report, my name will be among the names of other victims.' (316)

When the well-respected MP is asked to face and cross-examine his former torturer, Dirk Hendricks, he agrees reluctantly and for the only reason to help uncover the body of Steve Sizela. Alex's initial unwillingness to attend the hearing arises from two distinct motives. For one thing, he wants to live his life in peace without having to reopen the old wounds that were inflicted on him by Dirk Hendricks, who was brutally torturing Alex during his month-long imprisonment:

'Why did that bastard have to apply for amnesty?' [...] It had taken years for Alex to recover, even partially, from what Hendricks had done to him [...] And now, because of Hendricks' bloody-minded stupidity and the pressure James Sizela's friends had indirectly applied, it was all seeping back. His past was being slowly excavated and there was nothing he could do to shut it out. Soon he must do what he had vowed never to do again: he must come face to face with Dirk Hendricks. (30-31)

Alex can undoubtedly be considered a victim due to the traumatic experiences he had as a prisoner.

Being imprisoned and tortured was only part of what traumatised him and what he hopes never to be forced to relive again. In fact, the second main reason why he demurs at participating in the hearing are his repressed feelings of guilt for having betrayed Steve. Alex fears that the information he revealed when he broke under torture caused the policemen to kill his friend (133-35). In this context it seems to be irrelevant that Alex was only talking because he was suffering indescribable pain or that at the moment when he broke under torture Steve actually had been long dead. The mere fact that he betrayed one of his ANC colleagues and thus a whole ideal, makes him a perpetrator. When Hendricks discloses what Alex did the audience's disappointment that their admired member of parliament was capable of committing such a crime is unmistakeable:

There. Finally. It was out in the open. His betrayal. [...] He could feel Sarah stiffening and he could also feel the way the audience absorbed the information. The collective was united: like a wounded animal it gave up a soft burrowing hum that hovered above the hall until very gradually it died away.

Nothing now – only silence – as the crowd let sink in what Alex, their hero, had done. (192)

This scene illustrates that someone who has been assigned to the group of victims can also become a perpetrator. The situations and intentions creating perpetrators and victims are not easy to generalise. Therefore, they must be regarded individually which is also evident through the character Alex Mpondo.

Apart from being guilty of having betrayed Steve, the MP is a perpetrator in another respect as well, namely in terms of the image James Sizela has of him. For the town's law-abiding headmaster, who was tolerating apartheid, it was out of all reason that his own son joined Umkhonto we Sizwe. That was why he blamed Alex for having led Steve astray. Hence, from James' standpoint the Member of Parliament is to be classified as a perpetrator not in that he betrayed his son as well as ideals of the anti-apartheid movement. Rather, he holds Alex responsible for Steve's death because he convinced him to participate in the rebellion against law (244-45).

With that said, the assignability of people either to the group of victims or to that of perpetrators, especially in contemporary South Africa, proves to be ambiguous and context-sensitive. In other words, the question of good or evil, right or wrong and victim or perpetrator requires a response which is much more complex than initially expected.

This can also be exemplified by the way Alex' torturer, Dirk Hendricks, is presented in *Red Dust*. Principally, he represents the perpetrator. However, throughout the novel doubts concerning his pure evilness arise. Moreover, it becomes apparent that, like Alex Mpondo, Dirk Hendricks cannot be regarded as being guilty or the victim in only one but in several respects. Which group he is assigned to highly depends on interpersonal relations the character has with different people as well as on personal and political circumstances.

Hendricks is imprisoned and hopes to be released by trying to convince the Truth Commission that the violence he committed against Alex was an "act associated with a political objective" ("Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995"). Nevertheless, as soon as he starts to retell in detail his methods of torture, it is hard to imagine that someone was capable of committing such cruelties for political

reasons only. For instance, he mentions the helicopter where Alex was hung up upside down between two tables “with a broomstick inserted below the knees and above the forearms” or the wet bag which was pulled tight over the prisoner’s face in order to cut off his air supply (Slovo 125-26). Notwithstanding his motive for torturing his prisoner, in this respect Hendricks is undoubtedly in the role of the perpetrator who was responsible for gross human rights violations against Alex Mpondo.

The second misdemeanour the former police-officer is guilty of is that he betrayed his ex-colleague. More precisely, together with Steve’s body, he buried a page from the police records providing clear evidence that Pieter Muller is to blame for the boy’s murder (275). The fear that what he did would come to light would not let go of him even fourteen years after, a fact that is evident when Muller and Hendricks meet again for the first time:

In that moment, looking into Pieter’s eyes, Dirk saw something he didn’t altogether understand. Was it a question? No – much more than a question. He knows what I did, Dirk thought. And then Pieter’s hand touched Dirk’s and the moment passed and Dirk was left thinking he was imagining things. What was done was in the past. Over. Long gone. All that mattered now was the present and in this present he could see Pieter smiling and feel Pieter’s hand in his (27).

Besides, what is noticeable in this context is that Hendricks finds himself in a situation similar to that Alex Mpondo is confronted with. The circumstances are also comparable inasmuch as the death of both of their friends could be regarded as being an indirect result of their betrayals. However, a crucial difference lies in the way Alex and Dirk are dealing with that fact: while the former is haunted by feelings of guilt, Hendricks does not consider himself responsible for his colleague’s death.

Back then when he had resentfully dug the hole as Pieter had ordered him to and when he laid inside the remains of Steve Sizela, how could he have known what he did would stretch out far into the future to be ended only by Pieter’s death? And if he could have known, did that mean that his betrayal had killed Pieter?

No. Dirk refused that option. He could not have known. Never say that. It wasn’t his fault. His had been an impossible choice: either to tell them where Sizela was buried or allow himself to be buried in prison. (333-34)

Eventually, what is also shown by these short paragraphs is that the complex relationship between Hendricks and Muller led to the betrayal and turned Dirk into a perpetrator in another respect.

Throughout the novel many facets of the character Dirk Hendricks are illustrated. In particular, when Alex cross-examines him, the imprisoned police officer seems to be a completely different person from that Mpondo got to know being his prisoner:

Looking across the space that separated them, Alex found himself looking at a stranger. This man who sat opposite him was not the torturer who had haunted his life: he was just an ordinary man brought down by history and by the compulsion to grab history's second chance and to cross the line from instigator to applicant, from perpetrator to reconciled. (184)

A further indication for the fact that Dirk Hendricks cannot be clearly assigned to a category is that during the hearing he is given a number of names, such as "the other", "the stranger opposite"(186), "the apologetic, beaten one", "the torturer", "[t]he new one" (187), "the prisoner" (188) as well as "the farm boy" (189). At times he is even referred to as victim with respect to the consequences his work had for him and his family. One example for how the job of a police officer during apartheid was affecting everyday family life is the constant fear of becoming targets of attacks. Moreover, due to his psychological condition, Hendricks was posing a threat for his wife towards whom he was violent repeatedly (128-29). The amnesty applicant's complex personality and his role as a victim are not exclusively implied by the stories he reveals but this notion is even explicitly stated by none else than Hendricks himself at the moment when Sarah Barcant interrogates him:

She pushed the point. 'Are you a victim, Mr Hendricks?' He made up his mind. 'Yes, Mr Chairman. In my own way I believe I am a victim.' [...] I am a victim, if you like, of my ignorance and the things I thought were true.' [...] 'I am a patriot. It was told to me through my whole life that if we were not vigilant we would be overrun by the communistic menace. I was protecting my country from a takeover by communist-oriented organisations. I was doing only what I thought best.' (221-22)

Here, Dirk Hendricks states that the principal reason why he, to a certain extent, could be considered a victim is that he was undeliberately carrying out official instructions. This demonstrates that the assignment of individuals either to the group of victims or to that of perpetrators is for the most part determined by the prevailing political situations in South Africa during and after apartheid.

4.1.2 Bonds between Victims and Perpetrators

As shown in the previous chapter, in *Red Dust* socially ascribed roles of victims and perpetrators are illustrated in a way that makes the distinction between the people belonging to the groups extremely difficult. Another crucial aspect the novel is concerned with, is to put emphasis on what binds victims and perpetrators together. The ways in which entanglements between them are created is illustrated particularly by means of the characters Alex Mpondo and Dirk Hendricks on the one hand as well as by James Sizela and Pieter Muller on the other.

With reference to Hendricks and Mpondo, it is noticeable that they are not exclusively opposing each other as enemies possessing contrary character traits, but even sharing commonalities. For instance, they were both, each in his own way, acting in the interest of their homeland: Hendricks by protecting it from the terrorists and Mpondo by fighting against the apartheid system. Moreover, both of them betrayed their colleagues and are neither to be regarded as exclusively evil nor as completely good. This is also noticed by Sarah Barcant listening to Dirk Hendricks: "So many facets to this man, Sarah thought, just like Alex" (231).

Apart from the fact that the torturer and his victim are to be considered entangled inasmuch as they, as human beings, share similarities to a certain extent, a second form of interrelatedness is presented in the novel. In this case entanglement exists in terms of an intimate relationship between the two deadly enemies as it becomes apparent during a conversation between Sarah and Ben.

'I certainly believed him when he talked about his relationship with Alex. I was looking at Alex during the hearing. I saw something between those two, something intimate.'

'And that surprised you?'

'I don't know.' She sighed. 'Yes, I guess it did. They seem so very different.'

'They are,' Ben said. 'But nevertheless there is a bond that links Alex to Hendricks.' [...] 'It's the same bond that binds this country to its past. None of us are free of it (150).

In addition to confirming Sarah's suspicion about Mpondo's and Hendrick's connectedness, Ben indicates that not only individuals but even the whole South African society is entangled with and made up of the country's traumatic past.

According to him the seemingly inexplicable bond between the torturer and his victim is grounded on these ubiquitous temporal and historical traumatic entanglements.

Yet, even though it is true that all South Africans are fundamentally connected with what the country was forced to undergo, Hendricks' and Mpondo's relationship additionally needs to be looked at from a more differentiated aspect. The reason for this is that their relationship was established under extreme circumstances and due to particular preconditions. In respect thereof, their opposing roles as law-abiding police officer and torturer on the one hand and anti-apartheid activist and prisoner on the other have to be taken into account. To be more precise, the bond between them was created in a situation in which one had the absolute power over the other. This corresponds to the following notion about imbalanced power structures between interrogator and prisoner pointed out by Judith Lewis Herman: "In situations of captivity, the perpetrator becomes the most powerful person in the life of the victim, and the psychology of the victim is shaped by the actions and beliefs of the perpetrator" (75). As a result, victim and perpetrator are intimately bound together, a psychological phenomenon that is referred to as "traumatic bonding" or "stockholm syndrome" in literature. In general, both terms are "applied [...] to describe strong emotional ties that may form between victims and their oppressors across a range of relationships and types of abuse" ("Traumatic Bonding").

From the psychological perspective, reasons for the development of strong feelings towards perpetrators or victims are still being debated. However, considering that, Herman summarises the main influencing factors applicable to various situations of captivity, some of which also correspond to that presented in *Red Dust*. The author claims that one of the principal reasons why traumatic bonds are created is that "despotic control [is exercised] over every aspect of the victim's life" (75). Then, as soon as victims are convinced of the torturers' omnipotence, they believe that "life depends upon winning [their] indulgence through absolute compliance". Finally, when the perpetrators decide against killing the victims, the latter even feel "gratitude for being allowed to live" (77).

According to this, Alex Mpondo does not feel connected to his torturer in the sense that he is able to empathise with him in consequence of commonalities they share. Rather, as his prisoner, he was completely dependent on Dirk Hendricks, a person

that had the power to decide whether Alex should have lived or died. Therefore, in the face of death, the only thing that mattered to him was to satisfy his torturer:

They didn't know that he hadn't just told Dirk Hendricks where to find the guns, but had offered up the information as a gift, accompanied by other words ... *please ... I'll tell you anything* ... surfacing in that moment a verbal purging, at the same time as he could smell the rankness of his own terror and its physical manifestations – his soiled trousers, the urine trickling down his leg, his foul breath as the bag was pulled away.

[...] He remembered Dirk Hendricks's triumphant smiling face. Dirk Hendricks, victorious not because Alex had told him what he wanted to know [...] but because Alex had wanted to tell him. Had wanted to please his torturer. That moment, that feeling was burned into his heart. The way Dirk Hendricks's expression had changed – from elation to a visible sense of relief – Alex had known was mirrored in his own face. At that moment Alex would have done anything for Dirk Hendricks (Slovo 192-93).

In this extreme situation Alex' feelings as well as his behaviour were undoubtedly manipulated by Dirk Hendricks.

Besides, being in the subordinate position, he was not likely to have received any information about his torturer. Yet, the police officer was still not able to prevent the prisoner from reading his own character as well. This is particularly evident from the situation in which Alex is cross-examining Hendricks, proactively and in the end also successfully challenging him to show his true face (186). Without any knowledge of Hendricks' mental processes the MP would have never been able to bring the former police officer to the point where he could no longer hide his evil side. Nevertheless, even if the ability to see through his enemy proved advantageous for Alex during the hearing, it should not be overlooked that the bond between them was created in an exceptional and traumatic situation. This implies that the entanglement will always remain unwanted and extremely painful for Mpondo:

That was the worst of it. How thoroughly Alex knew the bastard. Not in the sense that you can know someone close to you, your child, for example, your brother or your lover. It was even more intimate than that. Deeper. The truth was that Alex knew Hendricks from the inside. Not only the physicality of the man, the smell of his aftershave, for example [...]. It was more and it was worse. It was the way Dirk Hendricks's mind worked. That's what Alex knew. That's what had made the whole experience doubly unbearable, that he had sat opposite his torturer and he had known what he was thinking and known also what he was planning to say next. (236)

Furthermore, another indication of the singularity of their deep intimacy is that it turns out to be hardly comprehensible to outsiders, like Sarah Barcant for example. This is particularly illustrated by the situation when she tells the well-intentioned lie that Hendricks admitted that Steve had been long dead before Alex broke under torture (331). By doing so, she is not aware of the fact that the MP does not believe her because he knew his torturer well enough to be sure that he would never tell the truth about what really happened.

If, on the other hand, the circumstances are considered from the perpetrator's point of view, it becomes apparent that he primarily took advantage of the victim's state of being at his mercy. Thus, being aware of the effects a situation of captivity can have on a person's psyche, Hendricks systematically bonds with Mpondo as he admits during his interrogation at the TRC hearing:

'To be a good interrogator, - he was staring at his feet – 'you must focus on your prisoner. You must get to know him. To understand not just his strengths or his weaknesses, but also the things he likes, the music that moves him, the smells that have special meaning for him, the people he cares about, the enemies he's made. If you do your job properly he must become like your child.' [...] 'Or your lover.' (147)

Hence, the torturer's objective was to know his prisoner inside out in order to get the desired information. Despite the strategy, which involves showing interest in the personal matters of the prisoner, an emotional connection is further established by offering "intermittent rewards" to the victim (Herman 79). Taking into consideration Dirk Hendrick's bonding strategies, a similar pattern can be observed when he talks about how he took Alex on a trip into the countryside because he "needed fresh air" or about the fact that he bought him a Coke (Slovo 193,195).

However, even though the intimacy was strategically developed for interrogation purposes only, the thorough knowledge of Alex's personality did not leave Hendricks entirely unaffected. On the contrary, he is emotionally bound to his former enemy even fourteen years after they last saw each other: "Dirk felt for Alex. He had a fellow feeling for this man. [...]. Even now, when Alex was the man who might stand between Dirk and his freedom, Dirk still felt an impulse to reach out to Alex, to gentle him into calm just the way he had once done." (200-201)

In summary, it can be stated that the strong link between Alex Mpondo and Dirk Hendricks evolves out of traumatising conditions, such as the society's temporal and historical entanglement or the extreme situation creating their traumatic bonding. It is therefore highly complex and probably harder to sever than other connections of people who are not at enmity.

That victims and perpetrators are intimately entangled with and bound to each other is further illustrated in the novel by means of the intricate connection between James Sizela and Pieter Muller. Smitsrivier's headmaster and the erstwhile police officer are at enmity since the son of the one died at the hands of the other. As it turns out it is precisely this deeply traumatising act that is paradoxically separating them into opposing roles but at the same time also creating an indissoluble link between them: "As he went to the desk, it occurred to James that he and Muller had much in common. They were both men of the old school, bound together by the deed that the one had committed against the other" (296).

As in the case of Dirk Hendricks and Alex Mpondo, this strong link is reflected to a certain degree by the fact that they share several common characteristics. Above all, Pieter Muller and James Sizela are alike with respect to their functions as law-abiding citizens, a fact that is repeatedly emphasised in *Red Dust*. The police officer, for instance, is characterised as "law-abiding functionar[y] who had only done what duty demanded" (19) and similarly, the town's headmaster is known as a person who "believes in rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's. Upholding the law and obeying authority is his *sine qua non*" (244).

Having this feature in common they both represent the South African past: "The stern headmaster facing down the solid, determined ex-policeman, Muller, both of them so much the products of the old South Africa" (16). Moreover, they are, each in his own way, very proud men. Pieter Muller for example, would rather die than compromise himself by begging for amnesty at the TRC hearing. That James Sizela, on the other hand, is to be considered a proud person as well is shown by the way he reacts after having been deeply hurt in his pride by Pieter Muller. He finally revenges his son and shoots his killer (302), even though, up until then, he persisted in saying that the only thing he wanted was to find Steve's body (47).

Finally, the bond between Muller and Sizela, just like the one connecting Hendricks and Mpondo, proves to be stronger and more profound than those not grounded on traumatising events. This becomes particularly evident by the fact that they are well aware of their commonalities and, as a consequence, thoroughly familiar with one another. Only due to this intimate link Muller is capable of manipulating Sizela to such an extent that the latter is no longer able to resist the urge to shoot his son's murderer. In that way the headmaster becomes his mere tool, acting according to the ex-police officer's will who has the power to transform an innocent citizen and victim into a perpetrator (300-302).

The dichotomy between victim and perpetrator might appear distinct at first sight, however, the categories are not easily separable. Due to their intricacy they are rather overlapping. Reasons for this include the facts that individuals are not clearly assignable to one of the categories or that unexpected and unwanted, but very intimate bonds inevitably exist between victims and perpetrators. In a manner of speaking, what was shown in the previous chapters can be summarised by the following words Ben Hoffman addressed to Dirk Hendricks: "This is not about sides, Mr Hendricks.' How could it not be? South Africa had always been about sides, from even before the *Engelse oorlog*. 'It's about humanity,' Ben Hoffman said." (257-58)

4.2 Multiple Traumata in *Red Dust*

As already indicated in the preceding chapters, one key issue addressed in *Red Dust* is the multiplicity of the human personality, taking into account both, that of criminals as well as that of the people who fell victim to them. Thus, considering that most diverse characters are illustrated from different perspectives, not only good and evil but also those traumatised and not traumatised prove increasingly difficult to distinguish in the course of the novel. In fact, the reader comes across a great number of different traumata suffered by the most diverse personalities. However, in this context it is important to note that all these traumatisations are equally the result of South Africa's past and, in particular, of the consequences of the apartheid policy.

Hence, once again it becomes evident that what needs to be focused on is not so much the individual analysis of each side of a racially segregated society, as the intricate entanglements of people with their traumatic past and consequently with

each other as well. This is also what Ben Hoffman tries to explain to Sarah Barcant who is only familiar with Western methods of making decisions about right and wrong. Thus, initially she is convinced that the two sides are distinct and opposing each other:

'But you must see,' he said, 'that nothing is as simple as you would have it. If you were to take the trouble to understand, to really understand those guns-for-hire like Hendricks, then you would also understand why this country is still so violent. We are all interconnected here. You cannot pay attention only to one side as if it stands separate from the other. If you look at the pass system, the township necklace makes sense: look into the fear in ordinary white eyes and you will understand black hatred.' (151)

Among the multiple traumata illustrated in *Red Dust* the focus initially lies on the emotional entanglement of James Sizela and his wife with the disappearance of their son Steve. What primarily causes them unbearable pain is the fact that they are forced to live in continuous uncertainty about his whereabouts. In that way, they are stuck in the past, unable to start working through their trauma. In a conversation with Sarah Barcant, James Sizela reveals what it means to live with such a burden:

'You cannot understand. You can't know what it is like to lose, literally to lose, your son.' [...] 'You don't know what it is to wait for your son's return, to see him in the street and call out and see a stranger turning.' [...] 'You cannot know how it feels to see the way grief has diminished your wife, or what it is not to want to face the fact that your son is dead because that would seem like betrayal, to think of him every day, every waking minute and at night as well and then finally to know that he is dead and yet not to be allowed to mourn him.' (180-81)

According to James the only possibility to get closure is to find Steve's body: "I have accepted the truth," James had said. 'My son is gone. All I want now, all we both want, is to be allowed to lay his body to rest'" (19). The type of trauma the Sizelas are going through represents the pain suffered by a huge number of people who have no clarity about what happened to their relatives, considering that until 1994 South Africans disappeared.

The complexity of trauma in post-apartheid South Africa is further illustrated in the novel by the character Alex Mpondo who experienced several traumata. As pointed out in the preceding chapter he was tortured and had to witness how the dead body of his comrade was carried away in prison. In addition, he is tormented with the question of whether Steve had to die because of his betrayal. In other words, the MP

is forced to live with the memory of different traumatic experiences which overlay each other. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Alex chose to forget what happened rather than letting the consequences of all those traumata determine his life. The impression that he left his past behind is also conveyed to the readers at the beginning of *Red Dust*: “Alex had come to terms with what happened. All he asked was he be left in peace” (31). However, as the day approaches when he has to face his former torturer it seems to be increasingly difficult for Mpondo to repress the awful memories and his entanglement with the past comes to his consciousness again. This becomes particularly evident from Alex’ mental reaction to Dirk Hendricks’ narration of the methods used to torture him:

And all the time the memory was just as he must always have feared it would be, without knowing that this is what he feared. This is why, he now realised, he hadn’t wanted to attend the hearing – to revisit Smitsrivier – because he hadn’t wanted to remember. The memory was being delivered, not in an ordered, structured form that might have been easier to assimilate, but in jagged splinters. Images – Steve’s pointing, the dirt under Dirk Hendricks’s nails. Sounds – those screams building up, battering his ears [...]. (133)

What is also shown by the above quote is that until that moment he has been repressing the feelings resulting from his trauma, the extent of which he has never been aware of.

Hence, it is hardly surprising that Alex is consistently reluctant to cross-examine Dirk Hendricks, as confronting his torturer triggers traumatic memories. Nevertheless, it still represents an initial important step towards the healing of his wounds, as pointed out at the end of the novel: “And yet, he thought, as he steered away from Smitsrivier, he didn’t regret coming back. He had looked Dirk Hendricks in the eye. Perhaps that was a start” (337). Thus, the fact that in retrospect he did not regret to have undergone what he initially considered a painful and unbearable process, illustrates that trauma, its painful memories and the healing process are entangled with each other as well.

Apart from the different types of traumatisations, symptoms, as well as healing processes experienced by black people such as James Sizela and Alex Mpondo, white trauma in post-apartheid South Africa is a further issue addressed in *Red Dust*. As indicated earlier Dirk Hendricks is one of the white characters readers also get to know from his vulnerable and traumatised side. As he reveals at the TRC hearing he

applies for amnesty to come to terms with the past and to openly express his point of view regarding the offences he committed when he was a police officer: "I am doing it so I may help clear up on the past. It is the time for me, for everyone, to make a clean breast of things" (86). Dirk Hendricks has had nothing left outside prison since his wife moved away with his children. Thus, it stands to reason that his major concern in applying for amnesty is to be able to recover from his trauma by telling his version of past events rather than to be released from imprisonment only (127). Aside from being officially diagnosed with PTSD the trauma he suffers is also caused by the ideological transformation the country underwent after the end of apartheid and the new image of whiteness that was consequently created:

They all thought they were better than him. They looked back and they judged him. Hindsight was a fine thing: it made judges out of sociologists and journalists. And yet Dirk knew that no matter how intricate and how clever the theories, the so-called experts could never really know what it had been like to be caught up in the centre of that whirlwind, caught by history in the making and at the same time making history and watching it unmade, and all the time having to take decisions like where to put the overflow of prisoners, or how to get the information before more lives were staked, or how to explain to your kids why you turned up from work unable to look them in the eye. (199-200)

In other words, he is given a new identity due to the fundamental alteration in the course of South African history. More precisely, it changed from being a person acting in the interest of the state to the one held responsible for a huge number of atrocities. In that way he is traumatically entangled with this image of a white perpetrator which he aims to get disentangled from. This is also shown by Dirk Hendricks' attempt to explain himself and to ask Alex Mpondo for a chance to be heard:

'It is not easy to talk about what happened. You can even feel a bit ashamed. But to you, Mr. Mpondo, I want to say that in all honesty I didn't know who you were then, I never saw you as you sit there today – an MP, a man with education, a fellow human being. I can understand it if you hate me – I went on for too long – but if you could find it in your heart, I would like to talk to you. Not here, like monkeys in a zoo, but in private, face to face. If you agree, I will try and explain to you why I did what I did, to show you that I also am human.' (233)

It is clear from the quote above that Dirk Hendricks demands something of Alex Mpondo that he did not even start to fulfil when the MP was subordinate to him. Thus, it can be argued that he has strictly speaking no right to ask for forgiveness.

Nevertheless, he feels the need to be considered a human being in order to be able to move on in the new South Africa.

4.2.1 Pre-traumatic Stress in *Red Dust*

Despite the consequences of multiple traumata from which numerous characters suffer even years after the end of apartheid, a further subject taken up in the novel is pre-traumatic stress. Concerning this matter it is shown that this, in western trauma theory hardly recognised psychological phenomenon was frequently posing a serious problem for people living in apartheid South Africa. In particular, in *Red Dust* there are two specific characters who obviously suffer from symptoms of pre-traumatic stress which were triggered fourteen years earlier: Dirk Hendricks and Alex Mpondo. In this respect, it once again stands to reason that the mental disorder was brought about by different circumstances, due to their former roles as guardian of the law on the one hand and terrorist on the other.

As far as Dirk Hendricks is concerned, to a certain degree the ex-police officer and his family were suffering from pre-traumatic stress in that they were living under constant threat and therefore fearing a possible upcoming event that might have traumatised them. To be exact, Hendricks was well known as “a member of the security branch in [the] small town of Smitsrivier” and consequently a potential target for attacks. For that reason they, as he claims, “had to take precautions”, such as a “wet blanket” ready to be used “in case of hand-grenade attacks” and the permanent monitoring of his children (128). This severely limited the whole family in their everyday life. The perpetual fear of potential attacks is also what Hendricks refers to when Alex Mpondo interrogates him:

‘Your family was never really under threat, was it?’ [...] ‘The fact that we were, happily, not attacked, Mr Chairman,’ Dirk Hendricks the prisoner said, looking to the head of the stage, avoiding Alex’s gaze, ‘does not mean that we were not under threat.’ (188).

Believing the words of the former police officer, it is apparent that he and his family experienced trauma. Yet, this type of traumatisation can neither be regarded as being caused by a single event nor as a consequence of any shocking experience. It is rather the consistent state of anxiety created by the ever-present violence in apartheid South Africa that traumatised them.

In view of the pre-traumatic stress Alex Mpondo was suffering from, it is striking that the intense fear he was being subjected to was deliberately instilled into him by Dirk Hendricks. For instance, he brought the exact time, when Alex would be tortured next, to the prisoner's knowledge. Furthermore, Alex Mpondo had already been tortured before and therefore knew exactly what he was being afraid of. Dirk Hendricks and his family, in contrast, faced constantly traumatising living conditions but never experienced the situation they feared. In addition, Dirk Hendricks described the upcoming acts of violence he would commit against his prisoner in detail, with the result that what the latter was subsequently imagining was powerful enough to cause symptoms of trauma:

Fear. Alex was an expert in it. It was sited not only in his mind but in his body. He knew its secrets. He had sat there in the hearing and he had felt it coming on. He knew how it would start, flickering in his chest, before climbing up through his throat, crackling at his nerve ends, setting his eyelids quivering. Fear and its anticipation. Dirk Hendricks had taught him all about that. This was his speciality. He had understood the power of Alex's imagination. That was what those torture sessions, spaced out regularly every four days, were all about and that is why Dirk Hendricks felt he had to deny them publicly. The narrative that Dirk Hendricks had chosen for himself was of an honest policeman duped by his government's propaganda, not the story of the sadist that he undoubtedly was. Because what Hendricks had done to Alex was not only inflict pain but also describe its moment in the future. He had made Alex wait for it. (237)

What the given quote undoubtedly demonstrates is that the MP's symptoms of pre-traumatic stress were not only appearing during his imprisonment but even years after his release, as the trauma is still deeply anchored in his body.

It can thus be concluded that, notwithstanding its lack of recognition in Western cultures, the psychological disorder is a serious problem for those affected by it. Not least because the symptoms of pre-traumatic stress do not simply disappear as soon as the people are theoretically no longer in danger, but persist for a long time thereafter. Therefore, to a certain extent the persistent fear of a traumatising experience in the future can be considered a trauma itself.

4.3 Expat Sarah Getting Entangled with South Africa

Not only black and white people are entangled with South Africa's traumatic history in a variety of ways but also those who left the country during apartheid and have been living in exile ever since. This is shown by the change Sarah Barcant undergoes as soon as she returns home. Or more precisely, as will become apparent in the following, she does not change in any fundamental way. She rather rediscovers that South Africa has always been part of her and thus gets anew unconsciously entangled with her home country.

Initially, she is not willing to leave New York, the place where she has built a new life and the lifestyle of which she has adopted in the course of the past fourteen years: "Back? she thought. There is no going back. Not after all this time" (3). However, she eventually opts to return to Smitsrivier since she is not able to refuse the request of Ben Hoffman to whom she owes her whole career (12). Soon it becomes clear that her past is undeniably bound to her: "From Smitsrivier to New York. A stunning dislocation. A continental shift for which there could be no mental bridge. And yet, as Sarah's gaze moved down Smitsrivier's Main Street to its distant end, she realised how familiar it was" (8).

Nevertheless, life in New York has still shaped her attitude in many respects and therefore becoming acquainted with the new South Africa turns out to be a complex, gradual process which she goes through until the end of the novel. At this point it should be noted that the readers view the action through Sarah's eyes. Like the protagonist, the audience is for the most part unfamiliar with the ever-present multi-layered entanglements in South Africa. Therefore, not only Sarah but also the readers are given a new perception of the seemingly obvious distribution of roles and their associated attributes in the country.

Initially, her attitude towards the present situation in South Africa is probably most reflected by her way of proceeding with respect to the case she conducts. It is obvious that she mistakes the cultural conditions of her former home country with those prevailing in the West. For instance, this becomes especially clear when Sarah notices that Alex Mpondo's version of the events taking place during his imprisonment is inconsistent with the map of the police station. In this situation she automatically assumes that he is deliberately withholding the truth instead of taking

into account that his lapse of memory might be caused by the severe trauma he experienced there (63-64). In a discussion following Mpondo's interrogation Ben points out to Sarah that she might have forgotten the fundamental difference existing between South African and Western cultures:

'Oh, come on Ben. You know as well as I do that Alex Mpondo is hiding something. If we're serious about proceeding, we have to find out what.'

'You're wrong.'[...] 'You've been gone too long. This isn't fast-talking New York, Sarah, it's Smitsrivier. People are slower here, they're much less direct. If Alex was oblique then that's because it's his way, his people's way. You've forgotten how this world works.' (67)

Despite the intention of summoning Sarah back because he was too old to appear for the Sizelas and Alex Mpondo on his own, Ben Hoffman further aims to make his former protégée conscious of the fact that South Africa belongs to her: "Without Smitsrivier,' Ben said, 'without South Africa you will always be less than you could have been'" (152). He therefore plays a crucial role in assisting Sarah to rediscover the part of hers she has ignored for the past fourteen years.

The development Sarah undergoes is particularly apparent when she takes notice of the bond existing between Hendricks and Mpondo (150). Hence, in so doing, she slowly moves away from the notion that two clearly separable sides exist and lets herself in for the idea that all South Africans are interconnected to a certain degree.

Eventually, Sarah Barcant realises that she, like all the people born in the country shaped by its traumatic history, is and has always been closely connected with South Africa and thus finds the way back to herself:

That she had run away from this place, and kept away so long, revealed to her what she had previously refused to acknowledge – that, try as she might to escape it, this country defined her. It would be with her no matter where she was. South Africa in its extravagance. She thought back on her arrival in Smitsrivier, remembering how alien the town had seemed then and how unreal. No longer. Now, looking through one window, she took in all the old familiarities, the brilliant light, the harsh, dry scent, the distant, lilting interchanges. The feeling of home (338).

5. Jann Turner's *Southern Cross*

The second contemporary South African novel illustrating the individuals' traumatic entanglements with the country's past, is *Southern Cross* by Jann Turner. In particular, the story revolves around Anna Kriel's attempt to free herself from her painful memories. She is deeply traumatised by the loss of her boyfriend Paul Lewis, who was shot dead in 1987. More than ten years later, she is still haunted by the past because Paul's murderer, as well as the reason for his death, have never been revealed.

The personal trauma of Anna Kriel is not the only aspect illustrating the unclear distinction between the past and the present. The entanglement of time is further reflected in problems that South African society is confronted with today. A number of everyday life situations are exemplified in *Southern Cross*. It appears from these scenes that issues such as violent crime, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and racism, for example, have become the norm, rather than the exception.

In terms of thematic background, *Southern Cross* and the previous novel, *Red Dust*, show several points of similarity. For instance, in both of them the TRC constitutes a crucial element. The Commission gives Anna reason to hope that the mystery surrounding Paul's death will eventually be solved. Thus, uncovering the truth behind unexplained incidents in order to overcome trauma, is also a central theme in *Southern Cross*. It appears that uncovering the truth is essential to dissolve traumatic entanglements with the past.

The novel displays traumatic interconnections resulting from structural violence and oppression under the apartheid regime. The focus is on the entanglement of victims and the perpetrators as well as the vagueness of good and evil in contemporary South Africa. In *Southern Cross* readers get a particular insight into these different perspectives and unforeseen interpersonal relations when Anna investigates the case alone. Thus, the idea of trying to group people in distinct categories is continuously challenged.

On the one hand, the opposition of victim and perpetrator is put into question with regard to people whose political positions become increasingly unclear. This is particularly illustrated by means of the character Paul Lewis. In the course of Anna's

inquiry she reveals information about her former boyfriend that she would have never thought possible. It turns out that he worked for the anti-apartheid movement as well as for the Security Police and so his role changes from victim to perpetrator. However, the more she learns of what lies beneath the seemingly obvious, the more intricacies come to light and it becomes impossible to determine to which category he belongs.

On the other hand, the issue of blurred boundaries is addressed in terms of interpersonal relations established between people who were once standing on opposing sides. In particular, such unexpected entanglements come to light during Anna's encounters with the imprisoned Colonel Ig du Preez. He is regarded as the most dangerous criminal of the apartheid regime. Yet, by getting involved with the former enemy, the protagonist is able to get to know him from a completely different perspective and to finally overcome her gridlocked concept of victim and perpetrator.

5.1 Entanglement of Past and Present

5.1.1 Anna's Entanglement with the Past

Southern Cross addresses the entanglement of Anna Kriel with the traumatic occurrences in 1987. The terrible experience that traumatised her for more than ten years is the murder of her boyfriend Paul Lewis. During apartheid he, Anna, Paul's friend Jacob Oliphant and his wife Rachel "formed a political cell" working for an underground resistance movement (13). Paul and Jacob were killed after they left for a job for the organisation. Before his departure, Paul promised Anna that would be his last trip and afterwards things would change (21). However, he did not have the chance to keep his promise.

Throughout the whole novel, Anna's trauma is illustrated in great detail, from its onset to the process of coming to terms with the past. Considering first the causes of her traumatisation, it is obvious that Anna's life is shattered most by the unexplained loss of her boyfriend. Yet, this terrible event is not to be seen as a trauma by itself, isolated from context, place and time. In fact, before the murder, the protagonist already lives in a state of permanent fear. In particular, attention must be paid to her life circumstances as an anti-apartheid activist. On the first page of *Southern Cross* it

is emphasised that for Anna and for many others, the living conditions in South Africa were deeply traumatising until the end of apartheid:

Hers was the ache of one caught in the vise of time and place. We are all shaped, to some extent, by our time and our country. Anna was moulded brutally by hers. She had no choices, or that was how she saw it. Life under apartheid offered only the narrow path of resistance. Her longing for that ordinary life of nine to five and family and Sunday-supplement gardening articles was a longing for freedom from struggle (1).

Thus, as it can be assumed from the passage, Anna was traumatised even before Paul's death. In this respect, it must also be taken into account that she was suffering from continuous traumatic stress as the trauma was caused by a long-lasting condition governing her life, rather than by a unique shocking event.

In the course of the first part of *Southern Cross*, which is set in 1987, readers additionally get a deeper understanding of the extreme physical and psychological stress members of the resistance movement were subjected to. On several occasions the Security Police appeared at their homes and detained them for days or in the case of Paul, even months (3). At times, the head of the Security Police, Captain Frans Nel, also turned up in the middle of the night without any specific reason offered (5). Therefore, they were forced to live in constant fear and uncertainty: "They lived every day in the heady anxiety of preparedness to pay the price, whether it was harassment, arrest, detention, trial, imprisonment or even death" (13).

Anna in particular is in this state of anxiety when Paul leaves her anew to carry out his last secret mission for the movement. Hence, she is traumatised even before her boyfriend's death. To be more precise, this trauma is caused by the fear of losing him. This and Paul's murder are therefore to be considered as closely connected.

It is nevertheless undoubtedly his death and the certainty that her boyfriend is never going to return which represents the greatest psychological burden. This is clear from the fact that Anna's whole world falls apart when she finally hears about the tragic event:

Nothing in her sweet, short life could have prepared Anna for this. It was as if she were standing in a hail of machine gun fire. Each word ripped through her like a bullet. The solid elements of the world seemed to separate, like a slow

motion shattering of glass, like the shards of a broken mirror cascading outwards, splintering into tiny fragments everything they met. (24)

This passage from *Southern Cross* reveals the pain caused by the message, as well as its overwhelming character. Furthermore, from the detailed description of how Anna's world collapses the severity of the shock is obvious.

From that moment on, the protagonist becomes traumatically entangled with her past as a consequence of her experiences. For instance, she is unable to conceive the thought that Paul would never return: "So she lived in a state of hopeful purpose. She kept Paul's clothes and books as he had left them, as if he might one day return to use them. And she grew back into the habits of his last detention, summoning his presence when she needed him, living close to his memory" (37). Although the traumatic situation has already arisen, Anna behaves as if her boyfriend was still alive. This implies that holding onto the past is the only way she has to avoid her incredibly painful reality. On the other hand, Anna is also well aware that living in the past means living close to the trauma and the terrible things that happened back then: "How she longed to be uncoupled from her past, to slip loose of all the burdens of memory. Yet memory was her lifeline. Letting go of the past meant letting go of Paul and she couldn't do that" (67).

For Anna Kriel time does not pass in a linear way but rather the past and present overlap. Even though the years go by and South Africa undergoes fundamental political changes, Anna still lives in 1987. In that sense, she lives physically in the present but it is actually the past which takes up all her time and energy, which is explicitly described in the novel: "For those who never wake from the past, life is a coma in which the present is ever receding, as the past should be, and the past is a painful, present haunting" (63-64).

5.1.2 Anna's Journey into the Present

The reader witnesses Anna's journey of working through her trauma and is able to observe her healing process step by step. However, the latter must not be misinterpreted: "healing" in this context does not imply a complete cure of her trauma but rather achieving a status where Anna can stop living in the past and move on.

This also becomes evident when she states: “I will never come to terms with the brutality of the cutting off – too soon – of Paul’s life” (92).

The primary reason for Anna’s unwillingness to put the past behind her is that the motive and the person responsible for the murder remain unknown. This is evidenced by the mere fact that even ten years after the terrible incident she cannot stop questioning herself why her boyfriend had to die and keeps looking for the person who killed him. At the Human Rights Violations Hearing of the TRC she explicitly expresses her concern: “I have been haunted ever since by the question – why? And that leads inevitably to – who? Who killed Paul and Jacob?” (90). Furthermore, when Anna talks to the journalist James Kay, she asserts that she could overcome her trauma if she at least knew the truth: “I sometimes imagine the release of it. The pure letting go I could feel if at last someone were to illuminate for me the one shadowy part of my life. *If only* someone would name it, explain the inexplicable,’ [...] ‘I think then I’d be free” (122). The fact that Anna is aware of the causes of her entanglement with the past also shows that she has already developed her own strategy to cope with her trauma.

Her situation displays certain similarities with that in which James Sizela and his wife find themselves. They too are in search of the truth about what happened to their son Steve fourteen years earlier. Without any clarity on this they are not able to come to terms with their traumatic past. On the basis of the unresolved trauma suffered by the characters in *Southern Cross* as well as *Red Dust*, it becomes clear that uncertainty is a primary cause of why so many South Africans have been deeply entangled with their painful past even until the present day. In this matter, direct reference is made in Jann Turner’s work, when Anna receives a call from her former friend and activist, Prudence: “It’s so weird when something makes no sense. You know? Sometimes I think that’s the cruellest thing they did, planting the questions and the confusion that will sit there for the rest of your life” (148).

This illustrates that time is closely connected with subjectivity and individual experiences. Thus, it is not a self-contained entity passing from the past through to the present and on to the future. On the contrary, it is rather the traumatised subject that determines the passing of time, depending on various factors like gaining clarity about the whereabouts of disappeared family members, for example.

We experience in this book how the elapsing of time cannot be controlled by external factors but exclusively by Anna Kriel herself. Anna knows that she is only able to free herself from the ever-present past, if she finds out who killed Paul and why he had to die. For that reason, she does everything in her power to find out the truth. The first occasion for hope is the arrival of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Johannesburg. Yet, she does not have any illusions about the Commission's capabilities, which are limited when it comes to investigating numerous unresolved crimes that took place during the apartheid era. Therefore, "it was not a new investigation she expected from this, but rather the publicity and the recognition for Paul and Jacob that might awaken consciousness or memory in someone who could shed light on the mystery" (64).

After she publicly expresses her concern during the Human Rights Violations hearing, James Kay approaches her with information concerning Paul's secret identity as a spy. Before he confronts her with the shocking message, he asks her whether she is sure she wants to know the truth, no matter how painful it might be: "And if that explanation turned out to be unpalatable, to be something you didn't want to hear?' He asked quietly. 'At least I would *know!*' she declared. [...]. But *could* you handle it?' Anna was thoughtful for a moment. 'Well, I've handled everything else,' she said" (122). Evidently, Anna's desire for clarification is stronger than that of being protected from information that could cast doubt on the image she has of Paul.

This firm determination to find her former boyfriend's murderer is also demonstrated when Anna decides to take the investigation into her own hands. Her main motivation is an article published by James Kay, which points out that Paul was a member of the Security Police (129). Thus, her primary concern is to convince the public of the contrary (145). However, Anna soon realises that she cannot hope to receive much support from the TRC: "The Truth Commission Investigations Unit had proved useless. They'd read the *Chronicle* article, but were swamped with other cases, it was unlikely they'd get to the case before the end of the year, they'd told her. She would have to do some investigating of her own" (145).

Even though the task of leaving the past behind is up to Anna, she does not go through the difficult process on her own. The person playing the most important role in this respect is James Kay. Initially, Anna regards him and his inquiry as a threat to Paul's good name (129). However, by raising the issue and indirectly encouraging

her to search for answers, the journalist assumes an essential role in overcoming her trauma.

Once Anna starts doing some research she gets caught up with the actual story behind Paul's murder. One major reason for this is that she receives valuable support from the imprisoned Colonel Ig du Preez. The fact that he is an erstwhile Police Colonel who worked for the apartheid government, means that Anna makes direct contact with one of the enemies they were fighting years ago (144). Thus, she gets information about people from the opposing side, who might have been involved in the case (162). Immediately she pursues du Preez's leads and meets former Security Police officer, Shane Fourie to question him. In the course of the encounter, she gradually gains an insight into the secret operations of the Security Police and eventually finds out that Paul was one of their members (179). Thus, Anna gets involved with her former boyfriend's secret life and she cannot help but to continue her search for the truth about the past, even when freeing herself from it is her most fervent wish. This is especially illustrated when Joe Dladla advises her to stop digging into the past: "'You have to let the past go, baby. Someday you're going to have to let it go.' She knew that he was right. But the past wouldn't let go of Anna" (240).

Anna's desire to cope with her trauma places her in a paradoxical situation. In fact, she can only be freed from the past if she engages herself in it, even if this is becoming increasingly difficult and painful. In the course of her investigation the protagonist has to handle the fact that Paul not only lied to her in terms of his occupation, but also regarding his love life. As she comes to know from Shane Fourie, Paul had an affair with Sherry Nel, Frans Nel's wife, while he was together with Anna (180). Hence, by wanting to uncover the truth at any cost, at the same time she takes on a heavy emotional burden. The painful consequences of her inquiry are particularly noticeable during her conversation with Sherry Nel who describes her time with Paul in great detail. Listening to her stories is hardly bearable for the protagonist as "[e]ach word [sticks] Anna like a knife" (282).

Sherry Nel then informs her that Paul's former handler is no one else than Joe Dladla, the man Anna got involved with after her boyfriend's death. Thus, she reveals that both of the most important men in her life betrayed her. As a result, she is disillusioned and questions her own decision to know the truth at any cost. At this

point, she is even convinced that uncovering the truth does not influence her healing process in a positive way: “‘The truth shall make you free.’ *What a load of crap*, she thought. The truth had bound and gagged and paralysed her; there was nothing liberating about the truth at all” (286).

However, it is James Kay Anna approaches once again when she is overwhelmed by the painful truth: “During her lonely hours of the long drive into the Free State, Anna had pictured him as her saviour, her sanctuary” (293). On that account he can be seen as the only person she entirely trusts. He is the one who gives her security and consequently the strength to continue her search for the truth.

As has been shown so far, Anna’s search for the murderer proves increasingly difficult and complex. Yet, due to the intricacy of the truth Anna is also enabled to relate to different viewpoints of people involved in the story. In this respect, the aforementioned assumption that the state of not knowing is the principal reason for Anna’s traumatic entanglement with the past, plays a decisive role. According to that it can be claimed that every piece of information, however painful or unpleasant, contributes to her moving on from the past. Hence, the truth in all its complexity is part of her healing process as it sets her free from uncertainty.

Thanks to the support of James Kay, Anna Kriel is eventually able to put the past behind her. In the novel, this fact is illustrated by the last dream she has of Paul:

‘It’s time for me to go,’ he said.

Anna nodded; this was something she already knew. It was to be their final leave-taking.

‘I’m sorry, Anna. I let you down. I let us all down.’

‘In the end it was yourself you betrayed.’ She struggled for words, choking on tears. ‘I do love you, Paul, I will always love you,’ she said.

Then someone came to take him away.

Anna woke up crying and certain that she would never dream of him again. She felt like an accident victim coming round in hospital. Aching and bewildered, but alive. It was over. (315)

From the dialogue between Anna and Paul it is clear that the protagonist is finally able to let go of the traumatic memories of her former boyfriend. Moreover, it is shown that their final conversation revolves around forgiveness. Hence, Anna is not only successful at leaving the past behind, she also found out the truth about the circumstances leading up to Paul’s death. What is further of decisive importance for her healing process is the way Anna deals with the truth. Only by choosing to forgive

him it is possible for her to come to terms with the past because this way she prevents the memory of him from awaking negative feelings in her.

5.1.3 The Ever-Present Past in Contemporary South Africa

In the novel the entanglement of past and present is further apparent from the aftermath of apartheid and the ever-present trauma in South African society. In these premises Jann Turner offers an insight into the difficult living conditions that South Africans are confronted with even years after the end of apartheid. In particular, she addresses several social problems which continue to exist in the country today, such as violence, criminality, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and racism. All of them can be seen as a consequence of centuries-long racial segregation as well as apartheid policy.

In order to make the social situations in post-apartheid South Africa accessible to an international reader, they are frequently portrayed through the eyes of the character James Kay. He returns to his home country for the first time since he moved to London thirty years ago (47). Thus, as for the readers, various everyday life situations in the new South Africa represent a hitherto unknown experience for the journalist as well. For instance, one of the first social problems he witnesses first hand on the streets of Johannesburg is violent crime:

Out of nowhere a man dashed in between the cars, past Ilse, straight up to the passenger window of the mustard-coloured VW Beetle in front of them. The sound as his wrapped hands broke through the window was a terrible splintering crash. The man grabbed and was gone, a brown handbag swinging from his shoulder as he raced across the intersection and down onto the freeway, disappearing from sight in seconds. It happened so fast that James was briefly uncertain of whether or not it had happened at all. (137)

After the incident James is startled and intends to go to the car owner's rescue. However, his colleague, who is clearly surprised by his intention, restrains him from offering help to the woman. Her reaction indicates that she does not regard crimes of that type as an unusual occurrence. This fact becomes clear when James reflects upon what he has just experienced: "It wasn't the incident that shook him as much as Ilse and the other driver's reactions, as if the robbery were so minor and commonplace it barely deserved a moment's reflection" (137).

It is not evident from the example above that the prime cause for the current situation in South Africa is the centuries-long racial segregation, as the country is not the only

one in which violent crimes represent an everyday experience. Hence, the fact that robberies have become part of normality does not show by itself that the entanglement of past and present is reflected in contemporary South African society. However, this particular issue was addressed in a report published by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg. Amongst other things, special attention was paid to a number of factors having considerable impact on the high level of violent crime in post-apartheid South Africa. It was claimed that these factors include, for instance, “inequality”, “high levels of poverty, structural unemployment and social and political exclusion and marginalisation” (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 8). Furthermore, they are the result of the country’s segregation policies in the past:

Violent crime in South Africa, as in other countries, is [...] the product of a variety of factors. While none of these factors are entirely unique to South Africa, the way in which they interact is shaped by South Africa’s apartheid past, specific features of the post-apartheid period, and other factors including in particular South Africa’s regional context. (10)

History does not leave contemporary South African society entirely unaffected. On the contrary, social issues like the comparatively high rate of crime and violence are the direct consequence of the past, which for this reason is not self-contained but overlaps with the present.

Southern Cross also addresses another serious problem that can be seen as a direct consequence of the past. Attention is drawn to the widespread HIV and AIDS prevalence. According to the UNAIDS report from 2012, South Africa was “the country with the largest number of HIV infections” worldwide and there were approximately 5.6 million people living with HIV (UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS). Jann Turner underlines these extremely high HIV/AIDS rates as it follows:

He’d visited the place often, but its capacity to shock seemed to increase, rather than diminish, each time. The place was one huge, haemorrhaging Emergency Room, where the overstretched doctors barely kept up. They no longer bothered to record if a patient was HIV Positive. Positive was the norm, not the exception and it was only Negative patients whose status was noted, and they were an ever-decreasing number. (134).

This quote concerns a situation in which James Kay witnesses the dramatic increase in the number of people infected with HIV. Emphasis is put on the ordinariness associated with circumstances that are regarded as exceptional in other countries.

The passage does not give information about the connection between the actual public health situation and the country's history. Nevertheless, the question has been examined in depth. Among others, the issue was addressed in an article created with the cooperation of various scientific institutions in South Africa, such as the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine in Durban. The analysis revealed that the rapid spread of epidemic diseases including HIV/AIDS is the result of the country's past: "The distinctive features of South Africa's history that account for the current health problems include racial and gender discrimination, income inequalities, migrant labour, the destruction of family life, and persistent violence spanning many centuries but consolidated by apartheid in the 20th century" (Coovadia et al.).

By this point it has been demonstrated that institutionalised racial segregation during the apartheid era significantly contributed to the problems society confronts today. It therefore stands to reason that racism is also a continuing phenomenon in South Africa, even if systematic marginalisation is theoretically a thing of the past. In the novel, examples illustrating individual racism are to be found. The following, for instance, shows a form of racism that can be encountered in everyday situations:

The auntie was piping shrilly about a murder that she'd either read or heard about. From what Anna could gather a man had been axed to death in his bed. His wife lying next to him had taken a few blows, but survived. 'It wasn't a kaffir who did it,' the auntie declared, stretching her bird-like neck, 'there was no *smell* you see?' [...] 'There would have been a smell if it had been a black. Né?' (Turner 166)

Here, racism is enacted in three different ways. First, the narrator refers to a black man using the term "kaffir", which is nowadays defined as "insulting" and "contemptuous" ("kaffir"). Also in this case the interconnection between former times, in which the abusive word acquired its negative connotation, and the present age is noticeable. Until 1994 the derogatory character of the word was reflected in the prevalent segregationist and racist politics in the country. This is not the case anymore. However, as is evident from the passage above, a change in the political situation does not prevent white people from using racist terms, or rather from continuing to hold onto ideas and attitudes from the past.

The second statement demonstrating the woman's racist position is the one in which she asserts that the murder was not committed by a black person. Excluding this option implies that she proceeded on the assumption that the murderer must have

been black. Finally, the third way in which racism is expressed in the passage from the book concerns a generalised negative characteristic the woman attributes to black people, namely, a distinctive “smell”.

The connection and the overlapping of past and present is an omnipresent phenomenon in South Africa. Especially through problems society is confronted with in everyday life, the traces of the past become apparent. In *Southern Cross* the readers’ attention is particularly drawn to the fact that issues such as violent crime, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and racism are not considered exceptional. Rather, these problems have become the norm. It can therefore be claimed that the nation has not yet come to terms with the trauma caused by systematic oppression of the black population in the past. Thus, the way trauma affects contemporary South African society stands in direct relation to temporal entanglement.

5.2 Entanglement of Victim and Perpetrator in *Southern Cross*

*It's a mistake to see it all in black and white
It never was and never will be
It's a thousand shades of grey*

Colonel Ig du Preez (Turner 195)

In *Southern Cross* the relationship between victim and perpetrator constitutes a further crucial element. It is exemplified in two different ways.

On the one hand, entanglement exists insofar as one single person frequently assumes more than one role. In the novel, this becomes evident as people who initially are undoubtedly regarded as victims, finally turn out to be perpetrators. Hence, the focus lies on the ambiguities concerning the category a person is assigned to. They are created by the fact that individuals change sides or work for both of them. In that way, Jann Turner clearly illustrates how easily people are misled

by the preconceived opinion that everybody can be seen either as victim or as perpetrator only.

However, on the other hand, interpersonal connections are established between individuals who worked for opposing sides during apartheid. Notably, the focus lies on bonds that are developed unintentionally. They are illustrated by encounters in which the protagonist, contrary to her expectations, feels sympathy for and is connected to people who were responsible for numerous atrocities in the past. This kind of unwanted entanglement is especially evidenced by the bond that exists between Anna and Colonel Ig du Preez.

5.2.1 Unexpected Role Changes: from Victim to Perpetrator

When it comes to categorising people as victims and/or perpetrators, reality turns out to be much more complex than initially expected. The author addresses this particular issue illustrating the different roles of the character Paul Lewis. Assigning him to one category or the other is particularly difficult as he worked for the underground resistance movement as well as for the Security Police during apartheid. Thus, it is not clear on which side he stands politically. Furthermore, his intentions cannot be explicitly determined since most of the action takes place ten years after his death and the readers do not get an insight into his point of view. Consequently, the main focus is on the way Anna experiences his role change in the course of the novel.

In the first part of *Southern Cross*, Paul is still alive and returns from a seventy-three day long detention (3). The only information that is given about him is that he is part of the underground resistance movement and therefore works against the apartheid regime (13).

However, what is evident right from the beginning is how much Paul means to Anna. For instance, during his detention just the thought of him gives her the strength to get through it (4). Furthermore, her certainty about the deep feelings she has for him is clearly illustrated: "I wonder, she addressed him silently, if there will ever be the day when I'm not grateful for you? She closed her eyes, smiling. No, there will never be such a day" (17). This also implies that she entirely trusts Paul and the idea that he might work for the other side is beyond her imagination. Even ten years after he was shot she is firmly convinced that Paul was part of the anti-apartheid movement only.

This fact becomes especially evident from the conversation Anna has with James, after he revealed to her that Paul might have worked for the Security Police too:

'I have no idea. But I do know that Paul was no spy. I *know* Paul,' [...]

'How can you be so sure, Anna? How can you be sure that you know anybody?'

She glared back at him with incomprehension. It was blindingly simple to her. 'You just do. You *know* when someone is lying to you.' (125-26)

The main reason why Anna is confident that her former boyfriend was not a spy becomes clear in the lines quoted above. In fact, she presumes that Paul could by no means have had a secret identity because she knows him and loves him so intimately. From that it can further be inferred that Anna has a clear preconceived idea of the characteristics of people standing on one side or the other.

She also leaves that impression on James Kay. This shows particularly after the former Security Police officer, Captain Frans Nel, applied for amnesty for having killed Paul and Jacob (199). On that account, Paul was no longer under suspicion of having worked for the Security Police. When the journalist hears the news, he reflects upon Anna's way of thinking: "This was the ending she wanted, James thought as he dialled her number. Clear cut. With good guys and bad guys and Paul's heroism intact. He was glad for her" (200). However, at that moment he does not know that Frans Nel actually did not kill Paul Lewis and Jacob Oliphant.

In the meantime Anna has already found out that Paul had a secret identity. In fact, she paid a visit to the erstwhile Security Police officer Shane Fourie, who disclosed the painful truth to her: "'That young guy. *Paul*. He was one of *ours*.' [...]" The words hit Anna like bullets, ripping through her flesh. She felt the blood drain out of her face, her tongue felt dry as ground glass and the air tasted like ash" (179). Clearly, she was deeply shocked and disillusioned by this information.

It is at this point, where the role Paul had been given completely changes. Whereas previously he has been considered an anti-apartheid activist and victim of the tortures of the Security Police, he is henceforth seen as a perpetrator working for the opposing side. In addition, Paul's killer must have had a different motive for murder from what was previously assumed. Consequently, he is no longer a victim who was killed because of his ideology and that died for the freedom of all South Africans. Hence, Paul is a perpetrator insofar as he betrayed the ideal of the resistance

movement. This is also what Anna reflects on when she sees a copy of the Freedom Charter in their living room:

'We the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people.'

The words vibrated with a different meaning for her now, for those were the words Paul had betrayed. *These freedoms we will fight, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty!* (190)

With regard to the way Anna deals with the shocking news, it is noticeable that primarily the reason for her bewilderment is not that her former boyfriend was a traitor. It is rather that she is not able to make sense of the fact that they were intimately connected and at the same time strangers to one another. Therefore, she calls her own discernment into question:

Anna sat down, struggling to take it in, to understand. She had given herself to Paul, entrusted him with her fragile, precious, imperfect self. All boundaries had fallen away and the feeling of knowing and being known so completely was headier than the highest high.

To learn that he'd betrayed her, that Paul was merely her fantasy left her desolate. He'd lived in another reality, her soul mate, her single sparking connection in the world. And she'd been alone all along, alone lying next to him, standing by him. He was supposed to have been the one, the only, who looked penetratingly and saw piercingly into her deepest self; her match, her equal, meeting her needs as much as his own, sometimes before his own. But he'd been on his own mission the whole time. (190)

It is clear that after Paul's secret identity as a spy was revealed he is no longer considered a victim only, in that he betrayed an ideal, his comrades of the resistance movement and finally Anna, the person who loved him most. Yet, the impression that Paul Lewis was a perpetrator is not conveyed clearly either. This is mainly because the author provides an insight into his personal history which sheds light on what caused him to join the Security Police and work as a spy for them. For instance, the reader gets to know that Paul had a tough childhood, left school at the age of sixteen and became addicted to marihuana. Subsequently, he dealt with drugs and served two prison sentences, one for drug possession and the second for dealing (119). As Anna learns from Shane Fourie, this was advantageous to the Security Police. To be precise, people like Paul who were disoriented and experiencing difficult life situations could be easily made to submit to their will:

‘Paul was a buttonhead when he started doing time; he was big into that stuff. People like that are useful. We kept him vrot for a while, then we took him off it. Did it *our way*. Made him grateful.’ A glimpse of the sadist in Shane emerged in the way he uttered those words. ‘We cleaned him up, taught him the rules and then gave him an early release. Conditional. *We* cleaned him to study at the university. We needed people there. Easy work if you ask me. But you had to be the right person for it.’ (183)

On the basis of the statement made by the former Security Police member, it appears that Paul did not decide to be a spy by choice. Thus, the truth that lies beneath the decisions Paul took and the actions he performed is much more complex than it first appears. Due to the disclosure of his past it becomes easier to develop understanding for the way he acted.

The closer Anna comes to the truth, the more the distinction between victim and perpetrator is blurred. As it becomes increasingly clear, all that matters to the protagonist is that he loved her. She obtains evidence concerning the authenticity of his feelings for her when she gets to know that Paul wanted to stop working as a spy and to “hand himself over to the ANC” (302). Consequently, she is also able to make sense of his last message before he left her forever. In fact, Anna realises that it was not intended to give courage to her when she was fearful. Rather, he was talking about the strength he gained from their love himself: “At last Anna understood Paul’s note on the shower curtain: ‘There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.’ And his depression and weird excitement the night before that day. There was a piece of Paul that really had been hers all along. Some of her faith in him and in herself was restored” (302).

Anna is finally able to forgive him. Furthermore, by stating that he was the only one he actually betrayed, she does not consider him either a good or an evil person. By facing up to the people and stories Paul got involved with during apartheid, the protagonist is no longer capable of assigning him to one category or the other. Instead, she comes to the conclusion that “[t]he truth ha[s] a complex of causes and the blame [is] too widespread to be meaningful.” (309)

5.2.2 Unexpected Entanglements of Victim and Perpetrator

During Anna’s search for the truth behind Paul’s murder, she also finds herself in situations in which she gets to know people, who are known as the cruellest

perpetrators of apartheid, from a completely different side. This is the case of Colonel Ig du Preez, “South Africa’s most notorious prisoner, apartheid’s most ruthless and effective assassin” (144).

In a 2006 interview about *Southern Cross* Jann Turner states that this character is the one “most closely drawn from life” and is “based on former Colonel Eugene de Kock, a man [she] met and spent a great deal of time with during the two years that [she] covered the Truth Commission” (Rosenow). She elaborates on this encounter in the article “Eugene: From Apocalypse Now to Scotland the Brave”, by giving a detailed account of the impressions she gained from the imprisoned criminal. The reason for her visits to the Pretoria Central Prison was that Eugene de Kock offered his help in identifying some of the Security Police officers who might have been involved in her father’s, Rick Turner’s, murder. Amongst others, Jann Turner describes that she was not prepared for his “politeness”, “intelligence” and his “shyness”. Moreover, she emphasises that she got to know him in terms of his personal interests, such as the music he listened to and the books he read, for example. However, it is evident that she still did not disregard the atrocities he committed against numerous people during apartheid (Turner, “Eugene: From Apocalypse Now to Scotland the Brave”). Thus, she illustrates that a connection can be established between people who were once working for opposing sides.

This unexpected entanglement between victim and perpetrator is particularly evident in the novel as well. Anna pays former Colonel du Preez a visit because she expects him to help her shed light on Paul’s assassination. Already in this regard close similarities with the author’s experiences are noticeable. Before their encounter, she only saw him once “during his trial” at which “[r]age and disgust and pure hatred had burned in her eyes when her glance fleetingly met his as he scanned the public benches” (Turner *Red Dust* 155). Otherwise put, the attitude she has towards Ig du Preez is entirely negative when she arrives at the prison for the first time. This implies that Anna considers him to be a perpetrator, “a person who carrie[d] out a harmful, illegal or immoral act” and who, according to that definition, is associated with specific character traits, such as evilness and unscrupulousness (“perpetrator”). By being considered as such, Colonel Ig du Preez is different from people who are not assigned to the category of perpetrators. This “action of making some group into a clear contrast to ‘us’” is termed “othering” (“othering”). Hence, before Anna’s first

encounter with the prisoner she also *others* him.

However, to her astonishment, du Preez's behaviour does not correspond to her expectations: "She'd assumed he'd be cold, bitter even crazed perhaps; the last thing she'd imagined was this disarming politeness and effusive courteousness" (Turner, *Red Dust* 160). Nevertheless, at the beginning of their conversation, she considers him to be the assassin having a large number of victims on his conscience. This becomes evident by the fact that Anna immediately remembers the story of a detainee who was brutally tortured by the Colonel, as soon as she sees du Preez' hands (159).

The protagonist is torn between two different feelings. She hates the prisoner for what he did but she also feels sympathy for him. Therefore, Anna is clearly confused when she leaves: "She walked to her car, disturbed by the whole encounter. She could not say that she *dis*liked him" (164).

One major reason for the sympathy Anna unexpectedly feels for one of the most dangerous assassins of apartheid is that the Colonel did not give her the impression of being the cold-hearted monster everybody knew he was: "Du Preez stood up first, awkwardly pulling his sweater down over the waistband of his pants and instead of a hulking beast Anna saw an eager little boy in front of her" (163). Thus, he does not give the appearance of being dangerous, but rather of being weak. In this sense, Anna's positive feelings for the prisoner are to be interpreted in terms of a mental process Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela analysed in her novel *A Human Being Died That Night: Forgiving Apartheid's Chief Killer*: "When violators of human rights allow themselves to be emotionally vulnerable, they are giving others the chance to encounter them as human beings" (16). In other words, by not meeting her expectations and displaying his sensitive side, the Colonel enables Anna to see weakness and consequently also humanity in him.

To a certain degree, she subconsciously stops othering du Preez. Instead of considering him as a person that is entirely different from her, she starts recognising some character traits in him that are similar to her own. In an interview from 2009, Annie Gagiano termed this process of rethinking pre-existing mental concepts by taking notice of features other than those attributed to perpetrators, 'de-othering'. (Borzaga, "De-othering the Perpetrator").

Even if it is hard for her to analyse her own feelings with respect to the most feared murderer, Anna visits him twice more. One of her main reasons is that the information he provided her with at their first encounter proved particularly useful for the protagonist's investigation. His cooperation strengthens the trust she has in du Preez. Consequently, Anna's attitude towards him continues to change. Apart from the fact that she starts de-othering the perpetrator, the gradual process Anna goes through is evident from her attempt to comprehend his viewpoint. In doing so, she reflects upon what has made him the person he is considered to be years after the end of the apartheid era.

It had been easy to understand apartheid. Easier if you didn't have much education. Like any authoritarian idea it was fervently expressed with much resort to myth and religion. Du Preez would have internalised that from a very young age. And when the time came he had the qualities that were needed for covert action, for the secret suppression of opposition. He was brave, a good leader, and he excelled at killing. You couldn't call such a man a psychopath. He killed within a context, for political masters who applauded him. For as long as it suited them. Anna had met politicians who showed more sociopathic tendencies than Du Preez. No, the Colonel was apartheid's creation, the National Party's bloody mascot. Discarded when the team plan changed. Now the only respect or attention he got was from the occasional sympathetic warder. (Turner 233-34)

As it is clear from the previous quote, the protagonist sees du Preez from an entirely different perspective than before. Initially Anna was only able to regard him as a perpetrator possessing exclusively negative characteristics. Besides, taking into consideration his point of view would have been inconceivable to her. Later, on the contrary, she tries to explain to herself how the man who always approaches her with kindness and respect could have been one of apartheid's most feared killers. Hence, she wants to understand him.

The more time Anna spends with Ig du Preez, the more she realises that he shares several behaviours and attitudes with her. Moreover, it becomes clear to her that it is not only he who has positive characteristics in common with people standing on the "good" side. On the contrary, she remembers a woman having the same attitude the Colonel was despised for:

She recalled a discussion about him at a Northern Suburbs dinner party. A pair of psychologists holding forth over expensive wine, talking psychopathy. One of them, the older man, insisting that it was important not to forget the child in Du Preez, the scared little boy looking for approval in any way he could

get it. The other, a younger woman, shouting, 'It's not our job to understand these people, it's our job to eliminate them!' It was the kind of thinking the Colonel himself had bought into. And look where that had got him. (235)

Anna comes to the conclusion that behaviour and traits are not assignable to one group or the other. As a matter of fact, the closer examination of an enemy reveals that people standing on different sides have numerous similarities and, thus, are deeply entangled with each other.

Before her third visit to the C-Max, Anna discovers that two people she trusted kept secrets from her. Firstly Paul, who turns out to have worked as a spy for the Security Police; secondly James, who is not willing to tell her what he found out with respect to Paul's death (268). Therefore, she feels betrayed and abandoned. Eventually, Anna is forced to continue the investigation on her own. Paradoxically, the person she approaches in her precarious situation is none else than Colonel du Preez (270). From this behaviour it can be concluded that Anna trusts the prisoner and that she has already established an emotional connection with her erstwhile enemy. However, even if she has already become aware of this intricate bond, she still fails to entirely understand it. During their conversation she directly addresses her concern:

'You know,' she said quietly, 'when I first saw you, at your trial, I hated you. I wished you dead.' [...] 'And here I am and here we are and we talk about being friends and you're my only ally in this investigation now.' She opened her hands in front of her, as if they might express the difficult thing she was trying to say. 'I've wondered sometimes if I would be able to talk to you like this if you'd killed Paul. And it *could* have been you who killed him.' [...] 'I don't think I could. Forgive you. And I can't ever for what you did, to other people, but somehow – well, here we are. Don't you find that strange?'

The Colonel shook his head. 'No, not really. It's because we belong to each other,' he said, 'like two sides of the same coin.' (275-76)

In the conversation above, Ig du Preez provides an explanation for the apparently inexplicable connection that exists between the two former enemies. According to him, their entanglement is created precisely because they were once opposing each other. To be exact, during apartheid they were both fighting for what they considered the good of the country. Hence, even though their views of what was best for South Africa differed fundamentally, they are still closely related to one another. Anna and the Colonel are both part of South Africa and its history, which implies that they equally share the trauma of apartheid.

6. Michiel Heyns' *Lost Ground*

Michiel Heyns' *Lost Ground* is the last novel analysed in this thesis. It differs from Slovo's and Turner's works in that the main focus lies on the forgotten past and identity of a South African exile. While the main characters of *Red Dust* and *Southern Cross* are haunted by their traumatic past and try all they can to come to terms with it, the protagonist of the present novel does not appear to be traumatised at all.

Entanglements with respect to trauma resulting from a long-term absence from the South African home are to be found. In this regard attention is primarily drawn to the crisis of identity of the main character, Peter Jacobs, which comes to light after his return to the native land. There, he intends to write about current racial attitudes in South Africa based on the murder of his white cousin by her black husband. During Jacobs' stay in the small town Alfredville, he unintentionally gets involved in the story and reveals that he is inextricably linked to the country. Thus, his expat identity is gradually deconstructed until his crisis is finally uncovered. Throughout this process readers also witness his mechanisms to protect his identity which was constructed and got an entirely different meaning in exile.

The plot of the novel can also be regarded as 'entangled'. On the one hand, it is intertwined as not only one, but several different plot lines are of central importance and, in the course of the novel, become mixed up in a complex way. The merging of these different versions of the story also contributes significantly to the creation of suspense. Some of them are invented by the protagonist and considerably deviate from the truth, such as the Othello plot he plans to use as a starting point for his article. Others revolve around Peter's investigation and his personal experiences. Yet, the closer Peter Jacobs gets to the undeniable truth, the more he realises that it is his own story he attempts to rewrite.

On the other hand, traumatic entanglements are reflected in the structure of the plot. It imitates the psychological condition of the traumatised main character with the aid of various narrative techniques. Suppressed memories of the past, for instance, frequently interrupt the chronological order of events in the novel. That way, the intrusive character of such thoughts and Peter's unconscious, deep connectedness with his native place are exemplified. However, his inner conflict is not only illustrated by rhetorical figures but also by the form of the plot. In general, the chapters are

reminiscent of diary entries which include descriptions of the progression of Peter's investigation, inner monologues and memories as well as emails addressed at his ex-boyfriend James. All of them represent parts of his identity which struggle continuously against each other. Thus, the form of the narrative is essential to the revelation of the character's mental state which is affected by the experiences made at home and in exile.

The last chapter is concerned with the entanglement of the past and the present. Peter's memories from his youth and the experiences he has twenty-two years thereafter provide readers with an insight into how the different attitudes prevailing in South African society have changed over time. It becomes clear that many changes have occurred. Nevertheless, some encounters make him believe that South Africans still hold on to notions deriving from apartheid. The more he gets involved with the story, the more he realises that neither have people completely changed their thinking, nor do they stick to the ideology of the past only. The past and the present rather overlap and cannot be considered independent of each other.

6.1 The Entangled Plot

6.1.1 Multiple Plot Lines

The freelance journalist Peter returns to South Africa as he expects to uncover a remarkable story of the circumstances surrounding the murder of his cousin Desiree. The main suspect in the case is her husband Hector Williams, the black police chief of Alfredville. Peter is convinced to have found parallels between the storyline of the crime taking place in Alfredville and the plot of Shakespeare's *Othello*, a black man who kills his white wife out of jealousy. He proceeds on the assumption that, like Othello, Hector Williams murdered Desiree because he could not endure the thought of her being unfaithful (108). Thus, he predetermines the plot and anticipates the outcome of the story. This also implies that the course of the story is up to the journalist who is completely in control of the situation.

Taking for granted the fact that he committed the murder Peter plans to focus on Williams' motive. Thus, his intention is to write a whydunit, rather than a whodunit: "The outcome is known; the story is in the why, not the who" (110). Peter has set

himself to determine what the murder implies with respect to “racial attitudes” in post-apartheid South Africa (107). He assumes that Hector Williams’ position in society as a black man had a negative effect on his self-esteem, that eventually turned him into a murderer: “What I’m interested in is the kind of insecurity that, even after he’s achieved total success, would still undermine his self-image to the extent that he’s driven to kill. As with Othello” (108).

This shows that Peter considers his inquiry as a form of collecting data for a social survey in the broadest sense. In this process he initially sees himself as an objective observer rather than the cousin of the murder victim. He claims that the only reason for the return to his native country is a promising topic behind the tragic occurrence. Consequently he regards the fact that the incident resulted in the death of a close relative less a painful experience but more as a fortunate coincidence. “At first my interest was, as you say, personal, but then I started thinking that the story had ... possibilities” (102).

Although Peter considers the plot he has in mind to be independent of his own story, he still claims that they are connected with each other to a certain extent. He is of the opinion that the story he plans to write starts with Desiree’s death: “[H]er death – let’s say the point at which her story intersects with mine” (106). Yet, it soon can be noticed that the different stories overlap in another respect too. Peter integrates more autobiographic elements into his constructed plot than he wants to admit or is even aware of. It is clear that his life in exile and the Othello plot have certain elements in common. For instance, in London, he had an interracial relationship with a wealthy and successful black Jamaican (112). Furthermore, the tragedy was of significance in his life because his ex-boyfriend auditioned for the role as Othello (113).

Even outsiders suggest that Peter’s article contains more autobiographical elements than he is aware of. This assumption is made by one of Peter’s first acquaintances, the psychologist Nonyameko. She guesses that his story revolves around the typical South African expat who comes back to his roots in order to find himself:

‘Oh the plot is standard ex-pat. We have had about twenty of those, treating us to their momentous return to the mother country and the examination of their own entrails and consciences. The details may differ but the essence is the same: a mixture of self-examination and self-congratulation, with poor tired old South Africa serving as both punch bag and security blanket. (28)

Thus, without knowing the journalist she assumes that he is the main character of the story. Although she might be mistaken about the plot Jacobs intends for his article, she nevertheless anticipates what his stay in Alfredville amounts to. As it turns out at the end of the novel, she is right about the fact that the time Peter spends in his home town results in a search for identity.

Eventually the plot develops differently from what Peter initially anticipated and he loses control of the story. From interviewing people about the murder theories come to light that deviate from his Othello scenario. The various ideas become deeply intertwined and it gets increasingly difficult to determine whether the actual occurrences are in line with Peter's theory. Bit by bit he comes to know that Hector Williams could not have killed Desiree and therefore, the basis for his hypothesis is invalid (184). In fact, the assertion made by the veterinarian, Henk Pretorius also holds true for Peter's way of proceeding: "Too many mistakes are made by people who are sure they've made the right diagnosis, and act on their diagnosis" (152). Moreover, it turns out that the writer is more involved in the case than initially thought. On the one hand, it concerns him because suspicion is cast on Bennie Nienaber, his close boyhood friend, and on the other because he unwantedly takes over the responsibility for the clarification of the murder. The reason for this is that each of the people he interviews supplies him with clues that are essential to the shedding of light on Desiree's death. All of them have reason not to go to the police and they burden Peter with the correction of the facts (185,197). Even Nonyameko, who always listens to him and offers him help in bringing his constructed identity into question, needs him to solve the crime (212). All of a sudden, the objective journalist becomes part of a plot he did not write himself. Now, he has to fit the pieces together into a coherent whole. Nonyamko comments on his situation in the following way:

'Oh dear, you really have gone and mixed yourself up in it, haven't you?' [...]
 'Look,' I say, 'I haven't *mixed myself up in it*. It's still only a story.'
 'In which you seem to be taking a leading part.'
 'I'm not *taking* it. It's being inflicted upon me.' (209)

It is clear from the quote that Peter refuses to accept that it is his duty to solve the crime. Yet, he is finally persuaded by the car guard Vincent who claims that "it is the duty of someone who knows the truth to make it known", to go to the police (231).

The expat is more mixed up in the story than he could have ever imagined. However, he comes to know that he not only took over the role of the detective but that he is in fact the key figure in the plot. As is revealed at the climax, Desireè was not killed by Bennie but by his wife. She was jealous of Desireè because Bennie was in love with her. At this point the journalist comes into play: in actual fact, it was him he loved and he saw Peter in Desireè because they looked alike (287). The supposedly neutral observer gradually gets entangled in the story until he finally gets “embroiled up to [his] ears” as he could be blamed for the murder itself (295).

6.1.2 Entangled Plot Structure

The second perspective from which the plot can be seen as entangled relates to its formal structure. Here, ‘entangled’ refers to the structure of the narrative which appears nonlinear by the co-occurrence of the action taking place in the present as well as of memories from the past emerging. This entanglement of seemingly independent events occurring at different times reflects trauma to a great extent. In fact, “narrative rupture[s]” in the form of flashbacks, for example, represent a major characteristic of trauma literature (Visser 6). The reason for this is that the use of such stylistic devices is generally considered an appropriate way to illustrate the “impact of trauma”. Thus, trauma novelists give shape to different kinds and effects of traumata. As a consequence, “temporality and chronology collapse [...] and narratives are characterised by repetition and indirection” (Whitehead 3).

Also Michiel Heyns’ work has the structure of a trauma novel. The story is told from the present point of view but it is also frequently interrupted by memories and thoughts of past events. The plot of *Lost Ground* starts with Peter Jacobs’ arrival at the Queen’s Hotel in Alfredville and readers are informed about the impression the place of his past makes on him. It is striking that, already the sight of this first place he visits at his home town, triggers memories about Bennie. Peter’s first flashbacks are primarily about the time he spent with his friend. After these scenes, he remembers how he got to know Bennie. This shows that the narrative is non-chronological on two different levels. On the one hand, the flashbacks disrupt the linear succession of events and on the other hand, the memories do not come flooding back in chronological order either.

By means of the way in which the retrospections are arranged Peter's process of becoming aware of his problem is reflected. This is clear from the content of his memories: while initially he remembers seemingly random experiences he had with Bennie, the flashbacks include deep feelings towards the end of the story. For instance, in one of his last memories he expresses how much his friend means to him: "I love you, Bennie, I'd take you anywhere if I could" (262). Thus, the more the plot unfolds, the more Peter rediscovers his deep emotional connection with Bennie and his native country. Eventually, the last flashback revolves around the moment when he informs his friend of the fact that he would leave him and South Africa. This moment can also be seen as the origin of Peter's crisis as it is the point at which he severs the link to his home. The order in which the memories are evoked therefore gives some indication of the gradual revelation of his trauma.

Apart from flashbacks in the form of memories of Peter's past, the narrative displays further stylistic features of the trauma novel. One of these, which, according to Visser, represents a "primary formal criteri[on] for 'authentic' trauma literature, is aporia (6). The figure of speech expresses "real or pretended doubt or uncertainty" ("aporia"). In this way, uncertainty of traumatised people concerning their identity can be expressed in an illustrative way. In *Lost Ground* the rhetorical figure is also used to underline the protagonist's self-doubt and constitutes an essential part of the narrative. Frequently the first person narrator asks rhetorical questions which are almost exclusively addressed at him and which generally revolve around defining his identity. Among others, he brings into question whether he has a history (Heyns 35), what would have happened and whether he would be the same person if he hadn't moved to London (182) and why he put his past behind him so easily (199).

As in the case of traumata encountered in real life, the main objective to be attained by fictional characters is to come to terms with painful memories and to redefine the self. It now appears that this is also what is reflected by the formal structure of trauma novels since the plot is constructed according to the symptoms of trauma. This fact is also emphasised by Granofsky who states that, "[t]he primary vehicle for the plot in the trauma novel is the search for an integrated, stable identity" (18). This can also be noticed in *Lost Ground*. As pointed out in the previous chapter, the story of Peter Jacobs' cousin unexpectedly becomes his own. Even though he is not consciously in search of a stable identity he is confronted by and has to deal with this issue.

Even though psychotherapy aims at the overcoming of traumata, this does not always hold true for trauma novels as “modern and postmodern novels also resort to narrative techniques that open up these structures, undermine containment, and prevent closure” (Mengel 145). Also in the South African context, numerous authors make use of such storytelling methods to demonstrate the complex nature of South African traumata. Michiel Heyns is also one of them. In *Lost Ground* closure is not achieved. After his return to South Africa the protagonist is forced to face up to an identity crisis which he thought was non-existent. Thus, he does not come back to come to terms with a trauma but the problem only comes to light after his arrival. At the end Peter Jacobs is shattered and he becomes aware of his identity crisis. This is clear from the last paragraph of the novel:

‘No,’ I say, ‘everything is not all right. Everything is a fucking mess.’ I try to laugh, but it emerges as a stifled kind of cry, as of a distressed animal. And then the shell cracks, my time-hardened carapace, defence against feeling too much and showing too much, and I am left exposed on some desolate shore, delivered over the furies that attend on human misfortune or misdeed. I cover my face with my free hand, and feel my body shaken with a violence of emotion I’ve never allowed myself, a flood of inarticulate horror overwhelming me. [...] I seem to be making a scene, and force of habit tries to draw me back into the realm of expected behaviour. But more strongly than habit, I feel the relentless pull of loss, of the losses I have caused and the losses I have suffered, the drift towards annihilation that nobody and nothing can stay. But I hold onto Nonyameko’s hand, for all the world as if I could thus anchor myself to some saving vestige of identity, as if her grasp could keep me from being swept away into oblivion. (Heyns 297)

Peter’s mental breakdown towards the end of the novel also underlines the complexity of trauma as its symptoms can be suppressed for years. Consequently also the healing process, if it takes place at all, cannot be generalised and claimed to be the same for each individual. Trauma is rather multi-layered and entanglements cannot be easily resolved or put into words.

The form of the narration is another integral component of the plot. Like the rhetorical figures analysed so far, the formal structure also gives some indication of Peter Jacob’s trauma and identity crisis. It can be claimed that the plot consists of diary entries as the action in each chapter takes place on different days or at least at different times of the day. Furthermore, the story is told from the first-person point of view. Due to the fact that the diary is the medium of self-reflection it functions as the “empathic listener”, with which Peter is able to share his most intimate feelings and

thoughts (Mengel 144). The entries include reflections and dialogues mainly revolving around Peter's research and his memories from the past. Thus, they deal with the examination of his lost South African identity. The plot is further made more complex by the e-mails Jacobs regularly exchanges with his ex-boyfriend, James. In contrast to the self-reflexive and also informative diary entries, the content of the emails is directed at James and Peter respectively. By means of this type of exchange, a connection to his life and identity in Britain is established. The switch between Peter's reflections and the superficial communication with James sheds light on how important his past really is for him. Furthermore, these different forms of the narration make his identities clearly visible. Contrary to the self-reflexive parts, the emails represent his self in the present that struggles against the idea of Peter getting reconnected with his past because it fears that old wounds are opened again: "*Your home town seems to have pressed you to its bosom with a vengeance, what with old friends and new acquaintances. Beware the embrace of the past- it's a nostalgia trap, SpiderWoman and vampire all in one*" (Heyns 137). Thus, the mere form of the novel reflects the entanglement and the inner conflict between the main character's different identities. His search for identity is discussed in further detail in chapter 6.2.1.

6.2 Home and Exile

Another major theme of *Lost Ground* is the revelation of the South African exiles' trauma and its complex entanglements. In this case, the intricacy of trauma is intensified by the distance between people and their homeland. It is therefore directly linked to the uprooting from the country of origin and the new life in exile. Furthermore, the psychological burdens exiles are subject to frequently go along with a crisis of the self. The reason being that personal identity is, to a great extent, constituted by national identity. Being separated from the native country therefore leads to a crisis that eventually results in the desire to redefine one's own identity. The difficulty behind such a particular life situation is also emphasised by Edward Said who claims that exile "is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home [...]" (137).

The main character of the novel spent more years in exile than in South Africa. Due to the fact that he left his home country and tried to forge a new identity in London, he is what Edwards defines as a “diasporic person”. As such the protagonist of *Lost Ground* is “displaced from a homeland that is connected to language, religion and a sense of cultural belonging” (150). However, Jacobs initially does not seem to be aware of the psychological consequences of being uprooted. Thus, the book is not primarily concerned with his life abroad and the psychological burdens associated with it. Rather, the main focus is on the exiles’ return to his homeland where traumata caused by displacement and the long-term stay abroad come to light for the first time. In his native place, Alfredville, he is then no longer able to ignore his deep connection with South Africa as well as the traumatic entanglement of his identities as South African and exile.

6.2.1 ‘In-Betweenness’ and the Search for Identity

The reason for his migration to England was that he refused to join the South African army and fight for the apartheid regime. Thus, he left South Africa out of conviction, an act he refers to as “principled emigration” (Heyns 23). Before leaving he explains his motive to his best friend Benny: “I don’t want to go to the bloody army and fight in a war I don’t believe in for people I despise” (261). Due to his father’s British citizenship, he had the possibility of moving to London and studying there. Thus, he was one of the few privileged war resisters who would not be sentenced to six year’s imprisonment as a consequence of conscientious objection (259).

Before his departure Peter Jacobs was looking forward to moving abroad because he thought that studying in England could be “interesting” (260). Therefore, it seems as if he was glad to be able to leave South Africa behind and that he did not give much thought to his home town. This impression is also conveyed when he reflects about his emigration: “I missed Alfredville for about six months, I suppose; Bennie I missed on and off for a year or two” (199). Yet, when he returns to Alfredville after twenty-two years, readers soon notice that he did not get what he was hoping for from his life in London. In fact, it becomes clear that an essential part of his history is missing due to his absence from home:

[H]ave I even got [a history]? Of course I have a personal history, in the sense that everyone has one, certain things have happened to me since birth, other

things haven't, and sometimes I think the ones that haven't are more significant than the ones that have, a kind of negative history, then. My dear parents, whom I love with a kind of exasperation bordering on despair, saw to it that nothing ever happened to me, even at the price for shipping me off to England: that ultimate act of parental concern and renunciation that has sent generations of South Africans to seek security and opportunity elsewhere. But had I stayed in Alfredville, would I have had a more eventful existence? (35)

The above quote indicates that the experiences he has not gone through due to his emigration are more relevant than those he has gained so far. Furthermore, he stresses his existence which he obviously considers as less meaningful in exile. This too, can be seen as an indication of his notion that he was missing important identity forming experiences as he was isolated from home. Thus, to a certain extent, he regards his identity as insignificant and indefinite. Concerning this matter, Oha analysed the changes in self-perception which occur as a result of the long-term absence from people's native countries. In the following the author expresses how exiles are torn between different identities: "Exile, as a removal from home, orchestrates an *in-betweenness*: the exiled person is neither here nor there, even in the choice of language to express self. Exile is *somewhere*, but, psychologically the exiled person is *nowhere*" (87). Thus, uprooting from one's homeland on the one hand and the attempt to take roots in a new country on the other, entails that exiled people have no definite anchor anymore. As a result, difficulties arise when it comes to positioning oneself in-between the different cultures that are imposed and at the same time substantially contribute to the formation of the self. The fact that Peter Jacobs, as a diasporic person, has different identities, is illustrated when he unpacks his bags at the hotel in South Africa: "Odd, to find things that I packed in London now here, like a separate identity on a parallel trajectory across the world" (14).

Regarding the complex nature of diasporic identities which are characterised by heterogeneity, Stuart Hall asserts that "The diaspora experience [...] is defined [...] by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*" (235). According to that, Peter's identity is also multifaceted and necessarily has to be made up of different cultural identities. The numerous designations for Peter Jacobs appearing in the novel, are indicative of this fact. Amongst others, he is given the names "Jakes" (Heyns 11), "Master Peter" (81), "*Pieter*" (83), "Saffer honky" (96), "newshound" (186), "journalist" (136), "Mr. Wiseguy"

(196). Talking to Nonyamko even Peter himself claims that more than one factor constitutes his identity:

'is national identity the only kind of identity?' [...]

'It is the first one' [...] 'The others follow on from that.'

'I'm sorry, I just don't agree. I have a social identity, a sexual identity, a professional identity, a racial identity ... I even have a *name*, for heaven's sake. I have a bloody *passport* to prove it.' [...]

And where, in the midst of all these identities, is the one you call yourself?' (96-97)

Peter disagrees that the assertion that national identity is the most essential one to define the self. Instead, he insists on the fact that all his different identities are equally important. However, Nonyameko's question also indicates that it could be hard for him to say who he really is due to these multiple identities.

Apparently, the protagonist does not perceive the in-betweenness as a psychological burden. However, it can be claimed that he found a way to cope with his situation while he is in denial about the fact that he is still deeply connected with his home. Oha comments on this behavioural pattern in the following way: "Although the exiled person may design coping strategies to deal with *in-betweenness*, including trying to assimilate the culture of the context of exile, the *nowhereness* persists with the performance of memory and longing for home" (87).

One way of handling the situation of being torn between two different cultures is to prefer one country to the other. According to Crossley this behaviour is displayed by numerous exiles and is referred to as the 'Expatriate Syndrome'. More precisely, it "is a condition in which many expatriates see mostly either the best of their own nationality and the worst of the locals, or the opposite way around" (74). The protagonist of *Lost Ground* clearly belongs to the group of people who prefers life in exile over that in South Africa. Frequently, his statements give some indication of his indifference towards his home town (Heyns 102). Peter's thoughts also illustrate that he looks down upon the residents of Alfredville and their culture, as, for example the magazines popular there (163).

Taking into consideration Peter's life in Britain, several aspects still point towards in-betweenness. The state of being nowhere is reflected by the fact that he is noncommittal, both professionally and privately. Due to the fact that he does not

seem to have a clear position in these areas of life, he is lost to a certain degree. For instance, he is reluctant to specify his occupation. Without much conviction he claims to be a “freelance feature writer”, since he does not consider himself either a writer or a journalist (29). Instead of deciding upon one of them he steers the middle course. At that point it could be argued that the choice to professionally position himself somewhere in-between the occupational categories is, as a matter of fact, a decision as well. However, the inability to clearly define himself with respect to his profession, points towards a fragile identity. Already at the beginning of the novel he is confronted with the question of his identity by Nonyameko: “So you are a writer of sorts and a journalist of sorts. What kind of identity is that?” (29).

The instability and in-betweenness of Peter’s self in exile is further reflected by his sexuality. He has been in a relationship with a man for five years (111). Edwards points out that in literature homosexuality is frequently a way to underline the heterogeneous nature of diasporic identities (156). On two accounts, Peter’s sexual identity in Britain can be seen as a direct contrast to the traditional heteronormative attitudes prevailing in his home town at the time when he emigrated. On the one hand, because in South Africa same-sex relationships were not tolerated until the end of apartheid and in England, on the contrary, Peter was free to live out his sexuality. On the other hand, he resists the segregationist ideology of South Africa by having a relationship with a black man. Hence, due to the civil liberties in exile Jacobs has the possibility of freeing himself from the restrictions he faced in Alfredville. This absolute boundlessness is also apparent from the fact that in England he no longer has to decide upon his sexual orientation. Therefore, as in terms of his occupation, he chooses not to commit himself regarding his love life either:

The somewhat unclear direction of my sexuality, too, seemed not to be a problem here, where everything was permissible and experimentation was encouraged. I discovered somewhat to my bemusement that I was, if not exactly courted, then at any rate in moderate demand, at parties and in pubs, both by women and by men. I found that I could give and receive pleasure from both, and decided that the fuss about sexual orientation was a hangover from a puritanical age when human diversity was regarded as subversive. As far as I was concerned, it was not yet necessary to choose. (Heyns 199)

Peter’s decision against life in South Africa including the limitations of apartheid and for a new one in England where he enjoyed unprecedented freedoms has to be

viewed from two angles. It may be true that he is no longer subject to restrictions; however, as a result of the sudden freedom concerning his sexuality as well as the choice of his partner he does not seem to be able to take any decision at all. In the case of Peter Jacobs the possibility of self-determination therefore seems to have disorientation as a consequence.

Furthermore, his general instability and the fact that he is not fully aware of who he really is, becomes apparent from his behaviour in the relationship. As Peter shares with Nonyameko, his former boyfriend James frequently complained about his "lack of emotional commitment": "He said it was like trying to have a relationship with a traffic light, all go one second, all caution the next and then total no-go. He said he was in a state of perpetual exhaustion trying to catch the green light before it changed" (111).

However, his behaviour in the relationship can only partly be explained by the heterogeneous nature of his identity in exile. Another reason for Peter's inability to entirely devote himself to another person is that he has not been able to leave the relationship with his boyhood friend Bennie behind. According to the information given about his past in Alfredville, Peter's relation with Bennie was more than a friendship. Repeatedly, the fact that he felt attracted to him is underlined by detailed descriptions of Bennie's physical appearance (53). Without admitting to his attraction towards his friend, Peter gradually became aware of his homosexuality during the intimate moments they spent together in their youth. For instance, when they drove around with Bennie's motorbike Peter "enjoyed the closeness of the physical contact, without pondering the significance of [his] enjoyment" and "instinctively shied away from giving a name to [his] feelings for Bennie" (58). Being close to his friend therefore evokes the most intense feelings in him. This is particularly emphasised when Peter remembers the night they were swimming naked: "Floating in the darkness, or in the light of half a moon or a full moon in the still heat of a Karoo summer night heavy with the scent of syringa, Bennie's body flashing luminously next to me, I thought I couldn't ask for more from life" (59).

Although Peter claims to have forgotten Bennie after two years in England, it seems as if he has just suppressed the memory of his friend (199). Bennie is clearly more important to him than Peter is aware of because after his return, he immediately remembers a situation with his schoolmate (6). Moreover, Bennie appears to be the

person who had a formative influence on Jacobs as he is the only one he remembers from his schooldays:

I try to people the place with memories, summon up the figures that then seemed the arbiters of my happiness, that in some sense must have contributed to making me what I am. But they present themselves as inchoate, amorphous, blurred by time into a slightly resentful, muttering crowd, asserting vague claims that I don't know how to meet. The only one that emerges from the haze with any clarity or individuality is Bennie, who stands before my mind's eye with his insouciance undiminished by time. (50)

This in turn makes clear that social contact is another crucial identity-forming factor that goes hand in hand with national identity. For Peter, the person he associates with home is Bennie as all his memories triggered by different places in Alfredville are concerned with their shared experiences.

6.2.2 Return Home: Revealing Trauma

Like numerous contemporary South African novels, *Lost Ground* addresses the return of an emigrant to his homeland. In the case of many characters in these books the major motivation for doing so is an internal need to get back to the roots of their identity and rediscover a feeling of belonging. In that way South African exiles attempt to work through their traumata caused or intensified by the long-term absence from home. Michiel Heyns' novel revolves around this main theme as well. However, in contrast to figures in other works of that genre, the objective of Peter Jacobs' return is not the working through of his trauma. It is not until the plot unfolds differently than he initially assumed that he becomes aware of the fact that his emigration represents a heavy psychological burden for him.

6.2.2.1 The Constructed Truth

At the beginning of his stay in Alfredville, Peter is indifferent about his native place: "I grin inwardly about my dramatisation of the landscape, really just my self-dramatisation projecting itself upon insentient soil and sky. Having returned after twenty-two years of self-imposed exile, I'm trying for an emotion; the truth may be that I don't feel anything in particular other than the heat and dust" (62)

Peter's intention is to write an objective report about the social position of black people in post-apartheid South Africa. In order to be able to analyse the current race relations in Alfredville in the role of an uninvolved bystander, Peter disapproves of the idea that his own story gets mixed up with it: "[I]t's all muddled up in my mind, the fact that the assignment is here where I grew up, so I'm trying to keep my personal history out of it" (33). He even has a negative attitude towards the fact that other authors write about their personal stories: "I am put off by the self-consciousness of it all. *My Traitor's Heart, Country of My Skull* – why this solipsistic appropriation? Can't I write the country's story without first making it mine?" (65). It is conspicuous that he devotes special attention to that issue. In fact, his defensive attitude towards the entanglement of his past and the incidences in his home town seems to reflect more an internal need than simply the desire to write an unbiased article. It appears as if he does not want to be confronted with his history because that way he risks that old wounds become reopened.

Moreover, it is striking that Peter advocates the idea of reality as a construct. In particular, this is indicated by the fact that he considers the truth behind the murder irrelevant. In his view, his theory of what happened to Desiree is more than sufficient to come up with an informative article. In fact, he is averse to bringing the obvious into question. In this respect, a parallel can be drawn between his theory and his personal story. Like the circumstances surrounding Desiree's death, his own reality can be seen as a construct too. This is also clear from Noyameko's reaction to Jacobs' rhetorical question. It can be interpreted as another allusion to Peter's personal psychological conflict:

'And haven't we been taught that all truth is merely a construct?'

'Sorry, I am from the old school. I believe in the unconstructed true and false and right and wrong and even black and white. I was a revolutionary, remember.' (110-11)

Peter's firm determination to protect himself from being mixed up in the murder of his cousin is also evident from the way he wants to proceed with his investigation. Instead of verifying the theory that Desiree's husband is the murderer, and thus focusing on the who, he ignores this question and exclusively occupies himself with the why. To ensure that no doubts arise about the fundamental assumption that Hector Williams is the murderer, the protagonist does not expend much energy on interrogating him. Thus, already the information underlying the story he attempts to

write is incomplete and unverified. This fact is revealed by the psychologist Nonyameko, even before Peter engages himself in interviewing other inhabitants of Alfredville:

‘The murderer, or alleged murderer, would seem to be a pretty essential element of the story.’

‘Please don’t depress me. I’m hoping, if the worst comes to the worst, that I’ll be able to reconstruct his part in it.’ (110)

His intention to make up the role of the most important character in the story can be considered as closely related to his own story. He, too, avoids asking himself who he really is. Thus, he fears to be confronted with the fundamental question of identity which would shed light on his identity crisis. In the introduction of the *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* the importance of the question is emphasised: “Identity involves peoples’ explicit or implicit responses to the question “Who are you?”” (Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles 2).

6.2.2.2 The Deconstructed Truth

Yet, there remains the question of the real reason for Peter’s return. Initially, his motive seems to be the article because he confidently talks about his project. He also claims that another decisive factor for his unexpected homecoming is the separation from his partner in London (Heyns 111). Yet, already at the beginning it appears as if these are not the main motives and part of what he believes to be the truth only. Peter has not shown the slightest inclination to return for twenty-two years and has not even missed his home (199). It is therefore especially striking that, all of a sudden, he decides to go back to Alfredville for no other reason than an interesting topic for his article.

In actual fact, Peter’s main interest does not lie in writing the story. This is obvious from the huge amount of time and energy he spent researching the facts behind Desiree’s murder before his arrival. Nonyameko makes him aware of his behaviour when Peter details the progression of his inquiry: “My, you really did take an interest. One might even call it a morbid interest” (102). He is attracted by the place of his childhood with which he is deeply connected. Although he is not able to put that bond into words it is powerful enough to lead him to return. It can be claimed that Peter denies the fact that his personal story, which began in Alfredville, is the only reason

why he came back at all. “And what brings you to Alfredville?’ [...] This is the question that more than any other I anticipated, and I have decided to take refuge in vagueness, leaving my interlocutors to place their own constructions on my motives” (84). Due to the fact that Peter does not exactly know why he returned but subconsciously expects that Desiree’s murder is not the only reason, he leaves the question to other people. In that way he gradually gets to the bottom of his trauma.

At a certain point of the story, Peter is no longer able to deny Alfredville and everything he experienced there, especially his time with Bennie, as a crucial part of his identity. Retrospectively he has even got the impression that his life in Britain was rather insignificant and not part of his real self.

I think of writing to James and explain to him, and to myself really, my sense of being embroiled in a story that I thought I’d merely come to report. But there is too much that needs explaining, the place that Bennie used to occupy in my life. I don’t think I ever even told James about Bennie in London, he seemed impossibly remote, a dim memory of a disowned past. And now it is James and our London life that seem dim and distant. The Maida Vale tube station with its perpetually draughty vestibule, the hay-fever inducing plane trees in Randolph Avenue, our flat in Maida mews with its two hours of sun in summer and pervasive gloom the rest of the year: these seem unreal, part of somebody else’s existence, somebody to whom it is difficult to ascribe a name and identity. I myself, from this perspective, seem insubstantial. Can I really be so fickle? (198-99)

Apart from the fact that he becomes aware of his problem to make out his identity, Peter also admits that his life in Britain was not as unburdened as he pretended it to be. It is again in the presence of Benny, that the main character is able to confess to that fact:

‘People do leave, you know, they don’t stay in the same place for ever, which doesn’t mean they don’t miss the people they leave behind, which doesn’t mean they don’t love them, which doesn’t mean they are not bloody *lonely* much of the time. Who was it who said somebody who emigrates becomes a foreigner in two countries?’ (236-37)

Although Peter does not directly refer to himself he makes it quite clear to Benny that it is him whom he is talking about. With that said, Peter’s true intentions for his return gradually come to light.

After Bennie’s suicide, Peter finally seems to realise that he came back because he was in search for the past he had left behind and ignored for more than twenty years.

He also admits to himself that his boyhood friend is not only part of his identity but that he is also what he connects with home:

And yet that is what I have found: that I lost something years ago that I haven't been able to replace, and if that something isn't altogether Bennie, it is what he represented to me then, though I had no idea of it all the time: the unfettered exploration of life, the life of the senses, the unexamined joy of daily companionship in that exploration. (274)

Yet, even though he seems to be able to put his problem into words, and to have fully understood it, it is not until Bennie's wife confesses to having killed Desiree that he conveys the impression of feeling the pain he has suppressed for so many years. The reason why her words hit Peter so hard is that she holds him responsible for his cousin's, as well as for Bennie's death (288). Although he is conscious of the fact that he did not kill them, he still secretly knows that she is right to a certain degree. It is as if the past he has ignored for more than half his life, overwhelms him and forces him to open his eyes and accept it as an essential part of his present life. In the end, only Bennie's suicide makes him realise that he is undeniably connected with South Africa. That he is severely shattered by this recognition is evident from the fact that for the first time Peter is left speechless: "I am drained, too devastated even to feel grief or shock or outrage. I have no volition, no identity even" (291).

It is obvious that this loss of identity is directly related to the loss of home when he reflects about the outcome of the story and his plans for the future with Nonyameko. Bennie's death and the deep connection between the two friends that it symbolises, seems to give rise to uncertainty about where his true home is. In this sense, it is clear from the following quote that his thoroughly constructed reality collapses and what he has thought to constitute his home and identity, now appears insignificant to him.

'I don't *want* to go anywhere. But I'll head down to Knysna to see my folks. And then it's back to London I suppose.'

'You suppose? Isn't that where your home is?'

'I suppose. But I'm not quite sure what that means any more.'

'Well, home usually means something quite specific!'

'Like...?'

'Like where you have your house, your job, your friends, the place where you know where to go if you need to buy a pair of shoelaces.'

'My home is a flat I used to share with James, and don't much fancy inhabiting on my own. My job is freelance journalism, which I can do anywhere

I can plug in my computer. My friends were my and James' friends, who I suspect find him by far the more entertaining of the two of us.' (295-96)

6.3 Past and Present in *Lost Ground*

So far, Peter's search for identity has been analysed. The focus was on the major reasons for his crisis and the process of his becoming aware of it. Amongst others, the in-betweenness of his identity was illustrated. It can be considered a result of his twenty-two-year-long stay in another country surrounded by a society with values completely different from those prevailing in South Africa. He returns to his native country, his last memory being South Africa under apartheid. The present chapter is concerned with Peter's impressions about the changes that the country has undergone as well as with the way in which the trauma of apartheid is still perceptible in society.

In contrast to the entanglement of the past and the present illustrated in *Southern Cross*, *Lost Ground* depicts this characteristic of contemporary South Africa not in an urban but in a rural environment. While Jann Turner draws the readers' attention to societal problems such as illnesses, Michiel Heyns foregrounds the villagers' attitudes towards same-sex relationships for example. Yet, subjects that both of the novels bring up are racism and race relations. It is thus demonstrated that even though some issues may vary according to the density of population, racial attitudes reflect how the past and the present overlap in places all over South Africa today.

For the readers similarities and differences between past and present existing in the little dorp can be easily understood because the narration frequently switches between memories of former times and impressions he presently experiences. Already in the first sentence of the novel, attention is drawn to the hotel which is not as he remembers it: "The Queen's Hotel has clung onto its name, but, like a widow cutting loose in middle age, has in every other respect gaily abandoned its former identity" (5). Then again, he passes buildings that look exactly the same as they did when Peter left the country (48). Thus, some places have changed and others don't. This also holds true for the attitudes Peter comes across in Alfredville.

The transition from past times to the present but also the way in which history has left its traces in Alfredville, is especially apparent from the race relations. As already

pointed out, it is Peter's intention to analyse this particular issue. In the role of the outsider, he has no insight into the attitudes prevailing in South Africa. All he knows is the South Africa of his past on the one hand and Britain on the other. For instance, he grew up with the concept of absolute categories. These strict distinctions were not only made between people with different skin colours but also between the different social strata. Bennie's parents, for instance "were poor: in the white community in those days being *poor* was an absolute category, like being *retarded* or *crippled*" (54-55). In England, on the other hand, he was not subject to any restriction of the personal freedom and everybody was tolerated (199). Thus, he witnessed either the strict and conservative way of living or the one in which people earned respect because they were different.

This might also be the reason why he thinks that the changes the country has undergone with respect to interracial relations must have been complete or have not taken place at all. He does not take the possibility into consideration that neither of the options applies to the actual situation in Alfredville. This is also what Joachim, who runs the hotel, notices when they talk about the murder: "Shit, man, five minutes ago you thought Alfredville was okay with mixed marriages, now you think somebody murdered your cousin because she married a black man. Try for an in-between position, man. It's called moderation" (69).

More than a decade after the end of apartheid this entanglement of the past and the present is noticeable by the way people think about interracial relationships. Opinions among the inhabitants of Alfredville regarding this issue strongly diverge. On one side, racial attitudes of apartheid are still deeply rooted in society. This is evident from the way Peter's relatives talk about black people. His aunt, for instance signifies that Hector was inferior and incompatible with her daughter because he was not familiar with their way of behaving: "he didn't really understand our ways, the things that make us *us* [...]" (89). Moreover, his uncle makes racist statements such as: "I suppose he ate raw meat in the jungle with all the other terrorists" (89).

On the other side, contrary to his expectations, Peter comes across people who do not hold onto the way of thinking deriving from the past. One of them is Joachim who has a relationship with Boris, his black employee at the hotel (248). This is not the only time Jacobs encounters homosexual people in the small village. In fact, the veterinarian Henk Pretorius hopes that Peter approaches him to flirt (148). Moreover,

South Africa has changed as a black man was offered the opportunity of becoming the police station commander (101). This shows that even though the past is still an essential part of contemporary South Africa, the country has already undergone important changes. Neither have the prevailing attitudes changed completely, nor have they remained unchanged. Rather, the interconnection of the past and the present is noticeable and made accessible to an international readership.

7. Conclusion

Trauma in South Africa is complex, multi-layered and manifests itself through the entanglement of people, time, places and identities. In South African trauma discourse special emphasis has to be placed on these traumatic interconnections and overlaps so that clear-cut categories of good and evil or the past and the present, for example, are questioned. Only then is it possible to understand and to finally come to terms with the entanglements of trauma.

However, in order to be able to focus on traumatic interactions a space is needed where traumata and the related stories can be illustrated from different perspectives. One medium providing such a space is the contemporary South African novel. At times it is used to reveal unexpected entanglements and similarities between former enemies, to give readers an understanding of what it means to be haunted by the past and sometimes even the novel itself takes over the role of the empathic listener supporting characters in the process of becoming aware of their trauma.

In Gillian Slovo's *Red Dust*, for example, the traumatic bond between Alex Mpondo and his former torturer Dirk Hendricks is dealt with in detail. In the setting of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings these complex traumata and the problematic issue of clearly categorising victims and perpetrators in the aftermath of apartheid come to light. Then again, characters are able to develop an understanding of former enemies as is the case of Anna Kriel in Jann Turner's *Southern Cross*. In order to disentangle herself from her traumatic past, she feels compelled to contact the imprisoned murderer Colonel Ig du Preez and unexpectedly she likes him. In the end she succeeds not only in overcoming her personal trauma but also old enmities. However, closure is not always achieved. This becomes especially clear when reading Michiel Heyns' *Lost Ground*. Only towards the end of the novel does Peter Jacobs become aware of his trauma and identity crisis caused by his uprooting from home. Thus, the work is an example of the intricacy of trauma which is additionally underlined by the entangled plot structure.

Moreover, the close examination of the primary sources revealed that not only individuals are affected by trauma but that it is ever-present in the entire South African society today. Acknowledging the complexity of trauma and thus moving away from black-and-white thinking which is deeply rooted in the country is crucial to

the overcoming of trauma. Literature plays an essential role in this process and therefore also in the promotion of the image of South African society as a united rather than a separated one.

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9. Appendix

Abstract

Since the end of apartheid, trauma has become a keyword in South African society. The definition of trauma as a unique shocking incident, however, proves inadequate for the mental wounds suffered by numerous people living in South Africa as the traumatising situation in the country continued for years. Furthermore, traditional trauma discourse is based on the structuralist concept of binary opposition and distinguishes clearly between the past and the present, the inner and the outer world or the victim and the perpetrator for example. In order to describe trauma more adequately as well as to counteract the continuation of categorical thinking by which South African history is shaped, a new theory has been introduced. It holds that trauma is rather to be seen as multiple intricate entanglements between the categories originally thought of as separate. Against this background the thesis focuses on the complexity of trauma in the contemporary South African novel. The detailed analysis of *Red Dust* by Gillian Slovo, *Southern Cross* by Jann Turner and *Lost Ground* by Michiel Heyns provides an insight into trauma in South Africa today. Considering it that way promotes understanding for its causes and thus the coming to terms with the painful past.

Zusammenfassung auf Deutsch

Seit dem Ende der Apartheid etablierte sich der Begriff Trauma zunehmend in der südafrikanischen Gesellschaft. Der ursprünglichen Definition zufolge, beschreibt er ein einmaliges erschütterndes Ereignis, durch welches posttraumatische Symptome hervorgerufen werden. Im Hinblick auf die psychischen Belastungen, denen zahlreiche Einwohner Südafrikas über Jahre hinweg ausgesetzt waren, erweist sich diese Definition jedoch als unzutreffend. Der westliche Traumabegriff basiert außerdem auf dem strukturalistischen Konzept der binären Gegensätze wodurch innerhalb des Diskurses klar zwischen der Vergangenheit und der Gegenwart, der inneren und der äußeren Welt oder auch zwischen Opfern und Tätern unterschieden wird. Um auf die in Südafrika vorherrschenden Traumata angemessener eingehen zu können, sowie kategorischem Denken, welches während der Apartheid in ihrer extremsten Form zum Ausdruck kam, entgegenzuwirken, wurde ein neuer

traumatheoretischer Ansatz ins Leben gerufen. Ihm zufolge ist Trauma nicht als schockierendes Erlebnis zu sehen, sondern als eine Vielzahl von komplexen Verstrickungen. Vor diesem Hintergrund beschäftigt sich die vorliegende Arbeit mit unterschiedlichen unvorhergesehenen traumatischen Verknüpfungen im zeitgenössischen südafrikanischen Roman. Die eingehende Analyse der Werke *Red Dust* von Gillian Slovo, *Southern Cross* von Jann Turner und *Lost Ground* von Michiel Heyns rückt die Komplexität des südafrikanischen Traumas in den Vordergrund und lässt erkennen, dass das Verständnis für die Ursachen von Trauma und somit auch der Heilungsprozess durch eine Auseinandersetzung mit den zahlreichen Verstrickungen, gefördert wird.