



universität  
wien

## DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

„Representations of Trauma in  
Two Selected Post-Apartheid Novels“

verfasst von / submitted by

Adrian Ivad

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of

Magister der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2020 / Vienna, 2020

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme code as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

UA 190 344 456

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

Lehramtsstudium UF Englisch UF  
Geographie und Wirtschaftskunde

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sylvia Mieszkowski

## DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

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

Signature

*Achille. Noel*

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. The History of South Africa .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1. The Colonial Era .....	7
2.2. The Apartheid Regime .....	14
2.3. The Evolution of the South African Novel .....	19
<b>3. Truth and Reconciliation.....</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission .....	22
3.2. <i>Disgrace</i> and the TRC .....	28
3.3. <i>Disgrace</i> and Rape .....	32
<b>4. Trauma .....</b>	<b>37</b>
4.1. Definition of Trauma .....	37
4.2. Beginnings of Trauma Theory.....	40
4.2.1. Sigmund Freud .....	41
4.2.2. Cathy Caruth.....	42
4.2.3. Shoshana Felman .....	43
4.3. Trauma Processing.....	44
4.4. Presentation of Trauma in (Postcolonial) Novels .....	45
<b>5. Societal Healing .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6. Comparing the Novels .....</b>	<b>52</b>
6.1. Settings.....	52
6.2. Similarities and Differences.....	54
<b>7. Memory and Intrusion .....</b>	<b>57</b>
7.1. The Return of the Repressed .....	59
7.2. Effects of Trauma on Memory Formation.....	61
<b>8. Trauma Categories.....</b>	<b>62</b>
8.1. Perpetrator/Victim .....	62
8.2. Individual/Society.....	63
8.3. Collective Suffering .....	64
<b>9. Shame, Guilt, and Identity .....</b>	<b>65</b>
9.1. White Guilt .....	66
9.2. The Role of Identity .....	68

<b>10. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>11. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>11.1. Primary Sources .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>11.2. Secondary Sources .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>11.3. Online Sources .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>12. Appendix.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>12.1. Zusammenfassung .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>12.2. Abstract .....</b>	<b>78</b>

## 1. Introduction

South Africa's complex history is poisoned with exploitation, violence and racism, which reached their peak during the apartheid era. Ever since the arrival of the first white colonisers on South African soil, its black inhabitants were regarded as inferior and were therefore oppressed by the invaders, who gradually and unrightfully seized power in a foreign country. Since the first encounter, trauma has played a central role among black South Africans and intensified while the critical condition under the dominant white minority exacerbated and finally climaxed in the apartheid regime. However, the black population was not the only social segment affected by this inhuman system. After its demise, even white perpetrators, who originally caused and executed atrocities, claimed to suffer from traumatic symptoms (Mohamed 2015: 1187). Such a shift away from an exclusive focus on victim trauma to a broader area, including perpetrator and complicit trauma, gave rise to a whole new discussion in contemporary trauma studies (Mohamed 2015: 1165). South Africa is a prime example of a traumatised nation because, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu puts it, "there is not a single person who has not been traumatised by apartheid – even the perpetrators" (Lund 2003 In Posel 2008: 134-135). This collective trauma makes it possible to analyse distinct features of victim and perpetrator trauma within one society and country.

In problematic times, as under apartheid, literature has a growing impact on and value for readers. The black population's oppression has far-reaching effects on the mental and physical health and development of each individual and plays a key role in South Africa's history, and hence in its literature (Magona In Mengel and Borzaga (eds.) 2012: 93). Even after the system's fall, apartheid remains a popular literary topic. Instead of focusing on a potentially bright future that lies ahead of the rainbow nation, many authors still choose to cover negative aspects of society in their works (Barris 2005: 33). Trauma appears in many novels as a recurring theme, because it allows authors to give a voice to victims and perpetrators of the regime or to present their own experience of this horrible period. For my analysis I have chosen to investigate two such texts, namely J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Damon Galgut's *The Good Doctor* (2003).

John Maxwell Coetzee was born in Cape Town in 1940, but he resides in Australia now. Coetzee won several awards, including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003, the Booker Prize

twice, the Jerusalem Prize, CNA Prize three times and other awards and honours. The author also received the highest South African honour, the Order of Mapungubwe. Coetzee discussed the limitations of art in South African society while accepting the Jerusalem Prize. He called the structures “deformed and stunted relations between human beings” and “a deformed and stunted inner life” (1992: 98). According to Coetzee, “South African literature is a literature in bondage. It is a less than fully human literature. It is exactly the kind of literature you would expect people to write from prison” (ibid.). He thereby compares the life in South Africa to a prison sentence.

The author of the second novel I will be focusing on, novelist and playwright Damon Galgut, was born in Pretoria in 1965. He studied drama at the University of Cape Town. Galgut is a full-time writer and still lives in Cape Town. Among his published works are two plays in *Echoes of Anger and No. 1 Utopia Lane* (1983); a film script, *The Red Dress* (1994) and two short-story collections, *Small Circle of Beings* (1988) and *Strategy and Siege* (2005). Galgut also wrote six novels: *A Sinless Season* (1982); *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* (1992), *The Quarry* (1995), *The Good Doctor* (2003), *The Impostor* (2008), *In a Strange Room* (2010), and *Arctic Summer* (2014). He received the CNA Literary Award in 1992 for *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, and the Commonwealth Writers Prize Best Book for Africa for *The Good Doctor*. *The Good Doctor* pits idealism against cynicism and explores the rather difficult friendship between two men of opposing characters and outlooks (Cornwell et al. 2010: 95). It investigates the ethical heritage of the ‘new’ South Africa and thus invites comparison with J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*. It is Galgut’s novel *In a Strange Room*, however, that gives insight into the writer’s own life. *In a Strange Room* is considered both fiction and truth since the novel is based on autobiographical events. The protagonist in the novel is trying to escape and disengage with South African identity politics through aimless travelling. Damon, the name of the protagonist, has a confused mental state which can be compared to the situation in South Africa, and to the title of the novel. *In a Strange Room* can indeed be referred to the complex and difficult political situation after apartheid. Damon Galgut offers his readers access to his sentiments about South Africa and Damon, the protagonist of *In a Strange Room*, is looking for love and a place to call home. Frank Eloff in *The Good Doctor* also feels disoriented in the rural hospital and suffers from the consequences of failed love.

In my thesis, I am going to analyse how novels such as *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* are effective tools in working toward trauma relief in South Africa. This research question is

going to be the thread throughout my work and will link the theory part to the practical analysis of the texts. The reason for my choice, is my genuine interest in the history of South Africa, including all the wrongs that have been done by the white government and the resulting negative and devastating impact on the black population. Furthermore, I want to analyse the literary representations of effects of traumatising events on people, regardless of their role as victims or perpetrators, however, fully aware of the fundamental difference between these two categories. The results of my research will be covered in the theoretical part on trauma studies and consequently used for the analysis of the selected two novels.

In the first chapter of my thesis I am going to provide an overview of South Africa's history by primarily focusing on the tense relationship between races since the arrival of the Cape Colony's first white settlers. This background information will help readers grasp the dimension of oppression with its dramatic impact on the black population. Before turning to the analysis of the two selected novels, it is necessary to recognise in what a hostile and traumatising environment oppressed black communities had to live throughout apartheid. Therefore, this part will also shed light on the characteristic role of trauma among South Africans that needs to be comprehended in order to understand the wider context of selected passages analysed in the main part of my analysis. To accomplish this task, I will mainly draw on Leonard Thompson's *A History of South Africa* (Fourth Edition 2014), which presents a detailed historical and political overview of the country's story.

In the second chapter, I will address the important but also contested function of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was established in 1995 and investigated human rights abuses that took place between 1960 and 1994 in South Africa. During the four years the TRC was active its central purpose was to give a voice to a selected number of victims and perpetrators of the apartheid period and to help to reunite the damaged society. Although, the commission undoubtedly played an important role during the transition phase, it also received a large number of critiques, which I want to examine (Posel 2008: 141). This evaluation functions as introduction to the guiding principles of such institutions and their impact on trauma victims, especially in a country as South Africa. Furthermore, the TRC's aim of uniting a shocked and broken society plays a central part in the objects of my analysis. Since reconciliation and forgiveness constitute a fundamental share of trauma relief, these themes are extensively covered in novels such as *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace*. This chapter will also revolve around confession and reconciliation. These concepts play key roles in both novels

and can be identified as representations of the TRC. As will be shown in the theoretical section, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was essential for the process and attempt of the country's unification during the transition phase. Therefore, this vital South African institution and its ethos are prominent in many South African novels. However, its representations differ. In some cases, the TRC and its approach are directly featured, in other novels, as in *Disgrace*, we can only observe a representation of the TRC in the university committee, which evaluates the case of David Lurie, who allegedly raped a black student of his. The members of the university commission attempt to receive his confession of guilt and wrongdoing, but do not succeed. These scenes shed light on the actual procedures of the TRC and their guiding principles. I will also present tools and concepts which will be used for the narratological analysis of text passages. For this purpose, I will mainly draw on Wolf Schmid's *Narratology: An Introduction* (2010). This theoretical basis will help to analyse the role of narrative devices used to describe trauma and the subliminal meaning they convey. In novels, and literature in general, it is not only significant what is being said, but also, and often more importantly, how meaning is delivered. Therefore, this approach serves a central and meaningful purpose, namely reading between the lines in the novels at hand and thereby identifying subliminal statements.

In the third chapter, I will present the state of the art in trauma theory with its starting point in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. I will provide an overview of the evolution of trauma theory as it is known today by analysing the most significant pieces of work in this field. At first, I will cover interpretations by Freud, Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth, who are leading theorists in trauma studies. However, my main focus will lie on (post-)colonial trauma, which is more valid in the case of South Africa than the Eurocentric views of above-mentioned scholars and provides a different definition and applicability. The field of trauma theory is extremely broad and has gained importance over the past centuries, especially after WWII, the Vietnam War, apartheid and 9/11 (Craps and Buelens 2008: 2). This chapter plays a significant role in my thesis, because the resulting theoretical definition will be of importance when it comes to the analysis of the two novels. Furthermore, the role of trauma literature will be analysed in terms of its impact as narrative exposure therapy with the purpose of societal healing, specifically in the case of South Africa. To achieve this classification and evaluation I will investigate the evolution of the South African novel, particularly focusing on the topic of trauma in literature and simultaneously linking it to



psychological therapy. I will present key features of this genre and consequently of my objects of analysis. As LaCapra argues, “literary texts can provide pathways for reader empathy” and “fiction can be truthful and reveal the emotional experience of historical phenomena” (2001: 13-14). However, there are countless possibilities to present trauma in novels, therefore I will attempt to locate certain generalisable commonalities.

In the fourth chapter, I am going to cover the topic of societal healing. To be more specific, this chapter deals with the impact of trauma literature on a society and the resulting healing process that can be achieved through reading. In trauma recovery, literature plays an important role and this thesis is revolving around two trauma novels, which is why I am interested in the potential effect such novels may have on their readers.

In chapter 5, I will concentrate on the two objects of analysis, and I will start by focusing on the stories’ settings and central issues raised, place them in a historical and political context to discuss their similarities and differences. This step is important for the actual analysis of specific passages, because the reader needs subjacent information, which again helps to understand the greater meaning of both novels when they are under scrutiny. In this part my central goal is to give an overview of the two stories and their backgrounds as well as comparing them on a general level.

I am also interested in the representations of memory and intrusion, which constitute significant aspects of each novel and can be clearly identified throughout the stories, and which I will analyse in chapter 6. The return of the repressed is one of the central discoveries of psychoanalysis and was subsequently used in trauma theory. The effects on trauma victims and their symptoms cannot be observed during the shocking event, but rather happen delayed in forms of memories or nightmares for example (Leys In Mengel and Borzaga (eds.) 2012: 4). In this part I will discuss the role of memory in both stories and their influence on the characters, as well as the coping mechanisms they use.

In chapter seven I will focus on the different categories of trauma. Each novel deals with instances of victim and perpetrator trauma or individual and societal trauma. I will classify the different categories and highlight differences by presenting passages in the novels where those categories can be observed and analysed.

Another important point of focus will be the representation of shame and guilt, which I will cover in the eighth chapter. In order to analyse these notions, I will draw on Silvan Tomkins’ interpretation of them, mainly using *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*

(1995). Guilt plays a significant role among white South Africans, who enjoyed every possible privilege during the apartheid era, while the black population suffered from injustices and inequalities caused by whites. Toward the end and after the fall, however, a growing number of white people realised what their kind has caused and started to feel a sense of guilt, even when they were not directly involved in the execution of cruelties (Lenz 2016: 76). Therefore, I will concentrate on white guilt and its effects on the white population, always indicating fitting examples of text passages, where this phenomenon can be observed in the novels. I will also analyse and interpret the important role of identity in both novels, which demonstrates the difficulties most (white) characters have to face after the fall of apartheid. The protagonists of both novels are white males, which is why I will primarily analyse this specific part of society. However, since I am discussing an African country, I will also devote special focus to the representation of black characters and their identities. Relationships between both groups will be examined closely in order to find out if tensions remain or if the attitudes towards each other have changed.

The goal of my thesis is to stress the significant role of trauma in two selected post-apartheid novels and their reflection of a broken society still coping with the aftermath of apartheid. I want to illustrate that the reconciliation process is not yet completed and that the profound trauma caused by apartheid is a burden, South Africans still have to carry. This will be achieved through the application of different theories and approaches, such as trauma studies or narratology. Trauma has not ceased to influence the lives of the South African civilisation and therefore still needs special concentration in literary, political or anthropological studies. It is necessary to be able to discuss such topics and draw attention to the widespread mental harm and its impacts in order to illustrate that victims are not alone and share their experiences, which consequently might stimulate the process of trauma relief and reconciliation, which is desperately needed across the rainbow nation.

## **2. The History of South Africa**

### **2.1. The Colonial Era**

The colonial era is a dark chapter in the history of mankind. Europe's most powerful countries aspired to increase their trade hegemony and size by appropriating foreign lands and exploiting foreign populations all over the world. Not only slavery reached a peak during this time, also international warfare continued to rise.

In the 15th century Spain and Portugal were the first colonial powers to travel overseas and discover and conquer lands hitherto unknown to Europeans. Unquestionably, this period had a meaningful impact on human development, since the rest of the world was suddenly located and mapped. However, these global expeditions led to uncountable cases of wrongdoing and were based on a false ideal and worldview, namely that Europe was regarded as the centre of the world and therefore owned the right to expand on its own terms, neglecting human rights of indigenous people around the world.

European trade companies started to spread over the globe and grow their power and wealth while brutally and unrightfully stealing land and resources from colonised populations. Colonial stories throughout history show many signs of similarities, regardless of the country under attack: 'the white man' arrived on land previously unfamiliar to him and claimed its possession. However, among all these uncountable cases of colonisation, there are certain incidents that stood out in terms of violence, malpractice and exploitation.

South Africa is one such country: invaded and ruled for over 300 years by white settlers, who continuously formed the population's minority. Black inhabitants were exploited ever since the first European settlers arrived and were regarded as inferior throughout history, ultimately leading to an exclusion from fair employment, good education and politics. The white population oppressed every black individual and adapted the laws and rules to their needs, leaving the Africans in a desperate situation.

Due to the scope of this paper I will not concentrate on the processes that shaped South African societies before the intrusion of white settlers. The evolution of the ancient South African population before this event is of no specific relevance when it comes to my analysis, because I am concerned with the relation between the colonisers and the colonised

and how this difficult relationship continuously traumatised the black population throughout history.

South Africa's colonisation started when the very first settlers were sent to the Cape, in 1652. The Dutch East India Company, which at the time was "the world's greatest trading corporation" (Thompson 2014: 33) planned to expand into new territories, previously untouched by white settlers. Jan van Riebeeck was "the commander of an expedition of eighty company employees" (Thompson 2014: 32) travelling to South Africa. This settlement rapidly developed autonomous traits and thereby composed the corner stones of a future white civilisation. According to Thompson (2014: 33), three different developments led to this outcome. First, several employees of the Dutch East India Company received land and were released from their contracts. These "free burghers" (Thompson 2014: 33) established the first white society in South Africa. Secondly, the company shipped a considerable number of slaves to South Africa, who created an infrastructure and facilitated a quick expansion through hard work. Third, the settlers expanded from "Table Bay and engrossed and enclosed land for cultivation" (Thompson 2014: 33), simultaneously displacing indigenous people. These pastoralists had to choose between either leaving the prosperous land or staying and working as servants of the Dutch. All three processes were executed under van Riebeeck's direction and continued in the eighteenth century (Thompson 2014: 33). The foundation for a horrible future of white domination was built.

The Dutch population grew continuously which simultaneously led to a growth in numbers of slaves in South Africa. By 1658 the Cape Colony had become a "slaveholding society" (Thompson 2014: 34) with characteristic features compared to the slaves of the Americas. South African slaves were attributed with different religious, linguistic and social backgrounds (Thompson 2014: 34). By 1793, there were more slaves than free burghers in the colony. However, the Cape slaves never became a self-reproducing population as in other parts of the world, because the number of males was always far higher than the number of females. Instead, the large and increasing count was reached through continuous slave imports. By the end of the 18th century, over half of the free burgher population owned slaves (Thompson 2014: 36). The white population always formed the minority, but never seized to regard the black population as inferior and, therefore, exploited every black person.

The manumission rate in South Africa was never high, meaning that only a few black slaves were released from their burden. Initially, these "free blacks" (Thompson 2014: 37),

who existed during this period, had “the same rights as the white settlers, but the law started to discriminate against them in the 1760s. By the 1790s they were obliged to carry passes if they wished to leave town” (Thompson 2014: 37). These conditions led to a growing sullenness among the black population. Throughout the colonial history many wars were fought because the black population felt exploited and wronged. However, “the settlers became increasingly brutal” and were always able to prevail with superior weaponry (Thompson 2014: 38). As in other colonies the former inhabitants of the land never stood a chance in combat, due to their underdeveloped arms and war experience and therefore remained being oppressed.

The original black inhabitants of the southwestern land, called Khoikhoi, became an inferior class inside the newly built society. They were “set apart by appearance and culture from both the Whites and the slaves; technically free, but treated no better than the slaves” (Thompson 2014: 38). Their labour was gradually absorbed, their chiefs were defeated and their pastures usurped by the Dutch. Furthermore, the Khoikhoi society was nearly annihilated after the contagion of smallpox carried by a Dutch ship in 1713, a disease they had no immunity against (Thompson 2014: 39). As can be seen, the white settlers nearly eradicated an entire population early on. Even if, in this case, unintendedly, the drastic impact of the Dutch colonisers in South Africa becomes very obvious.

Until 1795 the formal authority over the Cape belonged to the Dutch officials who fulfilled the instructions coming directly from the council in Amsterdam. However, the servants of the Dutch East India Company abused their positions and opportunities to enrich themselves. They seized the most arable land, a large number of cattle ranches and owned most slaves (Thompson 2014: 41). After their governor wanted to change the wine concession to his advantage in 1705, the Cape’s free burghers signed a petition, which led to the dismissal of said governor by Dutch officials in Amsterdam. From then onward the servants of the company were forbidden to own land and to trade. But they nevertheless continued with corruption and ignored the law by supplementing their salaries (Thompson 2014: 42). The company itself “turn[ed] a blind eye to its servants’ ways of augmenting their salaries at the expense of the local people” (Thompson 2014: 42). This resulted in major differences between company and settlers’ interests.

By the end of the 18th century the Netherlands was in an economic decline and outweighed by France and Britain, which nearly led to the ruin of the Dutch East India

Company. Now that a large number of businessmen and farmers “had accumulated considerable wealth”, the settlers in South Africa sent a delegation to the Netherlands and addressed the States-General demanding “freedom to trade with foreign ships and effective political representations” (Thompson 2014:42). However, this wish was ignored in the end.

As in most colonies, slavery played a significant role in the Cape. The relationship between masters and servants was rooted in violence and slaves were left with no rights. Disobedience was answered with brutality and major criminals were immediately executed. Although male slaves outnumbered male burghers, “a community with a collective identity” was not immediately formed, since they “derived from different cultures and [were] divided in small groups among the owners” (Thompson 2014: 44). Additionally, psychological bonds remained prominent, binding the slaves to their masters. However, by the 19th century the slaves finally managed to form a community in Cape Town (Thompson 2014: 44). This was an important step towards creating a feeling of belonging together. Nevertheless, the white hegemony could not be changed.

The manumission rate remained very low in the Cape Colony. During the 18th century only one in six hundred slaves was manumitted each year. The requirements for this process were to “be baptised, speak good Dutch, and have a guarantor who would pay the Poor fund” (Thompson 2014: 44). Only very few “free Blacks” (Thompson 2014: 44), who lived in Cape Town, were able to acquire capital. In 1750 “they formed 16 percent of the free burgher population of the Cape district” (Thompson 2014: 45). Considering the larger number of Africans compared to the white settlers, this percentage is remarkably small.

In the course of time, white men started to have sexual relations with slave and Khokhoi women. These affairs ultimately led to “the “black” population of the colony [becoming] considerably lightened, and the “white” population [becoming] somewhat darkened” (Thompson 2014: 45). Therefore, “it has been estimated that approximately 7 percent of the genes of the modern Afrikaner people originated outside Europe and that this occurred mostly during the company period” (Thompson 2014: 45). Keeping this in mind, the racism initiated by the Afrikaner population becomes incomprehensible, since they have African ancestors. Afrikaners is the name for Dutch settlers and their descendants. This term “became the universally recognised label in the twentieth century” (Thompson 2014: 56) and is still widely used nowadays. The later British settlers, however, used the term Boers as a

derogative label (Thompson 2014: 56). The relationship between Dutch and British settlers was never an easy one, which led to several conflicts throughout South African history.

As can be seen, the Cape Colony formed by the Dutch East India Company was distinguishable from other societies. In the beginning it was only intended as a “refreshment station on the trade route between Europe and Asia” (Thompson 2014: 45), but soon it became a new home to a number of European settlers who gradually formed an independent colonial society. These settlers “owned virtually all the productive land” (Thompson 2014: 45). However, they depended on the workforce of their slaves, “who were continually being imported from Asia, Madagascar, and Mozambique” (Thompson 2014: 45). This dependence was a “crucial facet of social structure of the colony” (Thompson 2014: 51). After living in South Africa for a long while, European settlers “conditioned to life as privileged people, distinguished from their slaves and serfs by physical and cultural as well as legal and economic criteria” (Thompson 2014: 51). However, they were also losing their connection to north-western European societies, “where social and economic conditions differed profoundly” (Thompson 2014: 51). This resulted in a difficult sense of belonging among European settlers, which I will elaborate on later in the thesis.

South African slaves had their origins in different cultures and countries and were split between multiple owners. Some slaves were able to live with at least some dignity, but very few were able to gain their freedom. However, not only imported slaves were treated inhuman, the indigenous pastoralists were also “deprived of their means of independent subsistence, they were incorporated into a society where their masters adopted methods of control they were accustomed to applying to slaves” (Thompson 2014: 52). Additionally, all these people with completely different backgrounds were speaking various languages. Most colonists were practising Dutch, the indigenous groups were communicating in their native tongues, and the slaves used their languages of origin. However, a lingua franca emerged from Dutch. Although this language called Afrikaans was originally only used for oral communication between masters and slaves, it would eventually become a distinct language, which is nowadays one of the eleven official languages of South Africa (Thompson 2014: 52). However, since the emergence of British settlers, the rank of the English language grew and it remains the most important of South Africa’s official languages.

During the French Revolution, Great Britain was the most influential sea power and occupied the Cape of Good Hope before France was able to. In 1795, the British forced the

Dutch to capitulate and gained the sovereignty over the colony in 1814 (Thompson 2014: 52). The newly won harbour was an important “stepping-stone to Asia, where the English East India Company was conducting a highly profitable trade, primarily in India” (Thompson 2014: 52). However, just like the Netherlands, Great Britain had no interest in the remaining country beyond the peninsula. Before “the country’s mineral wealth was discovered in the 1860s”, Britain only benefited from “wine, wool, elephant ivory and animal hides exports” (Thompson 2014: 53). These products did not have much significance for the British economy. Hence, only very few British emigrants, who left their home country before 1870, stayed in South Africa and “only [a] minute proportion of British overseas investment” (Thompson 2014: 53) was spent there. It is remarkable how unusual the development was, compared to North America. “By 1870, the United States had a population of over 32 million people of European descent and nearly 53,000 miles of railroad, but in all of Southern Africa there were no more than 70 miles of rail and 250,000 white people” (Thompson 2014: 53). However, this changed dramatically after the discovery of diamonds in 1870.

The ongoing if not rapid emergence of white people drastically changed the social relations in South Africa. The mix of nationalities did not only result in problems among white settlers and African inhabitants; the British and the Afrikaner population had their own issues. The ethnic setting showed similarities to the “Anglo-French problem of Canada” (Thompson 2014: 56) but was nevertheless different. In Canada, British settlers outnumbered the French population, whereas the Afrikaners of South Africa always formed more than 55 percent of the white population. Furthermore, the white colonists in Canada quickly and significantly “became more numerous than the native population at an early stage” (Thompson 2014: 56), while in South Africa the indigenous population was always in the majority with eighty percent of the total population. Ever since the first Dutch settlement, the white part of South Africa formed the minority but nevertheless managed to control the whole country until 1994. Although the settlers were interested in owning slaves and exploiting their labour, slaves became “legally free in 1838” (Thompson 2014: 58). However, white farmers refused to employ them, and since the political system in the Cape colony was always dominated by the settlers, the black population did not stand a chance to change the situation (Thompson 2014: 65). Therefore, even though slavery ended, the underlying structure of the society did not change. The Khokhhoi were continuously exploited and the white population could not imagine that black Africans “would ever be the economic and social equals of Whites”



(Thompson 2014: 65). Even nowadays this view remains prominent among certain white people in South Africa, who still cannot accept a majority rule. Not having a voice in their home country and being governed by a minority of foreigners is one of many traumatic aspects that shaped modern Africans, even after the election of the ANC in 1994.

Ultimately, the Dutch settlers wanted to rule and own the country by themselves. Therefore, they regarded not only the African inhabitants, but also the new British population as threat to their sovereignty. In the 1830s, an “anti-British feeling” (Thompson 2014: 67) spread among the eastern Afrikaners. English became the only language used in government, law and schools, even though it was foreign to Afrikaners (Thompson 2014: 68). By 1840, about six thousand of them and nearly as many of their servants left the Cape Colony in hope to find new land where they could establish a new state. These pioneers known as voortrekkers detested the British policies. Their migration came to be known as “the Great Trek” (Thompson 2014: 69). On their journey the emigrants were continuously attacked by inhabitants of the new land. However, due to “the superiority of controlled fire” (Thompson 2014: 91) the Afrikaners killed or displaced thousands of their ‘enemies’. The native population was gradually placed in reserves known as locations in order to gain more space for the settlement. By 1864, there were forty-two locations, leaving the rest of the land for the Afrikaners (Thompson 2014: 97). This shows, how little power the indigenous people had compared to the white intruders, who aimed at controlling the country. By now, white South Africans have started to reevaluate history and their ancestors’ cruel behaviour. This results in an urge to make things right and actively participate in a healing process. However, the past cannot be changed, which is why many white people start to develop a form of guilt, as soon as they realise that certain things cannot be undone. This so-called white guilt is described by Shelby Steele as “the knowledge of ill-gotten advantage” (Steele 1990: 499) of white over black people. In the novels *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* white guilt plays a major role and will therefore be covered later on in the thesis.

When huge deposits of gold and diamonds were found in South Africa in the 1870s and 80s, British imperialism reached its peak and for the first time South Africa started to play an important role in world economy (Thompson 2014: 110). However, this came at a price the black population had to pay once more. The mining industry’s racial structure was exploiting Africans, who were “poorly paid, and subjected to harsh living conditions in all-male compounds” (Thompson 2014: 112), while white workers executed supervisory roles and

earned high wages. However, also among the white population, racial categories started to reveal themselves. “Afrikaners, with their distinct language [and] historical consciousness” (Thompson 2014: 112), who mostly worked in rural environments were despised by the British townspeople. In a major war at the end of the nineteenth century, British troops conquered the Afrikaner republics (Thompson 2014: 122). The conflict ended in 1902 with a peace treaty that was signed in Pretoria, still excluding Africans from society (Thompson 2014: 143). The South African population was torn apart. Afrikaners, who intruded into this country in the first place never felt they belonged together with the African and later the British parts. The result was that they had no real sense of home. Since they had lost their link to the Netherlands, they were torn between two different worlds. On the one hand was their country of origin in Europe, they did not have a connection with anymore and on the other hand was South Africa, a foreign country, which rightfully belonged to its indigenous inhabitants. This discrepancy produced a feeling of ‘between-ness’ or liminality. According to Victor Turner, who adapted Arnold van Gennep’s concept, liminality is an ambiguous phase, in which “liminal personae are “neither here nor there”” (Turner 1969: 95 In Wels et al. 2011: 1). He gives an example of the middle phase of a boy becoming an adult man, in which he is no longer a boy and simultaneously not yet a man. However, this concept can be applied to various situations in life. In this case we are not dealing with a short transitional phase – as in Turner’s example – but rather with a manifested state of mind and constant, unconscious feeling of uncertainty when it comes to the question of geographical belonging. To this day, many white South Africans have to struggle with the dilemma of not quite belonging, which will be touched upon later on in the thesis, when analysing the two selected novels’ protagonists.

## **2.2. The Apartheid Regime**

Most white people collectively subjected Africans. This led to the incorporation of the black population in “states under white domination” (Thompson 2014: 122). Over time, especially towns in South Africa became known for their “dual form” (Thompson 2014: 170). White businesspeople lived in the vibrant and modern part, while the black population had to live in the dirty part, separated from the modern town. Unpaved roads, infrequent water supply, and bad or missing sanitary facilities were the daily struggles these people had to cope with (Thompson 2014: 170). In the 1940s an increasing number of Africans tried to move to the

towns, and since the government could not provide enough housing, they had to settle down next to the city limits. These locations are nowadays known as townships and have the poorest living conditions in the world (Thompson 2014: 178). The results of hundreds of years of white domination can still be seen when visiting South African cities, which are mostly surrounded by huge areas of poor housing facilities, where exclusively black people have to live.

As the minority, Afrikaners inherited a fear of the increasing black population. For those white people the only way to survive was a separation of races into different areas (Thompson 2014: 185). As a result, in 1946, apartheid came into being as their ultimate solution to the racial problem. This term was already coined in the 1930s and simply means “apartness” (Thompson 2014: 186) in Afrikaans. After the elections in 1948, the National party won the majority of seats and could thereby control a nation, “in which they formed no more than 12 percent of the population” (Thompson 2014: 186). In 1961, it achieved its major goal when South Africa became a republic and was thereby completely disengaged from Great Britain (Thompson 2014: 188). During the premiership of Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd “apartheid became the most notorious form of racial domination that the post-war world has known” (Thompson 2014: 189). Apartheid was based on four central ideas. Firstly, South Africa’s population was consisting of four groups, namely “White, Coloured, Indian, and African” (Thompson 2014: 190). Secondly, the white population perceived itself as the civilised race and was therefore predestined to control the country. Thirdly, only white interests were of value and therefore the country “was not obliged to provide equal facilities for the subordinate races” (Thompson 2014: 190). Fourthly, the white population shaped one single Afrikaans- and English-speaking nation, while Africans were part of different potential nations, this “made the white nation the largest in the country” (Thompson 2014: 190). From then on, these ‘pillars of injustice’ marked the life of South Africans and favoured the white population while oppressing the black part.

In order to execute their power, the apartheid government established new laws. For instance, the “Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949)” and the “Immorality Act (1950)”, which declared sexual contact and marriage between different races illegal (Thompson 2014: 190). Furthermore, in 1951, the government turned the existing reserves into eight (later ten) territories called Homelands. These Homelands were ruled by “hereditary chiefs” (Thompson 2014: 191) who were guided by the white government. The government wanted to gather all Africans in these Homelands, except for the labourers it needed. Workers who were no longer

required or capable of labour were sent into the Homelands, since the new policies did not allow them to stay “in the European areas of the Republic” (Thompson 2014: 193). Because of these pass laws Africans who wanted to visit a city for more than three days needed particular permits (Thompson 2014: 193). Although a huge number of Africans had been born in South African towns, they were forbidden to live there and were only treated as visitors (Thompson 2014: 195). Being deprived of one’s right to choose where to live in one’s own country of origin over decades resulted in a deep trauma among the black population.

Under the apartheid regime, Africans were neglected in most aspects of daily life. The segregation extended over taxis, ambulances, elevators, cinemas, and even beaches. Africans were restricted to live side by side with white people and their children did not receive the same level of education (Thompson 2014: 197). Most universities only allowed white students and the rest, who admitted black students, taught segregated classes. By 1978, eighty percent of students in South Africa were white. (Thompson 2014: 197). This human right violating regime and its laws were also enforced by a strong police force with a security branch, “which was responsible for interrogating political suspects and frequently resorted to torture” (Thompson 2014: 199-200). Over time, the government succeeded in conditioning the Afrikaner population to perceiving apartheid society as normal and just and regarding its critics as communists (Thompson 2014: 200-201). Apartheid was the main cause for trauma among black but also white South Africans. Even perpetrators suffered from trauma in their own way. In *Coping With Trauma* (eds. Watts & de L Horne 2000) the perspective of trauma victims and their helpers is presented. However, it needs to be said that kind, degree and intensity of trauma differ immensely when it comes to black and white South Africans. The former were traumatised throughout generations on a daily level with no way out; while the latter are now fighting with feelings of shame and guilt, because they benefitted from the system and did not try to act against it. *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* deal with such traumatic experiences especially focusing on the perpetrator’s or accomplice’s side. Therefore, I will mainly focus on this specific instance of trauma throughout my thesis.

Not long after the National party won the elections, the African National Congress, an anti-apartheid party, was taken over by a new generation of activists. Nelson Mandela was one of three members forming the executive and fighting for a majority rule. However, the government prohibited all such organisations in 1960 and thereby made political engagement against apartheid illegal. This resulted in many arrests of ANC politicians, such as Mandela,

who declared while on trial in 1964 that decades of passive resistance had “brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights” (Thompson 2014: 211). A change in strategy was needed and so the ANC and PAC resorted to violent resistance (Thompson 2014: 211). After years of peaceful activism, these parties could no longer hold back their anger and frustration.

By 1978, the economy was marked by a recession after the boom of the 1960s and 70s. For the first time, “there was a net white emigration from South Africa” (Thompson 2014: 221). Mainly professional and experienced people chose to emigrate from the apartheid state. At the same time the black population was rising at a high rate. A fast decline of the “white proportion” was predicted by demographers (Thompson 2014: 221). During this time, the civil rights movement in the United States became more and more successful. After “racial discrimination had been eliminated from American law” black activists focused on the political situation in South Africa (Thompson 2014: 222). However, the South African government did not change its course, even though the whole world was watching it. The pass laws still prevented the African population from visiting the cities, “except as migrant workers on temporary contracts” (Thompson 2014: 226). Simultaneously, the Homelands could not cope with the continuously increasing black population anymore, which led to worse housing and living conditions.

The situation started to change in 1986, when finally, a number of segregation laws were eliminated. Interracial sexual contact and marriage as well as multiracial political parties were no longer illegal (Thompson 2014: 227). By the same year the brutal police violence against unarmed black civilians was broadcasted all over the world and “South Africa had become a major focus of public attention” (Thompson 2014: 233). Between 1986 and 1988 ANC activists caused more than a hundred bomb attacks in public areas leading to several deaths (Thompson 2014: 238). Therefore, the government declared the state of emergency and arrested “hundreds of antiapartheid activists” (Thompson 2014: 235). During this period the government provided the police with even more power than before (Thompson 2014: 235). By 1988, the apartheid regime was still not “considering the possibility of black majority government in South Africa”, as President Pieter Willem Botha delivered in a speech (Thompson 2014: 237). From this point onwards the atmosphere continually became more violent.

However, a few months later the state turned bankrupt. The time for negotiations had come (Thompson 2014: 240). After several meetings with Mandela the government realised that he would not accept its demands “to renounce the ANC’s commitment to the armed struggle, its alliance with the Communist party, and its goal of majority rule” (Thompson 2014: 245). After president Botha suffered a stroke in 1989, Frederik Willem de Klerk became the National party leader. He knew that the days of apartheid were numbered and therefore gave in to Mandela’s requirements and eventually eliminated the remaining apartheid laws. Shortly after, in 1990, Mandela was released from jail after 27 years of imprisonment (Thompson 2014: 247). Although the nation was close to a civil war, “black and white politicians put an end to more than three hundred years of white domination” (Thompson 2014: 241). The Homeland governments were eliminated and their territories were incorporated in new provinces (Thompson 2014: 252). Finally, South Africa was being connected again.

All these major changes lead to one monumental and life-changing event in the history of South Africa. On May 10, 1994, “three hundred and forty-two years after the Dutch East India Company formed a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope” (Thompson 2014: 264), the first black president was elected and thereby power was finally transferred from the white minority to the black majority of the population (Thompson 2014: 241). The whole world watched this peaceful election. It was lasting four days in order to cope with the masses of Africans, who were able to vote for the first time in their lives (Thompson 2014: 263). After the retirement of Nelson Mandela in 1999, the ANC continued to win every election (Thompson 2014: 288). Even nowadays it remains the strongest party, although many – especially white – people are criticising their work.

The country still had to struggle with exceptionally high crime and murder rates, which the Mandela regime could not reduce. After his presidency, still nearly fifty percent of the whole population felt unsafe (Thompson 2014: 286). Furthermore, 41 percent of all households had no electricity and millions lived without piped water. Especially South Africa’s health system had to struggle with major setbacks. The government could not provide access to health care for everyone. Resources were transferred to rural areas, but the quality was very poor in public hospitals and equipment was “frequently stolen” (Thompson 2014: 283-284). The bad condition of hospitals and the unprofessional staff are also central themes of *The Good Doctor*. With poverty remaining critical, the income inequality in South Africa in 2011 was the highest in the world (Thompson 2014: 330). While during apartheid poverty was

associated with race, afterwards it was a matter of class (Thompson 2014: 329). Poverty remains a critical topic and demands change, otherwise a prosperous future cannot be guaranteed.

Despite all these drawbacks, Africans had hope again. In 2000, South Africa “was richer, more stable, and more humane than any country in mainland tropical Africa” (Thompson 2014: 289). Wealth was not anymore limited to the white population – a high percentage of black South Africans managed to receive high incomes too. However, it will still take a long time until this torn-apart country recovers from its traumatic past.

### **2.3. The Evolution of the South African Novel**

South Africa’s literature has arisen out of a long tradition of resistance and protest. In the course of settlement, four communities have been established in South Africa: the ancient hunter-gatherer and early pastoralist Khoisan, the pastoralist and agricultural Nguni and Sotho, the maritime, market-oriented and industrialised Anglo-Afrikaner settlers and the Indian community. The result of this creolisation is an abundance literatures (Heywood 2004: 1). Literary examples go back to the Khoisan community that dealt with imprisonment by white men. However, the white community’s experience and perspective was also extensively presented by writers such as Olive Schreiner, Eugène Marias, André Brink and J. M. Coetzee. South Africa was always rich regarding its different communities and cultures and each community has a tradition that has achieved recognition through literature (Heywood 2004: 4). South African literature includes poetry, drama and prose fiction in five ethnic traditions. The contents are organised based on historical turning points marking the violent entrance and establishment of modernity in South Africa (Heywood 2004: 296). The historical turning points, when apartheid was introduced but also when it was abolished, had an enormous impact on South African literature. Coetzee and Galgut published their novels after apartheid had ended, and they primarily deal with the aftermath of this system. Both authors describe the difficulties between white and non-white South Africans even after the end of apartheid through the complex relationships between their main characters.

According to Wolf Schmid there are two schools of thought in narratology: the first is classical narrative theory where texts have certain features of communication. Storytelling is bound to a storyteller. The second school focuses neither on the way the story is told nor on

the features of communication but on the story itself. Both have their limitations so that mixed narrative forms have already been established. It is important for narratology to represent the changes of a state or situation which should be conveyed through a mediating agency. This state or condition is produced by properties that refer to a character or the world at a specific point in the story. It depends on whether the state or condition applies to a character or the world whether inner conditions or outer conditions are discussed (Schmid 2008: 1-4).

Readers tend to see events that follow in a narrative as coherent and based on a causal connection, even if this is not the case. Narrative texts can sometimes be descriptive, when it comes to places or situations or persons. In general, narratology can be divided into narrative texts and descriptive texts, where narrative texts can be subdivided into mediated narrative texts and mimetic narrative texts. Mimetic means a mediating agency is not present (Schmid 2008: 5-10). In literary studies the above-mentioned change of a state or condition is important, but also the event that produces such changes. Each event implies the change of a state or condition, but not every changed condition forms an event. The context, that is, the system of social norms and values that were existent at the time of the written work or the time period when the plot of the work is taking place, is therefore essential to understand the situation. Events often derive from violations of such social norms. It is important for the interpretation and analysis of literature to know the norms of the society and era the written work takes place (ibid.).

There is a difference between narrative as art and narrative in news or radio. The essential feature of narrative as art is its fictionality, the fact that the world that is portrayed is fictional. The real is opposed to the fictional and its antonym is the factual. In literary studies the depiction of foreign inner states holds enormous value for the readership. The readers receive immediate access to the inner states of the protagonists (Schmid 2008: 30). Those states are imaginary as well. *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* are examples of mixed narratives. Events that happen in the novel have been influenced by facts of South African history, but the characters' stories are still the authors' inventions.

The functions of literary studies are the understanding and preservation of literary texts. The misunderstanding of a text implies that the meaning has not been conveyed appropriately. Writing is like an image of living speech and therefore fragile and fluctuating, if the author does not reassert its meaning (Trimpi 1970: 187). Meaning is considered to be the first and foremost function of language. Literature is only effective when the meaning of the



written work is understood. Analysis and interpretation are up to the reader and this is what makes literature beautiful: it allows for imagination. It is through interpretation and analysis that readers give the words meaning and consequently understanding and empathy towards the protagonists. *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* are novels which present a lot of valuable information about historical, political and personal issues. A very convenient example for meaning in the novels is the idealism of Lucy Lurie and Laurence Waters. Both stand for hope, love and a bright future at first, when their characters are observed superficially. They are hopeful and loving due to their innocence and lack of experience. As soon as the characters are analysed in depth, however, the reader realises that their idealism is rooted in an inflated sense of self-importance, especially in the case of Laurence Waters in *The Good Doctor*.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis gives insight into the causes for such behaviour, offering meaning to narrative. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the ego ideal is the inner image one wants to become (Akhtar 2009: 89). It is a perfect or ideal self, consisting of "the individual's conscious and unconscious images of what he would like to be, patterned after certain people whom [...] he regards as ideal" (Rosenthal 2003: 102). This definition describes Lucy Lurie and Laurence Waters well, they want to become the idealised version of themselves. Both want to save the world and become their perfect selves. But such idealism can be dangerous, and life very often does not encourage and reward such arrogance, pride is often followed by failure. *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* give examples of such failures. In the end Lucy Lurie and Laurence Waters are the characters that become victims to the cruelty of the world, even though they have been trying hard to make the world a better place. At the end of *Disgrace*, Lucy Lurie's decision to keep her child carries deep meaning. She is not ashamed of what happened and is prepared to give birth to a baby with multiracial parents. Through her action her idealism is again evident because she tries to connect white and black South Africans and to finally end apartheid, in a metaphorical sense.

### 3. Truth and Reconciliation

#### 3.1 South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The preceding summary of South Africa's history shows to what degree the black population was oppressed ever since the first Dutch settlement of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. With the establishment of apartheid in 1948 the government itself had become "a gross perpetrator of human rights violations" (Thompson 2014: 248). However, the dimension of these crimes was not revealed until, in 1995, Nelson Mandela assembled a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. During the three years of its existence the TRC conducted thousands of interviews and investigations and discovered that a particular security network, which involved police and military, was in charge for haphazard terror and murder (Thompson 2014: 249). The confessions of apartheid's victims and perpetrators helped the population to finally realise what degree of violence had been daily going on in South Africa.

Throughout the fight against apartheid many political leaders were imprisoned or exiled, because the government did not tolerate any opposition. Therefore, the clergy gained power and support among the oppressed population (Thompson 2014: 239). Especially Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, became an important character and representative during this difficult period (Thompson 2014: 239). South Africa's black population was desperately in need of leaders and consequently turned to the clergy. Unsurprisingly, the TRC consisted of several clergymen but also other high-profile members, such as lawyers and politicians. The fact that, besides chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu, another three clerics took part, created an "emotional and religious tone rather than a legal one" (Thompson 2014: 275). The commission's religious element is one of many aspects which were criticised by sceptics.

Between 1995 and 1998 a total of over seven thousand people applied for amnesty. At the beginning the TRC organised hearings of "victims of human rights abuses" (Thompson 2014: 275) caused by the apartheid regime. One of its chief goals was to restore dignity by facilitating the victims with the opportunity to relate to the violations of others (Rose 2002: 188). However, the commission was not sensitive to gender, even though female voices dominated the hearings. The women who testified were mostly the only survivors of atrocities and therefore the only ones who could tell the stories of their male relatives. From over 7,000 applications only fifty-six were from women (Rose 2002: 180). The stories were extremely

shocking and exceeded the imagination of the public and the committee itself. They, however, supported Mandela's assumptions that a kind of "Third Force" (Thompson 2014: 276) had been controlled by presidents Botha and de Klerk. This security force was believed to be responsible for random and targeted killings which mostly took place in townships. A central theme of the victims' stories was the exceptional brutality of actions taken by this force against the black population. Police and military frequently resorted to the cruellest kinds of torture and eventually even murder (Thompson 2014: 276). These kinds of incidents are also displayed in novels such as *The Good Doctor*. In this novel, the protagonist suffers from a trauma that dates back to his time as a medical assistant at a military camp, where he was confronted with torture. In South Africa, the public disclosure of such tragic experiences sparked a chain reaction of confessions by followers of the National Party, who confirmed that not only the police, but also ex-presidents, such as Botha and de Klerk, were directly involved in brutal events. According to former ministers they both "had given orders to kill" (Thompson 2014: 276). However, Botha refused to attend the commission, clarify these allegations and apologise. He merely tried to justify his actions by holding on to his belief that he acted in favour of white South Africans and was leading a fight against communist threats (Thompson 2014: 276). His lack of sympathy for the victims resulted in even more despair and upset among the population.

Thabo Mbeki on the other hand, a member of the ANC, the National Party's counterpart, admitted and confessed that members of his own party were also responsible for multiple attacks, such as bombings and other extremely violent acts. Nevertheless, he insisted that these incidents needed to be overlooked "because the ANC had been involved in a just war of liberation, which [according to Mbeki] distinguished them from atrocities committed by the apartheid state" (Thompson 2014: 277). The TRC, however, did not accept this apology "and found the ANC guilty of gross violations of human rights" (ibid.). Desmond Tutu justified the decision as follows: "a gross violation is a gross violation, whoever commits it and for whatever reason [... it cannot be assumed] that yesterday's oppressed will not become tomorrow's oppressors" (Thompson 2014: 277-278). For Tutu it was essential that no distinctions were made between human rights violations, no matter what motivation led their perpetrators. Only then, he argued, a future without self-justified violence is possible. The TRC showed that every single person has the potential to be a perpetrator in times of crisis and that it is important to recognise this feature in oneself in order to prevent such evil from

happening again (Rose 2002: 178). Therefore, its goal was to collectively process the past and shed light on the crimes that have been committed, while educating the society.

The TRC was able to reveal important information about the gruesome actions to which some apartheid supporters resorted, even though the National Party destroyed incriminating evidence in order to cover things up. Furthermore, the commission exposed that the ANC also contained members, who had committed equally radical and brutal crimes, however, with the motivation of liberating the nation. In the short run, the TRC was unable to “advance the cause of racial reconciliation” (Thompson 2014: 278). At times the existence of such a commission even emphasised existing ethnic disconnectedness in South Africa. Therefore, many South Africans continued to socialise with “members of their own “race”” (ibid.), even long after the end of colonialism and apartheid. What the commission also failed to achieve was to “bring justice to the victims of political violence” (ibid.). Many perpetrators could walk free, because they had confessed in front of the TRC. At the same time, victims were not adequately compensated for their trauma and loss. Ironically, the TRC’s goal of reconciliation was based “on an intellectual framework that also helped to apologise for apartheid’s wrongs” (Anker 2012: 151). During apartheid several million black South Africans lost their citizenships when they were moved to the newly established homelands (ibid.: 152). One of TRC’s problems was “its failure to reallocate wealth held by whites under apartheid” (ibid.: 160). For Achille Mbembe, “South Africa today is still a nation composed of too many black people in possession of almost nothing – no meaningful foundation for social and economic autonomy” (ibid.: 153). Furthermore, the commission was unable to present and conquer the daily humiliations, social injustice, and disparities African people had to face under the apartheid state (Rose 2002: 186). Therefore, the TRC had to cope with many critics, who found that too hasty a reconciliation would prevent the thorough examination of apartheid’s conflicts.

However, after the fall of apartheid, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, aiming to overcome the country’s dramatic past of segregation, indeed played an essential part in the building of a new democratic nation. The TRC was not the first truth commission but has undoubtedly changed the way such institutions work. Mainly established in developing countries since the 1970s, truth commissions were trying to present individual stories of suffering and wrongdoing to come to terms with the past and focus on truth (Posel 2008: 119). They have been “taking shape in the midst of a wider “politics of regret” that has

gathered momentum in the aftermath of World War II" (ibid.: 120). After the first was established in Argentina in 1973, over thirty truth commissions followed, mostly in developing countries. They are typically found in transitional phases after the change of an abusive regime to democracy with newly constituted human rights (ibid.: 120). Although multiple truth commissions have already been established around the world, they differ in certain respects. However, the main trajectories are very similar: their existence is limited to a short period of time, their goal is "uncovering and verifying truths about the violations of human rights" (Posel 2008: 121), and the fact that their findings are presented in a final written report. Furthermore, members are usually regarded as moral elite who convey trust and respect (ibid.).

In the case of South Africa, the lack of precedent, on which the TRC could draw, resulted in comparisons with other atrocities that took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These comparisons, however, failed to highlight the peculiarities that had made apartheid distinctive in history, such as its colonial background (Boese 2017: 250). It is true that similar racist conditions can be found in, for example, Algeria, Angola, the West Indies or other countries where colonialism took place and where the white man forcefully stole land from the indigenous. However, only in South Africa a system of racial separation was implemented through official laws and rules by the government over the course of decades, thereby maintaining white minority rule.

The major difficulty during transitions from an abusive system to a democratic one is usually finding a way to 'forget' a tragic past, in order to embrace a promising future. Therefore, truth commissions tend to represent the belief that "truth could unify and reconcile by exposing the horrors that past oppressors had denied or hidden" from the public (Posel 2008: 121). On the one hand, telling the truth indicates a "unifying [...] commitment to the new order of human rights" (ibid.), and on the other hand, it helps to prevent the recurrence of cruelties through public exposure. However, this does not hold true for everyone, and certainly cannot convince an entire nation. Sandra Young even argues that it would be "politically naïve" to believe that reconciliation between individual victims and perpetrators can be taken as "resolution of the country's racial and political conflicts" (2004: 151). This is certainly true, simply talking about horrible acts of abuse will not resolve the racial problem or the power hierarchies that are still present in South Africa. Victims, however, needed the possibility to tell their stories and felt relief when they were finally able to share

their experiences (ibid.: 154). This is an important starting point for a possible long-lasting reconciliation. Findings show that for many people who confessed in front of the TRC, the revealing of truth was liberating (Saunders 2005: 105). However, there are also several cases, in which testimonies resulted in a “painful, wounding and even re-traumatizing” (ibid.) experience for either those who testified or for those who listened. Such was the case when perpetrators did not show remorse and were nevertheless granted amnesty (ibid.). When a state aims to unify its population, it is not the right approach to grant amnesty to everyone who simply states facts without truly feeling remorse. A similar incident was presented in Coetzee’s novel *Disgrace* when the protagonist is being assured that he will be able to keep his occupation when he confesses and is willing to show true regret.

The need for truth commissions started after the extreme cruelties of the Holocaust, which changed the meaning of and thinking about the past and its far-reaching events (Posel 2008: 122). It was no longer possible to simply think about the past as being over and hope that it will not repeat itself. Gradually the past was perceived as a place of “trauma and denial” (ibid.). Therefore, the need “to acknowledge, confront, and repair the damage of the past has intensified” (ibid.: 123). Otherwise a peaceful future could not be guaranteed.

Charles Taylor has coined a term for the processing of violent histories and its efforts to repair the morally disputable actions of the past. According to him, “negative commemoration” is a part of Western democracy and appears next to positive commemoration, which refers to “installing national heroes, building memorials to epic battles, etc.” Individual testimony and the act of acknowledging the dreadful past and the accompanying trauma and pain are important aspects of showing remorse (all Posel 2008: 123). The politics of negative commemoration is attached to the identity of victims.

South Africa’s TRC has always tested and acknowledged different versions of the past. Not all of them are equally true, but yet can be a representation of personal truth and belief (Posel 2008: 127-128). By openly talking about personal suffering, the commission aspired redemption and “the production of a new moral order” (ibid.: 128). It was the first commission to build its work and purpose around public confessions and was thereby “central to the way that South Africa’s transition to democratic constitutionalism after 1994 was fashioned” (ibid.). In 1993 the government established a provisional constitution which was a transitional sign between a tragic past marked by racial division and a promising future “founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence” (ibid.: 129). The TRC was

guided by the need of acknowledging the damage that was done in the past and simultaneously guaranteed human rights through democracy to people who did not have this privilege before (ibid.). The simple fact that people were finally able to share their stories was a major success in a history of suppression.

However, many people did not entirely acknowledge how the TRC worked. Rebecca Saunders, for example, recalls that “it was this spectacle of perpetrators eviscerated of remorse and shame, if not humanity itself, that led some South Africans to regard the TRC’s ‘truth for amnesty’ deal as essentially exchanging justice for truth, or as merely cancelling debts rather than exacting payment for them” (2005: 101). These people rather wished for a stricter approach towards perpetrators. Their critical attitude was especially strong in instances in which the act of truth-telling was more highly appreciated than any form of justice or compensation (Boehmer 2002: 344). Furthermore, the commission tended to solely focus its attention on individual acts of violence or oppression and thereby did not shed enough light on the apartheid machinery, which abused the black population systematically (ibid.: 345). Many victims were disappointed by the TRC and the new government because no indemnification took place.

As mentioned before, the proceedings of the TRC were limited in time, and focused on events that happened inside South Africa’s borders and were part of specific human rights violations. This resulted in excluding, for example, “the institution of apartheid laws [...] the spread of war throughout Southern Africa [and] the trauma of forced removals” (Saunders 2005: 103). Furthermore, “the TRC’s construction of truth was hindered by such mundane things as lack of money, resources, equipment, infrastructure [and] documentation” (ibid.). Although the final report highlighted, and the commissioners emphasised, that the outcome of the proceedings should not be taken as the universal truth, people quickly created a myth around it (ibid.: 104). In *Doubling the Point* Coetzee (1992) argues that every effort of revelation is challenged “by a deeper truth or by a self-interested motive for confessing that poisons the sincerity of the impulse to confess that is necessary for confession to be meaningful.” Mark Sanders furthermore clarifies that the confessions of witnesses can be ambiguous “in meaning and effect” and at the same time are underlined by the “ambiguity in law” (both In Harris 2009: 111), because testimony has to be verified and is unverifiable at the moment of its expression. Therefore, confessions held in front of the TRC need to be viewed critically, because many perpetrators could have been driven by self-interested motives.

The TRC final report quoted one example of how difficult it was to determine the extent of human rights violations caused by one individual. Four things were qualified as GVHR (Gross violation of human rights): killing, torture, severe ill-treatment and abduction. Victims of wartime abuse deserve truth and justice and the process of confession may provide closure. However, it is also assumed that sometimes these processes cause more harm than good. A truth-telling/truth-seeking process usually takes the form of war crimes tribunals or investigative commissions. The transitional justice advocates claim that truth-telling encourages peace in post-conflict societies. This sense of justice for victims is supposed to dampen their desire for vengeance and minimises the risk of retributive violence and encourages reconciliation (Mendeloff 2009: 594).

After the fall of apartheid, South African society was in dire need of healing in order to collectively overcome its horrible past. The first step towards a new era of freedom was achieved through democratisation. The change of power to an 'actual' democracy, which included every citizen and not just the white population, and the resulting rebirth of South Africa led to the metaphor of the rainbow nation. This term "echoed the familiar multiculturalist axiom of unity through recognition of difference" (Posel 2008: 129). Furthermore, the prominent concept of ubuntu, which derived from the Zulu formulation "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu – a human being is a human through human beings" (idid.) restored the black population's dignity. These concepts are even nowadays used as representations of South Africa.

### **3.2. *Disgrace* and the TRC**

J. M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* deals with race relations in post-apartheid South Africa. Coetzee presents the country as a place "where white people are not ready to take responsibility and address their guilt" (Ratcliffe 2013-2014: 101). He portrays a man who ends up living in shame as he is being punished for his unethical actions and thereby implies that this will be the white man's future, if change does not take place. The author has been heavily criticised by some of his colleagues such as Nadine Gordimer, Christopher van Wyk, Athol Fugard and many more, for writing such an intense novel and for "perpetuating the worst nightmares and clichés about South Africa as a violent society" (Mardorossian 2011: 72). Especially the pessimistic representation of a country that finally overcame apartheid was not appreciated. However, *Disgrace* also found approval with many academics. As Carine



Mardorossian explains, the novel “does not reproduce so much as expose the workings of racist ideologies and their inextricable link to gender” (2011: 73). A closer analysis reveals the complexity of race, class and gender, which is pervasive in South Africa, and the problems that go along with it.

The protagonist of *Disgrace* could easily be read as the author’s avatar. Coetzee was a lecturer at the University of Cape Town and presents his critical view towards the South African society in this novel. Among his works, *Disgrace* has been widely recognised as phenomenal in many respects. The novel expresses the challenges for South African identities and does this by including the author’s own experiences of his life in South Africa. As the author experienced guilt and shame while growing up as a descendant of Dutch immigrants, his novels, especially *Disgrace*, revolve around protagonists that also feel guilt and shame. He creates a world closer to his own than in any other of his works (Rose 2002: 191). *Disgrace* subtly critiques the TRC proceedings and especially the “truth for amnesty” deal (Anker 2012: 153). This exchange enabled perpetrators to avoid being imprisoned for confessing and revealing the truth about their involvement in gross human rights violations during apartheid.

*Disgrace* is a third-person narration focalised by the main character, David Lurie. The heterodiegetic narrator tells Lurie’s story in present tense, which is a frequent feature of Coetzee’s novels. The use of present tense narration “implies an eschewing of the perfective [...] as a reliable marker of completed action” (Sanders 2002: 365). Therefore, the story does not end with its last sentence, but leaves room for interpretation afterwards. The protagonist David Lurie is a fifty-two-year-old professor, who is obsessed with sex. Deciding against a first-person narration in this novel has several consequences. Through the third-person narrator, who’s voice is “coming from outside of the narrative” (Ratcliffe 2013-2014: 96) Lurie’s actions are not condemned and thereby even slightly defended. The danger here lies in the fact that readers usually trust an external voice and its judgement, because one expects it to be impartial. With such an omniscient narrative voice, Coetzee manipulates his readers’ response. As the story evolves, it becomes more difficult for the reader to form a negative judgement, because one is confronted with Lurie’s thought processes and self-criticism. This form of narration makes it difficult for the reader to criticise him, even if it is obvious that he is evil (Ratcliffe 2013-2014: 96). An intimacy is created between the reader and the protagonist, which simultaneously confuses the reader’s judgement. However, the reader is shut out in certain scenes when the perspective changes. For instance, when Lurie rapes

Melanie, the reader is confronted with his outburst of lust and passion, rather than with his thoughts and feelings at the moment. Therefore, the reader has a “restricted viewpoint” (Ratcliffe 2013-2014: 99). One can only see the things that the protagonist sees, which leaves a lot of room for interpretation.

After an affair with one of his female students, which can be classified as rape, he loses his position as a teacher and is publicly exposed. However, before his suspension, a university committee is gathered and tries to collectively find a solution for Lurie’s situation. The proceedings of this university committee can be read as direct representation of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee and its omnipresence across the media. In the novel Lurie refuses to meet the committee’s expectations and demands of exposing contrition and shame for what he has done to his student (Ogden 2012: 308). The committee is interested in a peaceful conciliation, because some of its members see a disturbing link between Lurie’s behaviour and that of the Dutch colonisers, who also took advantage of black women. Stefanie Boese (2017: 250), however, points out that the link between Lurie’s actions and the colonial exploitations of South Africa is not apparent. The lack of a legal framework and language makes the committee rely on subjective ethics. The head of the university committee, Dr. Rassool “fails to offer a concrete link between [Lurie’s] actions and South Africa’s racial history” (Boese 2017: 250). Just as some members of the university committee pressured Lurie to show remorse authentically and convincingly in the novel, Leigh Payne uncovered that Archbishop Desmond Tutu sometimes even “tutored perpetrators in the art of remorse” (2008: 70) in order to achieve rueful confessions during the TRC hearings that took place in South Africa in the 90s. These confessions were supposed to have a greater and more meaningful impact on the audience. This, as Sanders (2002: 370) stresses, created a confusion between making a full disclosure of what happened and expressing remorse. Tutu can be seen as Rassool’s historical counterpart. The university committee in *Disgrace* creates a similar confusion and it seems that its major goal is to receive Lurie’s confession in order to display it as a successful case. They simply do not want to shed a bad light on the university.

In the novel, Lurie’s responses never fully meet the committee’s expectations. The committee is not able to talk sense into Lurie and cannot receive a truthful confession. His answers are not satisfactorily visceral (Saunders 2005: 100). In Saunders’ definition, visceral literally refers to the internal organs and, figuratively, “to the deep or profound” (ibid.: 99). Therefore, it is not only connected to the body, but also to emotions and can thereby “signify

the inverse of reason: the irrational” (Saunders 2005: 99). Lurie acts irrationally. He pleads guilty and accepts the charges but cannot be convinced that a legal confession is not enough to save him from a suspension. Just as the university committee in *Disgrace*, the TRC tried to measure if the confessor would adequately present the truth in real life (Saunders 2005: 101). The novel, by depicting Lurie as a perpetrator, who accepts his charges but refuses to show remorse, represents the ethical dilemma the TRC was facing with literary means (Saunders 2005: 99). After the unsuccessful hearing, Lurie has to leave Cape Town behind, because of the disgrace he is experiencing there. Similarly, to this flight depicted in the novel, many white South Africans chose to leave their home country, because they felt guilty and were afraid of a future without the privileges they were used to.

According to Foucault (1979: 61), the West has relied on the production of truth as long ago as the Middle Ages. It was and is expected that expressing the truth will lead to “intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it” (Saunders 2005: 102), regardless of any consequences. In the novel, Lurie’s expression of truth, however, leaves the reader questioning the TRC’s expectation, which are represented in the form of the university committee, that “by establishing a record of gross violations of human rights, one will also have produced a justice that is individually restorative and socially transformative” (Saunders 2005: 102). Lurie mocks the demand for a visceral alteration of society through confession and truth-telling, which was expected by the university committee as well as the TRC (Saunders 2005: 102). *Disgrace* seems to pose the question whether an act of confession by itself can offer a satisfying visceral transformation, which is what the TRC desired and claimed to achieve; or whether attention should have rather been focused on the compensation of victims and not entirely on the reformation of perpetrators and thereby the entire nation (Saunders 2005: 102). Priscilla Hayner (2002: 6) proposes that actual reconciliation may depend on a clear end of the fear of future violence and oppression; a medical programme for the injured; and a redistribution of goods and land, in order to balance victims’ structural inequalities and respond to their basic material needs. These are indeed important goals that should have been focused on.

Many critics read Lurie’s inability to cooperate with the university committee as Coetzee’s criticism of the TRC. So does Michelle Kelly (2015: 165), however, she rather sees David as having just another perception of the law than rejecting it. In front of the university committee he is willing to conform to the law as far as it is still part of a legal procedure, and

only rejects the commissioner's quasi-judicial demands. Later in the novel, after the attack on his daughter and himself, he continues to try and involve the law and the authorities. So, as one can see, regardless of his roles as victim or a perpetrator, Lurie has faith in the law, which, as Kelly suggests, "marks him out as an old-fashioned liberal and distinguishes him from those characters who experience the new South African state as lawless" (ibid.: 167). However, David also perceives the Eastern Cape as "anthropological" (*Disgrace* 118, emphasis in original), lawless world (ibid.: 161). For Kelly "*Disgrace* articulates some of the ongoing challenges for the much-celebrated constitutional order in South Africa" (2015: 174). Accordingly, Lurie at times believes in law, but simultaneously fears to encounter certain lawless characters in the countryside, which makes it difficult to position him in the liberal corner.

After he refuses to cooperate with the committee Lurie escapes Cape Town. He then visits his daughter Lucy, who lives on a farm in Grahamstown a region that has "witnessed some of the most brutal violence of the apartheid era" (Anker 2012: 157). There he becomes a trauma victim himself after he is violently attacked and set on fire, while his daughter is raped by three black men. Lurie, with his faith in the law, immediately wants to inform the police about these crimes, but his daughter does not allow him to mention the abusers, who she perceives as "debt collectors" (Coetzee 1999: 158). She feels she owes them something because of South Africa's history.

### 3.3. *Disgrace* and Rape

Rape is the central topic in Coetzee's novel, however, the two examples depicted – Lurie's affair with his student and the attack on Lucy – cannot be compared directly. As Mardorossian (2011: 74) points out, "rape is naturalised precisely as a black on white crime (thus decriminalizing white on white sexual violence)." However, the novel encourages readers to rethink this position towards rape by offering two different instances of it, which "cannot be understood in relation to one another" (Mardorossian 2011: 74). Since the story is focalised through Lurie, readers know exactly what he is thinking when he forces himself on Melanie Isaacs. One can tell that the word rape crosses his mind, but he continuously tries to justify his actions: "Not rape, not quite that, but undesired to the core. As though she has decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its

neck" (Coetzee 1999: 25). He nevertheless goes on and does not seem to mind her aversion. Sanders observes that although Lurie himself might not consciously know it, the final time he and Melanie have intercourse "it is rape under the sign of negation" (2002: 369). David is overpowered by his emotions and "bodily instincts" (Kossew 2003: 158) when he does what desire tells him to do. Kossew (2003: 158) argues that David is aware of the immorality that comes along with his actions towards the young Melanie but chooses to ignore the power relationship. As her professor, he has to act according to ethical standards and should not start and enforce a relationship with his student. Not only that, he even knows that she is not comfortable with this situation and chooses to ignore her wishes by imposing his will on her.

Since readers know what Lurie is thinking, it is easier to comprehend his actions and thought processes. Readers can follow "the reasoning that leads Lurie to decide this is not rape, and it is impossible not to participate in his way of thinking without taking away from the violence of his act" (Mardorossian 2011: 79). Paradoxically, as a reader one is made complicit because although one might hate Lurie, instead of questioning his actions, one starts to blame the student. The reader now is forced to question HER behaviour and simultaneously normalises "his forcefulness" (Mardorossian 2011: 79). Although one despises him for misusing his privileged position of power in order to have sex with one of his students, readers know what is going on in his head, which makes this act of rape appear far less dramatic than the second instance with Lucy, where one is only left with the brutal facts of a gang rape from the protagonist's perspective. However, since the novel is focalised exclusively through David Lurie, the reader does not receive an explanation for Lucy's behaviour (Kelly 2015: 161). One is left with Lurie's thoughts about the rape and the resulting fear for his daughter. This perspective makes him the victim rather than his daughter Lucy, because everything revolves around Lurie and his thoughts. One does not know how Lucy is truly affected by the rape, since the reader only knows what she is telling her father. However, it is true that she does not want to involve the police and later on even decides to keep the baby that she is expecting. Mardorossian points out that "if she presses charges, the gendered dimension of the rape will immediately be recuperated by a racially motivated reading and reify the social hierarchies that have historically been produced precisely through the link between rape and the construction of race" (2011: 75). Historians have found out that since the nineteenth century rape has been presented to the public mostly through race (Mardorossian 2011: 75). Several female critics, such as Elleke Boehmer interpret Lucy's silent acceptance of the rape "as

involving the subjection of the female body, as part of a long history of female exploitation of which the narrative itself takes note" (2002: 344). Benjamin Ogden, however, argues that these interpretations "ignore the value that the novel places on non-verbal reconciliation" (2012: 312). In *Disgrace* neither of the female victims of rape, Melanie and Lucy, nor Lurie, who was also attacked, receive any justice or confession from their abusers. Paradoxically, Lurie is simultaneously a perpetrator and a victim and could at least make it right after he experiences the feeling of powerlessness. He does try to apologise to Melanie's family, but is not able to find a convincing and adequate way. Furthermore, while being in Melanie's childhood home with an intention to apologise for an act of rape, he still cannot manage to control and repress his sexual arousal towards her even younger sister. As Elleke Boehmer points out, Lucy is simultaneously a "victim of historical violence – and, as a woman, a historical victim" (2002: 349). However, she chooses to accept this fact in order to heroically or naively account for the wrongs her ancestors have committed in the past. She takes this burden upon her and reads the attack as paying her dues (Coetzee 1999: 158). Later on, Lucy learns that Petrus is related to one of her attackers and still decides to become his wife. This displays how closely perpetrators and victims are forced together in South Africa (Boehmer 2002: 349). The marriage would guarantee her security, because Petrus is able to care for her and save her from further possible attacks. But not only that, it can also be seen as another example of 'making things right again'. As the reader learns, Lucy accepts the fact that three black men raped her, because she feels that she somehow deserved it because of history. Therefore, one can argue that she plans to marry Petrus in order to return property to the black man, which is something that neither the TRC nor the new government were able to do on a bigger scale.

The two violent incidents in *Disgrace* differ profoundly. In both cases we are talking about rape, but in the first instance a young black student is raped by a white male and in the second one a young white woman is raped by three black strangers. Mardorossian argues that "the way in which the two scenes of violence in the novel are read against one another reveals the arbitrariness with which human rights discourse [...] are applied along differential axes of power" (2011: 79). The fact that Lurie identifies the attack on Lucy as rape, but cannot see that his act was similar, "exposes his sexism as well as his racism" (Mardorossian 2011: 80). Obviously, he only classifies something as rape when it is done by black men to white women. Undoubtedly, black-on-white rape has devastating implications for a country in which this

crime is still dominating (Poyner 2000: 71). As Benjamin Ogden points out, “rape in South Africa has entered the domain of the minute hand” and has become “a fact of life” (2012: 301). He goes on and compares the incredibly high number of rape incidents in the country with the apartheid regime, where the black population was continuously abused mentally and physically. Rape does not only affect the mental wellbeing of victims; it also increases the risk of spreading sexually transmitted diseases. However, HIV infections, for instance, will never reach one hundred percent, and not every woman will become a victim of rape, but during the twentieth century every “black man or woman was experiencing a form of assault (metaphorical or otherwise) and subjugation from a white government” (Ogden 2012: 303). When turning to the first incident of rape in the novel one can now observe that Lurie’s disgrace is evoked by this specific event, while Melanie’s disgrace, on the other hand, is just another event in a history of white males utilising their skin colour and power for pleasure (Ogden 2012: 304). However, Melanie is not the first student Lurie has taken advantage of; it is just the first time that he has to deal with the consequences of his actions.

In an interview, Coetzee explains the relationship between the body and mental suffering. According to him, “it is not possible to deny the authority of suffering and therefore of the body” in South Africa (*Doubling the Point* 248). And there is a strong link between the body and power. The incidents of rape in *Disgrace* display “the exercise of power by those who have it over those who do not” (Kossew 2003: 156). In the novel, Lurie’s first two sexual partners are of African origin. This detail verifies his still existing privilege as a white male and the accompanying mind-set of an apartheid supporter (Anker 2012: 163). After the fall of the system he reluctantly starts to deal with the consequences of his unethical actions, which previously went unnoticed. It is not easy for him to get used to losing his privileges, which is why he also has difficulties when it comes to showing remorse in front of a university committee. However, throughout the novel he develops a sense of guilt and shame for his exploitation of women. Jane Poyner analyses that this reflects a “collective responsibility of oppressors for a history of abuse” (2000: 67). Similarly, Poyner argues that the books Lurie engages in stand for an analogy of the guilt “white South African liberals” (Poyner 2000: 68) felt for their complicity in the history of their country. However, he was already working with these books before he started the affair with Melanie, because he told her about them when they first met. Therefore, even if the books can be seen as an analogy, they still did not have

the desired effect on Lurie, since he continued to misuse his privilege as a white male in a powerful position.



## 4. Trauma

### 4.1. Definition of Trauma

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, the term trauma derives from the Greek *traumat-*, trauma wound, an alteration of *trōma*, which is akin to the Greek *titrōskein* to wound. In the early stages of trauma theory, it described a stressor that may produce “disordered feelings” (Erikson 1995: 184) and results in a critical condition. In other words, the term trauma refers to the state of mind which is the consequence of a physical or psychological injury. Whereas a physical injury of the brain is often treated with surgery, treating psychological trauma is much more complex, since the damage is not visible or tangible. A physical injury to the brain is visible through brain imaging methods and, therefore, it is easier to determine necessary procedures that help to regain the brain’s normal state. However, psychological trauma cannot be seen on images of the brain. Thus, interactions with the victim are necessary to grasp the damage’s dimension and cause. Trauma readings of Sigmund Freud emphasise unconscious conflict and mediation in the formation of neuroses in subjects. The subject of trauma theory is one of forgetting. The victim does not know or remember. The inner world of a traumatised subject is characterised by dissociated memories also referred to as traceless traces (Radstone 2007: 20). Therefore, testimony is important for trauma analysis. The dialogic nature of testimony is emphasised on in trauma theory. Sometimes the reason for psychological trauma is easily traceable, for example in the case of collective trauma after a war. In other instances, it is challenging to locate the source. This applies especially to victims who refuse to talk about their experiences and remain silent. Childhood experiences are especially important for the future development of individuals. Traumatic incidences that occur during childhood often lead to violent behaviour at a later stage (Heidarizadeh 2015: 789). In instances where human interactions and conversations are impossible, literature is an important tool for dealing with trauma. The stream-of-consciousness technique often used in literary works can be compared to a psychotherapy session, where the traumatised individual talks and narrates what happened and what emotions and memories are associated with the event. For a long time this so-called “talking cure” (Breuer and Freud 1895/2007: 30) was regarded as the single most important aspect of psychotherapy. Over the time, however, non-verbal aspects of interaction were starting to gain importance. However, the language-oriented approach is still a highly effective way of

treating victims of trauma. The traumatised protagonists in *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* are haunted by disturbing memories. These memories are also driven by very strong emotions such as hate, anger and fear. The suffering that derives from these memories and emotions can eventually lead to violence. In *Disgrace*, when Lucy Lurie discusses her feelings about the rape with her father, she identifies it as a personal experience and cannot understand why the perpetrators would hate her so much. Her father then tries to explain to her where the hate is coming from: "It was history speaking through them," he offers at last. "A history of wrong. Think of it that way, if it helps. It may have seemed personal, but it wasn't. It came down from the ancestors" (Coetzee 1999: 156). Of course, every form of undesired physical intrusion is a personal act and has consequences for the victim's future (sexual) behaviour. However, what Lurie meant by his explanation is that this violent act was not primarily an attack against Lucy but rather has to be seen in the bigger picture of power relations in South Africa. He justifies the entire act by linking it to the wrongs that have been done in the past, which are now being compensated for by black males.

Trauma is either based on a single event or experience or multiple events. Traumatic experiences are emotional experiences and fear and anger are the primary emotions that are frequently involved in a traumatic event (Heidarizadeh 2015: 789). Due to the impact of the emotions felt during the event, the memories that are formed are very prominent and return to haunt the victim later. As a result, trauma is known to have serious long-term consequences like confusion and insecurity. Catastrophic events like war, betrayal or sexual abuse can have enormous consequences and need to be treated in order to allow for a victim to lead a normal life again. Although, many people have been affected by disasters that disrupt their sense of self and standards of safety, not everyone has access to psychotherapy to cope with it. Even if the access is there, some people are not willing to undergo therapy, because this would ultimately mean that they indeed have a problem. Furthermore, psychotherapy is a stigmatised area, because many people link it to negative associations, which is also why many psychological traumas are left untreated. Other individuals can proceed with life effortlessly, but each person reacts and responds to trauma differently. Post-traumatic stress disorder is the best example of how trauma affects individuals after a traumatic experience. If it is left untreated, patients might suffer from anxiety, confusion, upsetting memories to the point where they are unable to function in daily life. This problematic topic is represented in many novels, such as *Disgrace*, where Lucy Lurie, after being raped, is dealing with the shock. She

behaves confused, which is one of many symptoms of a post-traumatic stress disorder. However, she still tries to react and behave composed and rational at times, especially in comparison to her father, who is driven by fear and horror. Although the reader does not know what Lucy truly feels, the traumatic incident seems to have a bigger impact on the father, even though he was not involved directly. His behaviour and his insistence to call the police, despite his daughter's wish not to, show that he is not directly focusing on her feelings and her physical and mental well-being but is rather acting selfishly and ignorant.

Even nowadays, mental disorders are stigmatised in some parts of the world. Many countries still do not acknowledge the importance of mental health. The belief that depression and anxiety, which may have their roots in traumatic experiences, are not worthy of treatment has significant consequences. Individuals who suffer need to receive support, and mental health facilities should be accessible to everyone who identifies as a victim. However, not everyone wants to be identified as a victim and some people even refuse to believe that they are victims and start to find excuses. If traumatised individuals are not taken seriously, they can become violent. Due to recurring negative emotions and memories, which are often triggered by harmless events after a trauma incident, they are remembering a horrible situation and start to feel the same strong emotions as they did when it took place. As a consequence, they could harm innocent people, because of their intensified fear and anger that was triggered through memories. The emotional scars of trauma are evident for extended periods. "She would rather hide her face, and he knows why. Because of the disgrace. Because of the shame. That is what their visitors have achieved; that is what they have done to this confident, modern young woman" (Coetzee 1999: 115). In *Disgrace*, Lurie interprets the situation and draws connections to his own emotions. The disgrace he was confronted with after he raped his student took the form of his colleagues and the entire university alienating him. Now that his daughter was raped, HE feels ashamed (Meyers 2013: 333). The resulting feeling of shame is not just connected to the rape and his futile role, but also to the fact that he "and the white middle-class type [was] complicit in the regime of intolerance and brutalization of man" (Oriaku 2016: 146). According to Oriaku (2016: 151), his ugly appearance is a physical manifestation of his state of disgrace. The following passage in *Disgrace* reveals that Lucy Lurie suffers from the emotional wounds long after her physical ones have healed: "Rape brings shame and stigmatization not only to the victim but also to the family whose honour is tainted by the act" (Oriaku 2016: 151). Trauma and its concurrent shame, doubt, or

guilt destroy important beliefs, especially the belief in one's own safety or competence to act or live in the world and one's view of oneself as decent, strong, and autonomous (Janoff-Bulman 1992: 19-22).

## 4.2. Beginnings of Trauma Theory

Trauma theory began in the 1860s, when clinicians noticed victims of railway accidents having prolonged and unusual reactions that extended beyond their physical injuries (Anderson 2016: 1). In the 1880s, doctors began psychological examinations of women who suffered from odd behaviour with no apparent cause. It was described as a feature of their gender's weak constitution (Anderson 2016: 1). Later it was brought to light that such women suffered from trauma, which could have been caused by mental or physical abuse. Sexual violence is a common theme in Coetzee's and Galgut's novels, the trauma afflicted through sexual abuse of women is very prominent throughout the stories.

Trauma studies arose in the early-to-mid-1990s. By bringing insights of deconstructive and psychoanalytic scholarship to the analysis of cultural artefacts that bear witness to traumatic histories, access to extreme events and experiences that defy understanding and representation is gained (Craps & Buelens 2008: 1). Trauma theory has been rising since the early 1990s, with authors such as Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth. Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* and Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* introduced the humanities to trauma (Radstone 2007: 9) Trauma theory developed through the writings of these authors, and through further contributions by neuroscientists and psychologists. The theory suggests that the relation between representation and actuality of the event might be reconceived as one constituted by the absence of traces (Radstone 2007: 12). The absence of traces testifies to a representation's relation to (a traumatic) event/actuality. Many victims in *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* are not aware of their own traumas and because of the absence of traces they do not know what drives their conflicted behaviour.

Over the course of history, psychology and cognitive science have developed into a broad interdisciplinary field. The brain is a complex organ and many theories have emerged that aim to explain how it works and especially how it can be healed if an injury occurred. The origin of traumatic response is unknown and unintegrated, but the ambiguous, literal event is

ever-present (Balaev 2008: 151). Trauma theory argues that trauma is only known through repetitive flashbacks. According to Cathy Caruth “the historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all” (Caruth 1996: 17). The experience itself is short but it is the brain’s processing of the event that can destroy the future of the individual if not treated properly.

The trauma theory that is employed today depends upon the abreactive mode, which asserts the position that traumatic experience produces a loss or disturbance of memories, and a dissolution of the self (Balaev 2008: 150). The Freudian concept of trauma and memory emphasises the necessity to recreate or abreact through narrative recall of the experience. When the barrier between silence and the freedom to speak about mental pain is lifted, progress occurs (Anderson 2016: 5). When this barrier is still present traumatised victims and perpetrators are unable to work through their mental pain and therefore progress cannot occur. In *The Good Doctor*, Frank Eloff is a very sceptical and neurotic individual, who does not trust others, but he does not realise that trauma might be the cause for his behaviour, and consequently carries on living his life as he is used to, accepting irrational behaviour.

A central claim of contemporary literary trauma theory asserts that trauma creates a speechless fright that divides or destroys identity (Balaev 2008: 149). Such a destroyed identity can also be observed in the plot of *Disgrace*, where David Lurie struggles with his own identity and is left lost and confused, without a moral compass. *The Good Doctor* also gives examples of divided and destroyed identities: just as Lurie, Frank Eloff has to struggle with his conscience. Many postcolonial critics and theorists have suggested theorising colonisation in “terms of the infliction of a collective trauma and reconceptualising postcolonialism as a post-traumatic cultural formation” (Craps & Buelens 2008: 2).

#### **4.2.1. Sigmund Freud**

Sigmund Freud developed a trauma theory that was continuously updated and changed throughout his life. His earliest idea, which he explained in *Studies in Hysteria* concerned the dynamics of trauma, repression and symptom formation (Berger 1997: 570). According to Freud, an overpowering event that is unacceptable for the conscious can be forgotten but can return in form of somatic symptoms or compulsive, repetitive behaviours. However, after a

while he realised that neurotic symptoms can also be the result of repressed drives and desires. In his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922) Freud returned to the theory of trauma. Another Freudian work that dealt with trauma is *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), where he explained a theory that would work for the historical development of entire cultures (Berger 1997: 570). The Freudian theory of trauma emphasises how memory of the traumatic event can be lost over time but regained in a symptomatic form when triggered through similar events. Consequently, each new catastrophe or disaster evokes and transforms the existing memories of an old catastrophe. Freud's analysis of repressed drives and desires can be utilised in order to analyse the fictional characters David Lurie and Frank Eloff. Both men also repress their need for love since both have been divorced and do not believe in healthy attachments between men and women anymore. Their repressed drives and desires result in a strong disrespect towards women.

#### 4.2.2. Cathy Caruth

According to Cathy Caruth, trauma narratives allow a new form of cross-cultural solidarity because reading about trauma creates empathy towards victims. Caruth is one of the leading figures in trauma studies and insists that "the language of trauma, and the silence of its mute repetition of suffering, profoundly and imperatively demand a new mode of reading and listening" (Caruth 1996: 9). She considers the responses to traumatic experience, including cognitive chaos and the possible division of the conscious, as an inherent characteristic of traumatic experience and memory. The possible division of consciousness and cognitive chaos that David Lurie deals with after Melanie's complaint might explain his refusal to show remorse. Only later when his own daughter is raped, does he start to realise what he did and only then reconciliation is possible.

Cathy Caruth, in her work *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), claims that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth 1996: 4). The traumatic experience becomes unrepresentable due to the inability of the brain, which is normally presented as the organ that has coherent cognitive schemata, to properly encode and process the event. Caruth also explains the contagion theory, which claims that traumatic experiences are transhistorically

passed across generational gaps through verbal and written acts of remembering (Balaev 2008: 152). If this is true, then everyone can experience trauma through empathic means based on one's ethnic, racial, gender, sexual, or economic background, producing a "post-traumatic culture" (Caruth 1996: 3). When now turning to the novels, one can observe that several characters show traits of such a post-traumatic culture. For instance, the attackers in *Disgrace* who raped Lucy out of pure hate directed at the white race, which was passed on over generations or Tehogo and his friend in *The Good Doctor*, who do not get along with the protagonist, simply because of history.

#### 4.2.3. Shoshana Felman

The American critic Shoshana Felman specialises in psychoanalysis and testimony, among other subjects on trauma. Felman's book *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (2002) deals with the link between trial and trauma. According to her, the two phenomena used to be dealt with separately until the Second World War and the Nuremberg Trials, where collective trauma was attempted to be resolved in court (Felman 2002: 1). The twentieth century was a century of many historical trials and traumas, which resulted in different trauma theories. The hidden link between trauma and law has gradually become more visible and dramatically apparent (Felman 2002: 2). Felman's proposed link between trial and trauma becomes visible in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where witnesses and perpetrators were invited to give statements of human right violations. In such trials the truth is important for reconciliation and forgiveness, since it helps to process dramatic experiences. However, this was not always possible to achieve. Coetzee criticises the TRC in *Disgrace*. After Melanie files a complaint against David, he is given the chance to confess and allowed to stay at the university as a professor, but he does not show remorse. This is a mirror of South African society after apartheid's end, where many white South Africans still did not show remorse and therefore reconciliation was and still is difficult to achieve.

### 4.3. Trauma Processing

Trauma is a damaging experience. To process a trauma time is needed, individuals suffering from trauma have to heal, and this can take several months and even years. The memories and emotions that the traumatic event produced might never vanish completely, thus the individual has to live with the reality that a change in his/herself has occurred. However, it is there, in this dark place, where self-knowledge and self-understanding hides. Recovering from trauma holds enormous potential for growth and self-discovery because the individual will have to develop new attitudes in order to deal with his/her life after a traumatic event. David Lurie has the potential of transformation after having witnessed his daughter being raped and after comprehending the rape's emotional impact on the victim. He starts to understand and gains knowledge about such physical crimes, especially after Lucy does not want to turn her perpetrators in, which David must accept helplessly. This situation has the possibility to transform David through self-understanding and self-discovery, which leads to a growth in character. Trauma can interrupt the conscious, but as presented in *Disgrace*, once a trauma is processed, transformation is possible, and this transformation holds enormous potential for the traumatised individual, whether victim or perpetrator.

However, a distinction has to be made between different categories of trauma. Morag (2013: 4) describes the perpetrator as "an unwelcome ghost, whose post-traumatic account stands as a profound challenge and hurdle for the society." Realising that perpetrators also have to cope with trauma should not undervalue the victim's side. It is important to recognise that both parts are capable of suffering, even though one was actively involved in the traumatic incident and one passively. Accepting the fact that perpetrators can experience trauma means to acknowledge that every human being is capable of causing trauma.

The selected novels deal with different personifications of trauma. Both protagonists are struggling with a mixed category of victim and perpetrator trauma. Both were at an earlier point in their lives misusing their privileges and acted unethically. David Lurie, on the one side, seduced and abused multiple of his female students and Frank Eloff, on the other side, was taking part in torture. Even if he was not executing the act himself, his professional opinion and advice led to the continuation of the torture. Both had the possibility to act differently. In the course of the novels both protagonists became the victims of trauma and experienced it themselves. Lurie is attacked and witnesses the rape of his daughter and Eloff is directly



confronted with the abduction of two of his colleagues. One of which has started to play a major role in his life.

According to *The South African Journal of Psychiatry* the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder is estimated at 2.3 %, in comparison to 1-2 % in Western Europe, 6-9 % in North America and at just over 10 % in countries exposed to long-term violence (2016). Post-traumatic stress disorder is the result of trauma and can affect victims and perpetrators for an extended period. It is exactly what Freud, Felman and Caruth explain in their theories. Not the experience is what causes the suffering but rather the intrusive thoughts that come back from unidentified roots and haunt victims through debilitating memories and emotions until they are unable to function and then exhibit abnormal behaviour.

#### **4.4. Presentation of Trauma in (Postcolonial) Novels**

The trauma novel refers to a written work that deals with a profound loss or intense fear on individual or collective levels (Balaev 2008: 147). External events like wars or natural disasters are collective human disasters that affect an entire population. However, the individual coping mechanisms for these events differ. Thus, it is interesting for trauma analysts to investigate such collective historical events.

Trauma narratives have emerged over the last thirty years as personalised responses to the psychological effects of catastrophic events. Trauma is an indicator of social injustice and oppression. Fiction helps readers access traumatic experiences and illustrates the effects of trauma on memory and identity (Vickroy 2015: 1). Readers are engaged cognitively and emotionally, and fiction plays a valuable role by depicting many of the social and psychological challenges facing us. Triggers of trauma in fiction can take different forms: in *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* they are presented in the form of racism, rape, the aftermath of a degrading political system (Vickroy 2015: 2). The contemporary genre of trauma literature demonstrates knowledge of psychological processes and includes literary elements and figurative language reflecting the causes and consequences of traumatic reactions. Many narratives incorporate the details of living through traumatic experiences as a way of immersing readers in the characters' states of mind (Vickroy 2015: 3). Trauma is an individual's response to events that is of such intensity that it impairs emotional or cognitive functioning and can bring lasting psychological disruption (Vickroy 2015: 6). Effective trauma texts engage readers in a critical

process by immersing them in. This is demonstrated textually with personal dilemmas reflecting on broader social and collective traumas (Vickroy 2015: 14). Of course, characters are not real human beings, but trauma fiction often presents realistic human dilemmas in representations that attempt to meditate on human responses to shock. And the discourses included by authors enable them to construct texts so that readers can consider the social values attached to trauma and its emotional fallout (Vickroy 2015: 16).

Postcolonial trauma novels are especially important to change Eurocentric views and make the world aware of the damage colonisation created for indigenous communities. Eurocentric views and structures maintain and widen the gap between the West and the rest of the world, and postcolonial trauma novels might encourage caring and compassion towards disadvantaged groups (Craps & Buelens 2008: 2). The postcolonial era is marked by collective trauma and psychologists and mental health professionals all over the world have realised that it is important to bear in mind the account of cultural differences in the treatment of trauma (Craps & Buelens 2008: 2). Postcolonial trauma literature helps in understanding how victims of different cultural backgrounds feel about traumatic events.

The postcolonial South African literature is filled with traumatised protagonists, in fact, postcolonial South African literature is based on the trauma inflicted by the apartheid system. *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* transmit this feeling of decay and disintegration to the reader very vividly. Inhuman conditions produced by dispossession, forced migration, slavery, segregation, racism, political violence and genocide have strong repercussions which many Westerners are unaware of because they have never experienced them. For society to heal from trauma everyone must be informed about the consequences such incisive events can have for the physical and mental well-being of individuals. A discussion might help to prevent these things from happening again in the future.

## 5. Societal Healing

In trauma recovery, literature plays an important role, but continuously has to cope with the problem of the silence of witnesses. One of the historical TRC's aims was to hear "narratives previously silenced by the brutal and violent structures of apartheid" (Harris 2009: 112). The act of expressing what has previously been silenced is understood to be a major breakthrough in trauma recovery, because stating the unspeakable might reduce its impact on a victim. During apartheid many writers recognised their "moral responsibility for South Africa's oppressed populations" (Anker 2012: 153) and chose to thematise their quandary under apartheid. Many of the victims' personal narratives were finally written down, because several authors decided to present the hardships of a suppressed community in their novels. This resulted in fictional stories that were based on true events, which then again helped people to relate with victims.

Intellectuals were seen as possible threats to the regime. Therefore, the government reacted with conservative censorship in the 1960s and 1970s in order to regulate controversial speech. As a result, many of them were exiled or imprisoned. Other authors such as Coetzee chose to escape this conflict by using allegories. However, critics interpreted this choice as avoiding direct conflict and intrusion (Anker 2012: 153). Interestingly, even after the censorship was stopped, *Disgrace* has provoked a controversy of its own. Readers as well as fellow authors and scholars started to criticise Coetzee for his dark and pessimistic take on the South African society. In my opinion this just shows that these readers are hiding from the truth and are trying to embellish the situation. Some people do not want to be confronted with the ugly truth and therefore try to ignore it. Furthermore, Coetzee's allegorical novels were being criticised for a lack of closure and failing to address the oppressions of the apartheid regime (Poyner 2000: 67). However, I do not read the entire novel as an allegory, since its links to the apartheid regime and its aftermath are directly visible to me. Stefanie Boese (2017: 248) also argues that many readers take *Disgrace* as direct representation of South Africa's current political and social situation. This was underscored by the fact that the ANC went so far as to use *Disgrace* as "evidence for the continuing racism among white South Africans" (Boese 2017: 249) when they presented the novel in the year 2000 to the South African Human Rights Commission. However, sadly the ANC did not mention the focus on rape and sexual violence against women, which shows that this ongoing problem does not receive

enough attention. Already during the TRC hearings this omission of rape talk could be witnessed, when race relations were always the single most important topic, largely neglecting women's stories of rape (Boese 2017: 249). Most women who testified were only talking about the crimes against men, which elevated one crime over another.

Undoubtedly, literature provides significant benefits for its readers through the unravelling of human thoughts and the inner workings of the mind, especially in dark times. Therefore, literature is a key aspect when it comes to societal healing. Literary texts have the undeniable power of portraying issues vividly and address a potentially large readership, thereby offering to help readers at the same time. The huge influence of written works on readers has been evident over the course of history in every era. In the past, social upheaval was often possible due to the distribution of written texts that revealed injustices which happened around the world. To illustrate this phenomenon, U.S. history offers a famous example. The 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, is alleged to have called the female writer Harriet Beecher Stowe the "little lady who wrote the book that triggered this big war" (Hamand 1988: 3). This quote indicates that the American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 between the North and the South has been influenced by her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), which paint a vivid picture of the atrocities caused by slavery. Harriet Beecher Stowe brought slavery into the homes of thousands of Northerners, who had had little to no access to the cruelty that was going on in the South (Hamand 1988: 3). The civil war ended with the abolishment of slavery in the United States in 1865. This demonstrates how immense a potential impact of a literary work could become.

The apartheid era in South Africa was another such dark chapter in history, where the imaginary and self-proclaimed superiority by white men led to the population's segregation. The ignorance and cruelty necessary for the establishment of such a social system is beyond all measures. Unsurprisingly, following the breakup of the unethical politics and the eventual end of apartheid, the population was traumatised and is still dealing with the repercussions of this period. The shame and guilt that haunted victims as well as perpetrators after the end of apartheid was severe but not always visible. After such collective traumas, emotional suppression is a common method for processing and dealing with trauma. Therefore, the published news and information about the brutalities caused during this time that reached the public are only the tip of the iceberg. Much of it remained hidden. Literature provided rich knowledge about these hidden parts of the apartheid era and its consequences. The two

influential and award winning South African novelists selected for this thesis, Damon Galgut and J. M. Coetzee, have both contributed greatly to the world's understanding of a racial segregation system and its impact. *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* displays the lives of formerly privileged white males and their struggles after apartheid's end.

Literature has the power to instigate change and can be a positive force. It can have healing effects on society because reading enhances empathy and understanding but also the feeling of togetherness. The protagonists in *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* perfectly mirror the feelings of guilt and shame that were the by-products of crimes committed against non-white South Africans by white South Africans. Both novels' protagonists are white men who live and work in South Africa in positions that aim to improve the world: David Lurie works as a university professor, who teaches communication in Cape Town, and Frank Eloff works as a physician in a rural hospital. Both have lost hope and are cynical about life, they do not enjoy their jobs and entertain a hedonistic lifestyle in order to bear their purposeless existence. The chain of events gives readers insight into the psyche of victim and perpetrator and allows for understanding and empathy towards them.

After traumatic events, trauma literature plays an essential part in the pursuit of societal healing. Authors of this genre try to express the debilitating experience of disturbed thoughts and memories that derive from traumatic emotional experiences, which have negative impacts on individuals' lives. They are creating a fictional world with invented characters who struggle with similar conflicting emotions caused by trauma which many people can relate with. It is obvious that the protagonists of, for instance, *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* are haunted by disturbed thoughts which lead to questionable forms of behaviour. The trauma novel works through the interplay that occurs between language, experience, memory and place. It draws attention to the role of place, which functions to show the effects of trauma through metaphoric and material means (Balaev 2008: 149). David Lurie and Frank Eloff must deal with memories that erupt due to environmental triggers; the place reminds them of their traumatic experiences.

For a healing process to occur, it is important that victims confront the origins of their traumas. By re-telling the story or re-experiencing their own trauma, even if it is painful, reading such novels might have an impact on the processing of individual traumas, because through the realisation and acceptance of guilt, readers can start to confront themselves and deal with their own traumatic experience. In the trauma novel attachments between people

are disrupted by traumatic events. Thereby, beliefs about “moral laws and social relationships that are themselves connected to specific environments” (Balaev 2008: 150) are challenged. The attachment between self and others is an undeniable theme in *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor*. Both protagonists form unstable and morally questionable connections to other characters, so the attachments formed between self and others are severely disrupted. The specific environment where the protagonists find themselves influence their behaviour. Turning to *Disgrace*, David has the duty to provide knowledge about communication and literature to his students. He, however, misuses his position to seduce one of his students and cannot feel remorse after the event took place. However, as he changes his environment from the city to a rural area where his daughter lives, a change in his character occurs. As soon as he moves into his daughter’s farm, he starts to take care of her and helps her with daily chores. The memory and meaning of Lurie’s personal trauma shift once he moves away from Cape Town, where everything reminds him of his previous experiences. Trauma literature represents the disruption between the self and others by describing the place of trauma. The physical environment offers the opportunity to examine both the personal and cultural histories embedded in landscapes that then define the character’s identity and the meaning of traumatic experiences (Balaev 2008: 150). Place is very important in the representation of trauma because it shows the individual experience within a larger cultural context and organises the memory and meaning of trauma.

In post-apartheid South Africa, not all white individuals are affected by trauma, but even those who are, have completely different experiences and reasons for their trauma. The two novels deal with similar cases but there are still differences in trauma processing evident. David Lurie and Frank Eloff are both individuals who suffered personal loss: their marriages failed, their reputations were destroyed, they lead purposeless lives and additionally they live in a country which suffers from collective loss, consequently they have lost all hope and have pessimistic views towards the future. This pessimism is aimed at all individuals they interact with. Trauma narratives can recreate and abreact the experience for those who were not there – the reader, listener, or witness can undergo the historical experience first-hand (Balaev 2008: 152). This makes trauma literature a very useful tool for healing but also to prevent future repetition of such events. The societal healing effect of novels like *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* lies in the complex relationships the protagonists form with other individuals and their sense of hopelessness which transforms at the end of the novels. The

main characters have lost their sense of self and fundamental assumptions about moral laws and social relationships are challenged, however, eventually there is room for redemption for both of them which can be connected to the recovery of a trauma. Each painful situation can be turned around with patience and time.

## 6. Comparing the Novels

### 6.1. Settings

Coetzee mentioned the scarcity in South African literature, which mirrors the relations between human beings in the country and the overall political situation there. Coetzee and Galgut chose the main settings of their novels *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* to be rural parts of South Africa, where the Batustans or homelands (also black homeland, black state) were established. These were territories set aside for black inhabitants of South Africa and South West Africa during apartheid. While the protagonist in *Disgrace* at the beginning of the novel used to live in Cape Town, the main events happen in the homeland, more precisely in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape.

Frank Eloff, the protagonist in *The Good Doctor*, works as a physician in a deserted rural hospital. The hospital is rarely visited by patients and the area is surrounded by nothingness. It is mostly “empty space. Uninhabited. No human chaos, no movement. A ghost town” (Galgut 2003: 4). The protagonist continues, “there’s nothing out there. No hotels, shops, restaurants, cinemas... Nothing” (Galgut 2003: 5). About the hospital he says on the same page, “this isn’t a real hospital. It’s a joke” (ibid.: 5). It seems that this part of the country has ceased to exist, the real life happens in the capital and other cities. This nothingness is a mirror of the inner state of the country’s people. After violence, injustices and poverty for years the emotional centre of South Africans is an empty space. Apathetic behaviour after the turmoil of emotions during apartheid is noticeable in the characters of *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace*. The metaphorical meaning of space is powerful in these novels: apartheid came like a storm in 1948 and it has left a damaged nation, that is still in need of repair. The eventual emptiness in the collective psyche of South Africans is expressed through the chosen places in the novels.

Choosing the settings to be the Batustans gives the readers the comparison between white and black South Africans. On the one hand, Cape Town, the place where white men rule, a city which is thriving with opportunities and possibilities. On the other hand, the rural areas, the Batustans, which are decayed and rundown. It is the aftermath of apartheid. Just as black and white men were treated differently during apartheid, they have to deal with the consequences of such treatment even after apartheid ended. Unfortunately, differences between black and white citizens are still present and the history of the country has left deep



scars that show in the behaviour of the country's traumatised people. South Africa remains divided and this can be observed in cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and others, which are visibly segregated. The rich live in suburbs, surrounded by the best restaurants and large villas, in areas that remain largely white. The workers, mainly black, live in poor, crime-plagued black enclaves. The World Bank said in 2018 that South Africa remains the most economically unequal country in the world. The differences between black and white after apartheid are portrayed in the novels *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace*. The characters still struggle with aggression and violence towards each other. White and black characters in the novels behave immorally and they try to release their feelings of anger and fear through (sexual) violence. On the one hand David Lurie who raped one of his students and on the other hand the black men who raped his daughter Lucy. *The Good Doctor* also offers the readers a very obvious example of segregation between black and white after apartheid. Laurence Waters and Frank Eloff have to share a room, because they are both the only white doctors and should stay together. Dr. Ngema, the head of the hospital does not express this directly, but the narrator explains the situation: "behind the words were other words, not spoken. It wasn't just that Laurence Waters and I were doctors; it was that we were two white men, and we belonged in a room together" (Galgut 2003: 8). Violence is a theme in *The Good Doctor* too, since Laurence Waters is killed at the end of the novel.

One of the most important themes in this thesis is trauma. Both parties, black and white South Africans suffer from trauma, the violent behaviour expresses the hurt and sadness that the traumatised characters have to deal with each day. The settings and places where the events occur in the novels are metaphors for the general situation of the country and the characters' inner state. The emptiness and darkness of the places resemble the overall situation in South Africa. In *The Good Doctor*, Frank Eloff and Laurence Waters have a conversation about the place that carries deep meaning: "but people get injured, people get sick. Don't they need help?"; "What do you think this place means to them? It's where the army came from. It's where their puppet dictator lived. They hate this place"; "You mean politics, he said. But that's all past now. It doesn't matter any more."; "The past has only just happened. It's not past yet" (Galgut 2003: 6). The dialogue between Frank Eloff and Laurence Waters expresses the decay of South Africa, the place provides memories about events that injured, sick people want to forget. This shows how brutal the past must have been, since even

injured and sick people do not want to receive treatment in this hospital because it makes them remember the violence and inhumanities that happened during apartheid.

Violence is omnipresent in the homelands, even if they appear very quiet and empty, just like after apartheid it seemed that problems are solved, however, it has left a traumatised generation still in need of healing. The homelands in the novels can also stand for the whole country of South Africa. The country's beauty has been taken away by greedy and proud men, whose arrogance has caused the country to separate between white and black areas. This segregation has left a damaged country, and the damage can only slowly be repaired as the novels *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* show.

## 6.2. Similarities and Differences

Coetzee's *Disgrace* was published in 1999 and received international praise, Galgut published his novel *The Good Doctor* four years later in 2003 and the similarities between the novels were noticed immediately. Galgut's writing style is often compared to Coetzee's and the two authors also deal with the same themes in their novels. The central issues of the novels are, on the one hand, post-apartheid, violence, rape, failed relationships, current political and racial problems in South Africa and, on the other hand, idealism by the younger generation. The similarities in central issues are very evident in the novels beginning from the equal circumstances both protagonists find themselves in. Frank Eloff and David Lurie are white South Africans in privileged positions, suffering from feelings of guilt and shame, by-products of depression. Neither manages to establish healthy relationships; they are both divorced seeking a solution for sex through partly immoral affairs. The protagonists are cynical and have given up on improving their situation, they escape to rural parts of the country to find peace. Apathetic behaviour is part of their depression. Frank Eloff has accepted his situation as a doctor in a hospital without patients, he is not happy, but he does not care anymore until the idealistic Laurence Waters arrives. It is the comparison between Laurence and Frank that points out the difference between their characters and Frank's apathy and scepticism.

In *Disgrace* David Lurie rejects the opportunity to keep his position at the university through an honest apology. His pride and arrogance hinder the asking for forgiveness. Instead, he avoids further humiliation and travels away from the city to the country. There it seems that his character changes positively because he is helping his daughter, Lucy. She is an open-

mindful woman and her positivity influences David. The same happens with Frank and Laurence in *The Good Doctor*. Over time both benefit from one another. One day, however, violence and rape take over their peaceful existence and disrupt their sense of safety and self. The rape of daughter Lucy is especially hard for her father, since she decides to remain silent about the incident. David makes a sudden and shocking realisation about Lucy's innocence and how innocent his student Melanie was. At that point David starts to regret his past actions and starts to reconsider his previous perspective. Frank Eloff has a similar realisation at the end of *The Good Doctor*, when Laurence Waters is gone and he finally receives a promotion at the hospital and moves to Dr. Ngema's room. It does not foster happiness. This final scene in the novel expresses a hopeless and purposeless atmosphere but he surprisingly accepts the situation and takes some small satisfaction from the fact that he has been waiting seven years for this to happen.

The difference between Frank Eloff and David Lurie is that Frank has been a physician at the hospital for seven years while David just moved to his daughter's farm at a later stage in his life. Therefore, Frank is aware of the political situation in the homelands. *The Good Doctor* starts with the first meeting between Frank and Laurence when Frank thinks to himself "he won't last", which in the end proves to be the truth. In *Disgrace*, David Lurie is not aware of the ongoing violence in the homelands until his daughter Lucy is raped, which serves as a wake-up call for him. The political and racial problems in South Africa are dealt with very similarly in the novels, however these problems affect the individuals in the novel slightly differently.

Another similarity is the idealism of Lucy Lurie and Laurence Waters. Both want to make the world a better place, Lucy through her farm and her love for animals and Laurence Waters through being a young doctor trying to save the world. Both are very idealistic without realistic perceptions about the situation in South Africa after apartheid. The novels deal with this idealism in the same way: Lucy Lurie and Laurence Waters become victims of violence which depict the importance of having a realistic mindset otherwise life will force it through experience. Experience is also an essential theme in both novels because the difference between experience (Frank Eloff, David Lurie) and innocence (Lucy Lurie, Laurence Waters) is illustrated often and the novels indirectly express the superiority of experience over innocence.

*Disgrace* employs a casual narrative voice which aligns with the dubious protagonist David Lurie, to ensure that despite his unethical and immoral actions he escapes the novel free from any condemnation from either narrator or reader. The focalisation creates the experiencing character as the reflector of fiction and the events that are in relation to him are communicated through David Lurie himself, who is the 'focaliser' of the narrative (Simpson 2004: 28). The external narrator is the medium for translating the perspective of the protagonist. This helps the reader to see the events from the protagonist's internal psyche (Simpson 2004: 124).

*The Good Doctor* is a retrospective, first-person narration. Frank Eloff is the narrator, the cynical doctor who is working at a hospital in a remote region of South Africa. Frank is both focaliser and narrator, the reader is constantly aware of his lies and concealments in his interactions with Laurence. He is truthful about his lies. This narrative style limits the reader's possibility for analysing Laurence's character, since the reader is influenced by Frank's perspective. The narration seems also to be a work of mourning of a lost estranged friend from the narrator's point of view. *The Good Doctor* is a trauma novel and the narration is produced by the memories of the protagonist Frank and therefore it is a limited perspective of what actually happened. Chapter 6 will explain how memories are formed after and during trauma and how such memories are often distorted. Consequently, what the reader knows about Laurence Waters is influenced by repressed emotions and memories of Frank Eloff and therefore not reality.

## 7. Memory and Intrusion

Defining trauma is challenging because the confusing array of conceptualisations ranges from PTSD to cultural trauma. In the field of psychiatry trauma remains a particularly controversial subject because its history is one of repeated gaps and ruptures, with cyclical periods of attention and neglect (Schönfelder 2013: 27). Trauma often produces amnesia and dissociations, which are crucial characteristics. Together with memory, trauma has emerged as a key cultural category and concern, Roger Luckhurst defines it as an “exemplary conceptual knot” (2008: 14) in contemporary networks of knowledge. There has also been a “memory boom”, and a “cultural obsession” (Whitehead 2008: 1-2) with individual and collective memory. Trauma and memory reinforce each other, and the obsession about them often arises at moments of crisis, at times when memory is felt to be fragile and threatened, which is a frequent after-effect of traumatic incidents (Schönfelder 2013: 28). The full effect of trauma is only revealed through memory, because this makes it a recurring issue that will not be resolved after the actual traumatic incident.

Memories are an important part of an experienced trauma. To overcome it, it is sometimes necessary to confront painful memories when they revisit and to eventually modify and accept them in a way that remembering the event does not hurt anymore. Remembering, repeating and working through were the processes Freud focused on in order to help his patients break through his resistance and overcome his trauma (Sedler 1983: 73). The patient needs to be confronted with his traumatic memory.

The nature of traumatic memory is a recurring theme in literary presentations of trauma. Many characters in novels experience intrusive memories and flashbacks. Through the depiction of such memories literary texts reveal how profoundly the past can hold traumatised protagonists in thrall. In *The Good Doctor* Frank is often reminded of his past through memories. At one point he is forced to remember the man who took his wife. When he recalls this particular incident, he immediately feels all the anger and sadness he felt when this happened. He describes the man, Mike, in detail and the language he uses instantly becomes very emotional. “How do I feel towards him? I think he’s a snake who stole my wife from me”; “I have moved on. But I haven’t forgiven him” (Galgut 2003: 142). His thoughts also show that he has a permanent picture of Mike in his mind and this feels “constant, unchanging, immovable” (Galgut 2003: 142). The protagonist also encounters many situations

in *The Good Doctor* that lead to an intrusion of memories. When he sees the leader of the soldiers, Colonel Moller, it feels like a “hot light growing in his head” (Galgut 2003: 99). He starts to sweat because it seems that this man has not changed, which is a representation of the past intruding on the present. His mind starts to recall the ugly images of days long gone. Frank tries to “shake off his memories” (Galgut 2003: 99) but it does not work. The more he tries to repress them, the louder they become. Furthermore, he is surprised by his sudden coldness and anger after seeing Colonel Moller. Whenever he thinks about Laurence and his idealism, the anger grows. The situation shows how Colonel Moller’s image triggers Frank’s memories and emotions. He remains in a fragile state after not having seen the colonel for some years. At a certain point his anger is directed towards Laurence, because the young doctor did not have to endure the kind of painful experience that shaped Frank. Therefore, he constantly calls Laurence and his ideals silly. However, Frank has a moment of clarity at the end of this very emotional encounter and suddenly realises that the name ‘Laurence Waters’ seems like a “combination of blandness and intrigue, banality and piety and this offended him” (Galgut 2003: 100). Colonel Moller also shows signs of traumatic memories at the end of the novel, when Frank tells him that he remembers him from the past. Colonel Moller claims that he cannot remember Frank, but when Frank tells him his story, Moller’s face changes and he seems instantly alert and “something in him contracted to that hard core, tiny and closed and impregnable” (Galgut: 203). He seems detached and is not interested in the discussion anymore, because he might also repress his past actions in the army. Another example of memory intrusion in *The Good Doctor* becomes evident when the Brigadier makes an appearance. The Brigadier is the former dictator of the ex-homeland. The discussion about who the Brigadier was and what he did shows how the characters are interested in the past, in the Brigadier and his rise to power.

Ghosts can be seen as a metaphor for the haunting memories trauma victims suffer from and *Disgrace* offers such ghostly bodies, for example when Lurie dreams of a blood-soaked bed and other “patterns of violated bodies” (Segall 2005: 41). Triggers can take the form of people or situations, even smells or colours, any feature or characteristic that reminds victims of the traumatic experience (Ehlers 2010: 141). Indeed, recurring traumatic memories can transform life into a nightmare. Haunting memories keep following the victim and can take on different forms. When David Lurie sees Lucy’s ghost in a dream as a young girl in a field asking him to save her, it represents the silent woman as an innocent child (Segall 2005:

43). “The obscurity of the ghostly figure suggests an inability to comprehend the full extent of another person’s tragic experience” (Segall 2005: 47). The individual’s inability to hide from such memories means that healing is only possible when the traumatic experience is faced and overcome, since triggers are everywhere and only once the individual is healed can such triggers no longer cause harm. In *Disgrace*, these ‘ghosts’ are brought upon by David Lurie’s affair with his student Melanie and mostly by his daughter Lucy’s rape. These events create a lasting and unsettling affect which starts to take over control of his life and emotions. Other than triggers that remind victims of painful events, nightmares can be another form of reliving the traumatic experience. Often ghostly bodies appear while dreaming and intensify one’s fear. During sleep, the ability to repress painful memories is decreased and therefore nightmares are often symptoms victims have to cope with in the aftermath of trauma. David Lurie suffers from nightmares about the event and those nightmares connect his wrongdoings with what happened to his own daughter. When returning from the hospital after the violent incident, David falls asleep and dreams about Lucy. “Come to me, save me!”, she stands, “hands outstretched, wet hair combed back, in a field of white light” (Coetzee 1999: 103). He is so convinced of this dream being true that he calls it a vision.

### **7.1. The Return of the Repressed**

The word trauma stems from the ancient Greek, meaning wound. Originally, it was found in the field of medicine but later grew in importance within the humanities. One of the most influential scholars in this domain, Cathy Caruth writes: “The term trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind – a wound inflicted by an emotional shock so powerful that it breaches the mind’s experience of time, self and the world.” (1996: 3). This eventually reappears in the forms of dreams and flashbacks. The repression of his or her memory brings forth the symptoms that are harmful to the victim. Numbness, the condition where the capacity to feel pain is temporarily suspended, is often associated with trauma. Furthermore, amnesia and repression are defences of the mind against an intrusion, derived from the trauma as a real occurrence, a physical or emotional blow that overwhelms the senses and against which the mind and body must defend themselves (Eyeran 2013: 42). Victims often deny or repress what and if anything has occurred. Repression can last from days to years, but eventually the effects of the original experience will emerge and manifest

themselves in the form of nightmares or some other inexplicable and abnormal behaviour (Eyerman 2013: 42).

In *Disgrace*, David Lurie's inner struggles do not pass him by while he is staying at his daughter's farm, nursing her. He has "nightmares of his own in which he wallows in a bed of blood, or, panting, shouting soundlessly, runs from the man with the face like a hawk, like a Benin mask, like Thoth" (Coetzee 1999: 121). These gruesome nightmares are signs of a repressed trauma that returns in form of dreams or memories. The blood indicates how horrible the situation is and links it to death. Thoth, the Egyptian god of the West, is haunting him. This can be read as a representation of colonial times, where the West was intruding on foreign soil. However, his capacity to feel pain is suspended: "Again the feeling washes over him: listlessness, indifference, but also weightlessness, as if he has been eaten away from inside and only the eroded shell of his heart remains" (Coetzee 1999: 156). A sign of resignation. He chooses not to confront his inner demons but rather accepts them and continues with his miserable life. Lucy, by contrast, does not talk much about the incident. She represses the event until she finally starts to open up towards her father. Her difficulty to talk to him about the attack might also come from the fact that her father did something similar to another woman. David repeatedly tries to convince her to move away from the place due to the memories that it will create: "Lucy, it really is time for you to face up to your choices. Either you stay on in a house full of ugly memories and go on brooding on what happened to you, or you put the whole episode behind you and start a new chapter elsewhere. [...]" (Coetzee 1999: 155). He thinks that leaving the farm will help her cope with her trauma, because then one trigger is eliminated, which otherwise would continuously remind her of the attack. He suggests to flee, just as he did after the incident in Cape Town. Lucy then replies: "I can't talk any more, David, I just can't. I know I am not being clear. I wish I could explain. But I can't. Because of who you are and who I am, I can't. I'm sorry. [...]" (Coetzee 1999: 155). She is unable to communicate with her father. On the one hand, because of the shock and on the other hand, because he is a perpetrator himself, which makes his advice unreliable. Lucy represses the experience and therefore, she is unable to understand why she cannot communicate her thoughts.



## 7.2. Effects of Trauma on Memory Formation

Cathy Caruth (*Unclaimed Experience*) expresses the impossibility of memory during and after trauma. Regarding the effects of trauma on memory formation the generational transmission of information is important. The writings of a witness, who experienced the violence first-hand, will differ from the witness's descendants. While the witness will focus on what happened, the descendants will discuss the psychological repercussions of what happened and the abnormal behaviour of the victims of violence in the past. As mentioned before, repressed memories and traumatic experiences will sooner or later manifest themselves in nightmares or abnormal behaviour. Descendants of victims are mostly trying to understand what has happened and by focusing on the incidents they are transmitting the trauma to the next generations. Descendants, who did not suffer directly from the trauma, look for reasons to understand the perpetrators and feel hatred towards them. Having such a strong feeling of hate but not understanding what really happened might affect their ability to create new memories since they are so focused on traumas that happened to their ancestors. Their strong desire to hate the perpetrators who victimised their ancestors does not give them the freedom to follow their own paths. Instead, they are rather driven by the desire for revenge and in that way, trauma is sometimes transmitted over generations. This hate that is passed on over generations is also represented in the selected novels. In *Disgrace* the ill-founded hatred of the three attackers towards Lucy Lurie is especially visible. In the novel "the personal themes reflect the political background [of South Africa]" (Meyers 2013: 339). Her father's explanation is that history is speaking through them and Lucy also believes that she deserves being treated like this for all the wrongs that have been done by her ancestors. *The Good Doctor* also deals with this topic. The relationship between Tehogo, a black male who works in an inferior position and only does minor tasks around the hospital, and Frank Eloff is also affected by an antipathy that was passed on over generations. Therefore, they do not seem to be able to become true friends.

## 8. Trauma Categories

The research outcome of this thesis is based on the analysis of the protagonists, their relationships and the events that change the characters' behaviour and their inner state. The main theme in *The Good Doctor* and *Disgrace* is the inability of individuals to cope with trauma and the consequences of such unresolved trauma. The development of a character who suffers from untreated trauma is portrayed by the two protagonists David Lurie and Frank Eloff. They have been witnessing the crimes and injustices of the apartheid era and are unable to handle the aftermath. Together with other characters that are directly affected by crime they have unusual coping mechanisms for trauma. Developing explanatory accounts demonstrates less psychological distress and better social adjustment (Kaminer and Eagle 2010: 67). A study with female rape survivors who sought counselling in Cape Town found that most of them had managed to develop an explanatory account for their rapists' actions. Each viewed her rapist as disturbed or ill and having a problem with sex, a hatred of women or having a need for power and control. The space to explore and develop these explanatory accounts gave them an opportunity many trauma survivors do not have. Furthermore, a strong yearning for contact with the people who had caused their suffering in order to better understand the perpetrators' behaviour was observed in another study (Kaminer and Eagle 2010: 67). Turning to fiction, one can observe in the case of Lucy Lurie in *Disgrace* that she has no opportunity for developing an explanatory account for her rapists' actions in a professional setting. However, she feels empathy towards them and expresses a strong yearning for contact through the decision to keep the child she expects.

### 8.1. Perpetrator/Victim

Human rights discourse sees victims and perpetrators as two completely separate groups of people. The two concepts are often referred to as two distinct groups: in a situation of Gross Violations of Human Rights (GVHR) there are victims and perpetrators. Both groups are seen as homogeneous and sometimes the two are set up as diametrically opposed. In the debate surrounding amnesty in South Africa this has especially been the case. Victims' rights were sacrificed, and perpetrators escaped punishment for their crimes and wrongdoings (Borer 2003: 1088). The TRC is often referred to in this victim versus perpetrator dichotomy which is

reflected in discussions of “truth versus justice, amnesty versus prosecution, and perpetrators versus victims” (Borer 2003: 1088). Conferences have been held on this subject which led to the discussion whether the TRC was victim- or perpetrator-friendly. The dynamic of separating victim and perpetrator is challenging, since this binary approach excludes overlapping cases where a victim can also be a perpetrator and vice versa (Borer 2003: 1088). Furthermore, having a strict separation between victims and perpetrators allows no room for special cases; not all victims are the same, and not all perpetrators can be compared. *Disgrace* provides a very good example of such a discrepancy; David Lurie is a perpetrator regarding the case of the black student Melanie, but he is also a victim regarding the case of his own daughter Lucy. Another problem is the determination whether a person was a victim of one or more ill-intentioned acts or not. The TRC’s decision to concentrate only on violations committed as specific acts that resulted in severe physical and or mental injury, was controversial and not entirely supported by the population. It meant that many other crimes such as prohibited education, forced removal and other laws that lead to hunger and poverty and lack of basic health care were not considered crimes and the victims were not considered victims in this case (Borer 2003: 1092). The definition of ‘perpetrator’ was also questioned, since the word made no distinction between the kinds of acts committed and the reasons for them and consequences that followed. The fact that the protagonist in *Disgrace* receives the opportunity for redemption from the university in order to keep his position as a professor highlights this difficulty of the TRC to determine the extent of the crime committed and the appropriate consequences for the perpetrator.

## 8.2. Individual/Society

Trauma is deeply rooted in the society of South Africa, which has been considered one of the most violent countries in the world. South African literature offers many examples of murder, assault and robbery. *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* are the best examples of novels about South Africa’s recent history of apartheid state-sponsored violence and rape. The high rates of violence could come from the historical context of South Africa which is characterised by political vehemence and lead to increased depression and anxiety symptoms in society. In *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* individual and societal trauma is ever-present. Society suffers from the consequences of apartheid and people have to deal with their suffering collectively.

Trauma literature and trauma studies reveal an unknown world to the readers and tragically create the opportunity to observe what would otherwise remain hidden.

A societal trauma, like an individual trauma, is a shock to established routines and taken-for-granted identities (Eyerman 2013: 43). Wounds that derive from a shock can be collective, social and individual. They can also reinforce one another, increasing the shock and sense of loss. In mutual suffering, one's personal loss is intimately tied to losses suffered by others which intensifies the trauma and the sense of belonging. A collective identity is shattered along with an individual one (Eyerman 2013: 43). Both novels show instances of individual and societal trauma.

### **8.3. Collective Suffering**

Cultural trauma chapters in history range across the world, from extremely violent episodes in the past in Germany, Japan, China, Poland, Greece and Israel during World War II to contemporary experiences of violence and displacement in Colombia, Sarajevo, New Orleans, and South Africa among others. According to Jeffrey C. Alexander and his collaborators Ronald Eyerman and Elizabeth Butler Breese a cultural trauma occurs "when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness..." (Alexander et al. 2011: 1). Eyerman observes that cultural traumas are connected with individual and collective traumas and are made, not born. He argues that cultural trauma refers to more abstract and mediated notions of collective identity, including religious and national identity. In the case of South Africa, it is acceptable to refer to a cultural trauma when discussing the collective suffering of South Africa's post-apartheid. The apartheid era is sadly part of the country's culture which has disrupted the collective identity of South African people. Eyerman furthermore establishes two sides to a cultural trauma: an emotional experience and an interpretative reaction through shock.

## 9. Shame, Guilt, and Identity

Shame is an emotion that is associated with negative self-evaluation, which often leads to withdrawal and stress, but also to feelings of worthlessness and mistrust. This sentiment has a negative valence and drives people to hide and deny their wrongdoings. It might be necessary to become part of a social group; it helps to identify wrong and right behaviour. Silvan Tomkins, a psychologist and the founder of the affect theory, considers shame, along with interest, surprise, anger, fear, distress, disgust and contempt to be the basic set of affects. He places shame at one end of the affect polarity shame-interest, suggesting that the degree of shame in an individual determines its ability to be interested in the world. According to Tomkins, shame and disgust operate only after interest or enjoyment have been activated and inhibits one or the other or both. Incomplete reduction of interest or joy is therefore an innate activator of shame. When no further exploration takes place, interest is reduced (Sedgewick and Frank 1995: 500). Many developmental psychologists nowadays consider shame the affect that most defines the space in which a sense of self develops. It is also likely that guilt and shame influence people's coping mechanisms during interpersonal conflict. Guilt and shame are distinct emotions with different attributes. Shame centres on the global self while guilt focuses on a committed action. Guilt is considered to produce less emotional distress and anxiety than shame. Guilt plays a prosocial function and promotes positive relationships and strengthens those relationships, it also emphasises on empathy towards others. Shame is always related to positive affect and is characterised "by the possibility of a return to the interest or enjoyment that has been partially inhibited or reduced" (Frank 2007: 15). *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* deal primarily with shame and guilt and offer many examples of both emotions. David Lurie's shame after the incident with Melanie and the guilt he only feels later, after his daughter has been raped, shows how these emotions differ. He does not feel remorse towards Melanie, only after the attack on Lucy, he suddenly develops empathy towards female victims of sexual violence. Lucy Lurie best describes the feelings of shame after being raped. The manipulated and forced form of sexual activity has a far-reaching impact on the victim. Feelings of shame after rape can lead to serious problems, such as withdrawal, which is what is evident in the character Lucy when she is unable to talk about the incident. Traumatization that comes with rape makes victims feel dirty, and they are even more ashamed to be part of society followed by feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. As

mentioned above, shame connects to the development of the self and when individuals feel ashamed it transforms their sense of self. But not only victims experience strong feelings of shame, also the rapist will most likely lose his dignity, job and friends, consequences that David Lurie must deal with. The shame he feels after the event with Melanie motivates him to escape from his previous environment and hide at his daughter's farm in the rural part of South Africa. Furthermore, *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* also deal with collective shame and guilt. The shame and guilt that white South Africans felt towards the black community after the end of apartheid is an essential theme in both novels.

### 9.1. White Guilt

South Africa's history is based on two colours, the Population Registration Act of 1950 assigned every South African to either the 'white' or the 'non-white' category. In 1990 when apartheid was abandoned, the white population's feelings of superiority were forced to transform into feelings of shame and guilt. The sense of self of white South African's was destructed and defined in a new way that connected whiteness to inappropriate actions and behaviour. The concept of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission helps to explain the term 'white guilt'. A collective apology from the white community for what had been committed towards the black community was supposed to allow a future of social cohesion (Reddy 1997: 277). The black community was supposed to accept and forgive. Whiteness was the talisman that granted access to privilege and power, blackness was the opposite.

When apartheid had come to an end, white South Africans had to deal with so called 'white guilt'. This term was first used by Judith Katz in *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training* (1978). Shelby Steele adopted this term and expressed it as a "remarkable loss of authority" (1990: 497). Acknowledging the feeling of guilt made the white population vulnerable, thereby transferring their former power to the black population. What started in the 1960s in America, was that whites were finally confronted with their "willingness to participate in [...] the oppression of blacks, their indifference to human suffering and denigration, their capacity to abide evil for their own benefit" (Steele 1990: 498). Steele clarifies that white guilt comes from a "knowledge of ill-gotten advantage" and "the feeling of gratitude one feels for being white rather than black" (1990: 498). For many South Africans the interactions made between races now have this uneasy feeling of guilt and shame. Those

feelings will never subside, unless the past has been processed on both sides. Acceptance and forgiveness need to take place otherwise the past will never be forgotten and will continue to have a negative impact on the future. In the novels, Frank Eloff and David Lurie suffer from feelings of guilt and shame, firstly, because they have destroyed their personal relationships and their lives are composed of regret and frustration and secondly, because they are white South Africans and have to face the fact that their community harassed black South Africans for decades. It seems that the two protagonists are unable to master their own lives. They are unable to form healthy relationships and to critically evaluate their own forms of behaviour. Their sense of self, as mentioned above, is shattered by shame and guilt. David Lurie is a university professor, and he should know what moral behaviour consists of, since he is a role model. Instead, he forces his student Melanie to have sex with him. Of course, race and age play an important role in this relationship, however, the fact that he takes advantage of his power in order to seduce the young girl that is dependent on him, shows the true ethical violation. It is possible that he is seeking for acknowledgment and confirmation, since he is becoming old and less attractive, but his inner struggle should not be externalised in a way that harms others. He feels guilty and ashamed as a white South African because he enjoyed privileges in the past that were based on racial differences. Due to these confusing feelings, he thinks that by seducing a black student he can find closure. His white guilt that derived from South Africa's history is justified after the rape.

In *The Good Doctor*, Frank Eloff sees in Laurence Waters all that he is not. Especially the fact that Laurence tries to help people in need, makes Frank realise that he has never done anything important and he has never tried to improve his life or the lives of the people surrounding him. He is old now and full of despair and when he sees Laurence Waters and his idealism it bothers him because when he was young, he never attempted to save the world. His guilt and shame about not having done anything worthwhile makes him hate Laurence. Furthermore, because Laurence Waters is also white and does not express similar feelings of guilt and shame, Frank grows an antipathy towards him. Laurence is too young to have played an active role in apartheid and has not experienced what Frank had to experience.

Both novels show how destructive shame and guilt can be on an individual's life, especially if the feelings are not worked through. According to the shame-interest polarity, individuals start to become less interested in the world when they feel ashamed, which might explain Frank Eloff's passivity. Furthermore, the connection between shame and guilt and a

sense of self, explains the confusion the protagonists have internally. They are deeply ashamed about several life decisions and past actions. David Lurie develops guilt at the end of the novel when he realises how his daughter suffers after the rape. Guilt is connected to empathy; a character trait David did not have at the beginning of the novel.

## **9.2. The Role of Identity**

South Africa has raised challenging questions as to what it is to be a South African after the end of apartheid. In order to form a new identity, it is important to determine what has to be remembered of South Africa's past and what has to be forgotten. The concerns or crises of identity in South Africa, due to the massive changes since the end of apartheid by the liberation movements in 1990 and the transition from an apartheid state to a constitutional democracy, have long been a subject of debate (Chapman 2002: 226). It is sensible to distinguish between black South Africans, who have been victims to violence, degradation and injustices for years and white South Africans, who have considered themselves superior and are responsible for inappropriate actions and destructions towards a group of their own society. Considering the expression of identity in these two groups, it is obvious that there has been a complete invasion into the sense of self of black South Africans during apartheid, which has shattered their identity and sense of belonging to a community, the social identity of black South Africans has been completely destroyed.

The concept of social identity has been invoked throughout the human sciences, when there is a need for a conceptual bridge between individual and group levels (Brewer 2001: 115). Social identity provides a link between the psychology of the individual and the structure and process of social groups within which the self is embedded (Brewer 2001: 115). Furthermore, social identities represent the internalisation of rules, expectations, and norms that are associated with specific social roles as aspects of the individual self, the individual therefore places himself or herself into a defined position which is in relation to others and the social system in general (Brewer 2001: 117). South Africa's identity is shaped by a posttraumatic culture, a profound historical shock has transformed the individual self of South Africans, among many other nations in the world's history. Cathy Caruth argues that "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own, it is precisely the way in which we are implicated in each other's traumas" (Caruth 1996: 24). The culture of this age but also the previous one can



be called a “wound culture” (Seltzer 1997). This term describes a culture that is focused on its own suffering and sense of physical and mental injury (Worsham 2006: 171). *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor* are stories of trauma. Trauma that applies to those who suffered from it directly, but also to those who suffer with the victims, through the victims and for the victims. The protagonists are survivors of a traumatic history that is and is not their own (Felman and Laub 1992: 57-58). This traumatic history forms the identity of individuals, it is a part of who they define themselves to be.

Considering what constitutes the development of a social identity mentioned above, *Disgrace* portrays situations, where forces that are often out of one character’s control can destroy such an identity. Social Identity gives an individual meaning, belonging and security. If an identity is fragile, the sense of self is threatened, and insecurity and anxiety arise. The characters in *Disgrace* have identity crises, which are rooted in a very uncertain future for their country, based on a very violent past. Apartheid has harmed their sense of security and justice, and this is evident in the novel’s older characters, who experienced the segregation between black and white. David Lurie is searching for meaning by working on an opera that deals with Lord Byron’s final phase of life. Lurie identifies with the hedonistic life that Byron leads. Lucy Lurie also struggles with finding a proper social identity for herself and moves to a place, away from the city, where she settles down and lives life on her own terms. The identities of David and Lucy Lurie have to be redefined in the course of the novel, since new experiences shape them, and previous behaviours and attitudes change.

Frank Eloff is a convenient example of alienation and identity crisis. In *The Good Doctor* he portrays a man who has lost his self-identity, and now tries to be useful in a rural hospital, where there are rarely patients, which makes him question his role as a doctor in this place. The idealistic Laurence Waters, Eloff’s antagonist, derives his identity from the idea to save the world. The novel’s protagonists show how difficult it is to find an identity in a troubled country. They hang on to an ideal or in the case of Frank Eloff to his stubbornness and cynicism, because they cannot find their purpose in life. It gives him a feeling of safety to stay in his depressing mindset and see the world as hopeless and unforgiving. The roles of identity in *The Good Doctor* are an important theme of the novel because they also show how difficult it is for individuals to change, how sometimes they hold on to old identities that do not serve them anymore and how this hinders their growth and transformation.

## 10. Conclusion

Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Galgut's *The Good Doctor* serve as lessons for humanity to learn from the past and not repeat the same mistakes, as the novels raise metaphysical and ethical concerns about cruelty and suffering, about the nature of evil and the burden of belief based on the history of South Africa. Apartheid's era of discrimination, rooted in an impression that whiteness equals superiority and blackness inferiority, has shown how beliefs can form a society and can eventually lead to destruction. Furthermore, the nature of evil in humans is depicted very clearly in the two novels. Every human has the capability to become evil, however, the novels also show that everyone has the possibility to choose whether he wants to become evil or not. It is, however, not as simple, since forces out of one's control often influence humans to choose one side, which basically mirrors the world's history and the reasons for wars. Society is being influenced by certain beliefs which drive people to approve of war, violence and discrimination.

Confession and reconciliation are further important themes in *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor*, since the novels deal partly with the desire for vengeance and violence is evident in the novels, violence that is rooted in injustices done not to the perpetrators but to ancestors of the perpetrators. It is an intergenerational transmission of trauma. Confession eases the feelings of hate in victims and reconciliation is possible. David Lurie does not confess his wrongdoings towards his student Melanie, he does not show remorse and consequently Melanie is unable to forgive. The actions of the TRC can partly be seen as hypocrisy because not everyone of the white community honestly feels regret and remorse towards the black community and therefore feelings of hate and anger towards the white community are still present.

The two protagonists Frank Eloff and David Lurie might serve as examples of how individuals have to deal with the consequences of their government and culture, even if they were not directly involved in the crimes. They suffer from white guilt, because they are both white South Africans in a post-apartheid era and still live in South Africa and deal with a fear of themselves. The fear derives from the knowledge of being guilty. They know that they enjoy privileged positions simply because of their race and they are aware of the fact that they are taking advantage of them. It is a collective guilt and shame felt by the characters, which could be compared to what is felt in Germany after the holocaust. Guilt and shame are powerful

emotions, shame focuses on individual actions and guilt is often associated to empathy which then deals with actions towards others, they are debilitating and make life difficult. The inability to overcome feelings of guilt and shame can have tremendous consequences for individuals, they often suffer deeply and try to solve these emotions through antisocial behaviour. This happens because their psyche is confused and disrupted and by making the external world also confusing and disrupting through their own actions gives them confirmation and security. This vicious cycle is a disturbing effect of trauma, alongside feelings of guilt and shame. Both novels show what happens when psychological trauma is not resolved by therapy or other means or how essential it is to deal with and heal psychological traumas. Trauma is a complex phenomenon and the lives of traumatised individuals are severely impaired by recurring memories of the painful experience and by nightmares. Repression of such memories leads to abnormal behaviour in victims but also relatives of victims, transgenerational trauma transmission will bring the trauma to future generations, unless at one point it is solved and healed through transformation.

Frank Eloff and David Lurie exhibit morally questionable behaviour because they are traumatised and suffer from white guilt. The protagonists are not aware of their frustrating situation and try to project all their internal struggles onto the outside world. They are not critically evaluating their own self, even though to the reader it is evident that their sense of self is disrupted, and the characters are very confused. The novels show that evil resides in everyone and it is the responsibility of the individual whether or not it chooses the right path between good and bad. Bad things happen and it is of immense importance to deal with what happened and not repress and avoid it. This applies especially to collective trauma, since war and societal problems affect individuals. Forgiveness is a possible way to find closure.

David Lurie is also transformed when he takes care of his daughter and finally feels guilt towards Melanie. The power of transformation through an act of love is another important message in *Disgrace* and *The Good Doctor*. Frank Eloff might show hatred towards Laurence Waters, but looking deeper at their relationship there is a strong sense of love between the two since they help each other, so that Laurence transforms Frank in a positive way. Forgiveness is one step towards healing, but before that acceptance must happen and acceptance only happens when victims and perpetrators of trauma and their relatives finally face their fears instead of running away. To finally move on, acceptance regarding what happened is necessary, acceptance and forgiveness which then will lead to transformation

and a healed society. Lucy Lurie is a special example of an excess of empathy and forgiveness towards her perpetrators. She tries to understand why they would hate her so much and refuses to go to the police. Instead, she decides to give birth to the child she conceived during the rape and sees this decision as an act of forgiving and reconciliation. She wants to connect the black and white community with this child, a child that was fathered by a rapist driven by hate and anger but who will be born from an understanding, sympathetic woman driven by love and empathy.

## 11. Bibliography

### 11.1. Primary Sources

Coetzee, J. M. 1999. *Disgrace*. Martin Secker & Warburg.

Galgut, D. 2003. *The Good Doctor*. Palgrave Macmillan

### 11.2. Secondary Sources

Alexander, J. et al. 2011. *Narrating Trauma: On The Impact of Collective Suffering*. Paradigm Publishers.

Akhtar, S. 2009. *Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. Routledge.

Anderson, S. 2012. *Readings of Trauma, Madness, and the Body (American Literature Readings in the Twenty-First Century)*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Anker, E. 2012. *Fictions of Dignity: Embodying Human Rights in World Literature*. Cornell UP.

Barris, K. 2005. "Realism, Absence and the Man Booker Shortlist: Damon Galgut's *The Good Doctor*." *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 17(2), pp. 24-41.

Balaev, M. 2008. "Trends in Literary Trauma Theory." *An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 41(2), pp. 149-166.

Berger, J. 1997. "Review: Trauma and Literary Theory." *Contemporary Literature* 38(3), pp. 569-582.

Boehmer, E. 2002. "Not Saying Sorry, Not Speaking Pain: Gender Implications in *Disgrace*." *Interventions* 4(3), pp. 342-351.

Boese, S. 2017. "J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and the Temporality of Injury." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 58(3), pp. 248-257.

Borer, T. A. 2003. "A Taxonomy of Victims and Perpetrators: Human Rights and Reconciliation in South Africa." *Human Rights Quarterly* 25(4), pp. 1088-1116.

Breuer, J. and Freud, S. 1895/2007. *Studien über Hysterie*. Fischer.

Brewer, M. 2001. "The Many Faces of Social Identity: Implications for Political Psychology." *Political Psychology* 22(1), pp. 115-125.

Caruth, C. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Chapman, M. 2002. "The Politics of identity: South Africa, Story-telling, and Literary History." *Journal of Literary Studies* 18(3-4), pp. 224-239.

Coetzee, J. M. 1992. *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*. Harvard University Press.

Cornwell, G. et al. 2010. *The Columbia Guides to Literature Since 1945*. Columbia University Press.

Craps, S and Buelens, G. 2008. "Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels." *Studies in the Novel* 40(1-2), pp. 1-12.

Ehlers, A. 2010. "Understanding and Treating Unwanted Trauma Memories in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder." *Zeitschrift für Psychologie / Journal of Psychology* 218(2), pp. 141-145.

Erikson, K. 1995. "Notes on Trauma and Community." In Caruth, C. (ed.). *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Pp. 183-199. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Eyerman, R. 2019. *Memory, Trauma, and Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Felman, S. and Laub, D. 1992. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. Routledge.

Felman, S. 2002. *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*. Harvard University Press.

Foucault, M. 1979. *Power, Truth, Strategy*. Feral Publications.

Frank, A. 2007. "Some Affective Bases for Guilt: Tomkins, Freud, Object Relations." *ESC English Studies in Canada* 32(1), pp. 11-25.

Freud, S. 1922. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. International Psycho-Analytical Press.

Freud, S. 1939. *Moses and Monotheism*. The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

Gagnon, K. et al. 2017. "Victim-Perpetrator Dynamics Through the Lens of Betrayal Trauma Theory." *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation* 18(3), pp. 373-382.

Hamand, W. F. 1988. "'No Voice from England': Mrs. Stowe, Mr. Lincoln, and the British in the Civil War." *The New England Quarterly* 61(1), pp. 3-24.

Harris, A. 2009. "The Ambiguities of Reading: A Reflection on Mark Sanders's Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of A Truth Commission." *English Studies in Africa* 52(1), pp. 111-115.

Hayner, P. B. 2002. *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions*. Routledge.

Heidarizadeha, N. 2015. "The Significant Role of Trauma in Literature and Psychoanalysis." *Procedia. Social and Behavioral Sciences* 192, pp. 788-795.

Hlatshwayo, M. 2015. "White Power and Privilege in Academic and Intellectual Spaces of South Africa: The Need for Sober Reflection." *Politikon* 42(1), pp. 141-145.

Heywood, C. 2006. "A History of South African Literature." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 (1), pp. 140-142.

Janoff-Bulman, R. 1992. *Shattered Assumptions: Toward a New Psychology of Trauma*. Free Press.

Kaminer, D. and Eagle, G. 2010. *Traumatic Stress in South Africa*. Wits UP.

Katz, J. H. 1978. *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training*. U Oklahoma Press.

Kelly, M. 2015. "'Playing It by the Book': The Rule of Law in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Research In African Literatures* 46(1), pp. 160-178.

Kossew, S. 2003. "The Politics of Shame and Redemption in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Research in African Literatures* 34(2), pp. 155-162.

LaCapra, D. 2001. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. John Hopkins University Press.

Lenz, R. 2016. "A Stranger in the Country of His Birth: The White Man's Predicament in The New South Africa as Portrayed in John Conyngham's *The Lostness of Alice*." *Journal of Literary Studies* 32(2), pp. 75-92.

Leys, R. 2012. "Trauma and the Turn to Affect." In Mengel, E. and Borzaga, M. (eds.). *Trauma, Memory and Narrative*. Pp. 3-28.

Luckhurst, R. 2008. *The Trauma Question*. Routledge.

Lund, G. 2003. "'Healing the Nation': Medicolonial Discourses and the State of Emergency from Apartheid to Truth and Reconciliation." *Cultural Critique* 54, pp. 88-119. In Posel, D. 2008. "History as Confession: The Case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Public Culture* 20(1), pp. 119-141.

Magona, S. 2012. "It is in the Blood: Trauma and Memory in the South African Novel." In Mengel, E. and Borzaga, M. (eds.). *Trauma, Memory and Narrative*. Pp. 93-106.

Mardorossian, C. M. 2011. "Rape and the Violence of Representation in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Research In African Literatures* 42(4), pp. 72-83.

Mendeloff, D. 2009. "Trauma and Vengeance: Assessing the Psychological and Emotional Effects of Post-Conflict Justice." *Human Rights Quarterly* 31(3), pp. 592-623.

- Meyers, J. 2013. "In A Dark Time: Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Style* 47(3), pp. 333-341.
- Mohamed, S. 2015. "Of Monsters and Men: Perpetrator Trauma and Mass Atrocity." *Columbia Law Review* 115(5), pp. 1157-1216.
- Morag, R. 2013. *Waltzing with Bashir: Perpetrator Trauma and Cinema*. I.B. Tauris.
- Posel, D. 2008. "History as Confession: The Case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Public Culture* 20(1), pp. 119-141.
- Ratcliffe, A. 2013-2014. "Analyse the Development of Narrative Voice in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* using the Fowler-Uspensky Model of 'Point of View' to Explore the Construction of Condemnation and Conscience Within the Text." *Innervate* 6, pp. 96-107.
- Reddy, V. 1997. "Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *South African Human Rights Yearbook* 8, pp. 267-298.
- Ogden, B. 2012. "Reconcile, Reconciled: A New Reading of Reconciliation in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 42(3-4), pp. 301-314.
- Oriaku, R. 2016. "J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* as an Allegory of the Pain, Frustration, and Disorder of Post-Apartheid South Africa." *Matatu* 48, pp. 145-160.
- Payne, L. 2008. *Unsettling Accounts: Neither Truth Nor Reconciliation in Confessions of State Violence*. Duke UP.
- Poyner, J. 2000. "Truth and Reconciliation in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Scrutiny* 2 5(2), pp. 67-77.
- Radstone, S. 2007. "Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics." *Paragraph* 30(1), pp. 9-29.
- Rose, J. 2002. "Apathy and Accountability: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Raritan* 21(4), pp. 175-95.
- Rosenthal, H. 2003. *Human Services Dictionary*. Brunner-Routledge.
- Sanders, M. 2002. *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*. University of Natal Press.
- Sanders, M. 2002. "*Disgrace*." *Interventions: The International J of Postcolonial Studies* 4(3), pp. 363-73.
- Saunders, R. 2005. "*Disgrace* in the Time of a Truth Commission." *Parallax* 11(3), pp. 99-106.
- Schmid, W. *Narratology an Introduction*. De Gruyter, 2010.
- Schönfelder, C. 2013. *Wounds and Words*. Transcript Verlag.



- Sedgwick, E. K. and Frank, A. 1995. *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*. Duke University Press.
- Sedler, M. 1983. "Freud's Concept of Working Through." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* LII, pp. 73-98.
- Segall, K. W. 2005. "Pursuing Ghosts: The Traumatic Sublime in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Research In African Literatures* 36(4), pp. 40-54.
- Seltzer, M. 1997. "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere." *October* 80, pp. 3-26.
- Simpson, P. 2004. *Stylistics. A Resource Book for Students*. Routledge.
- Steele, S. 1990. "White Guilt." *American Scholar* 59(4), pp. 497-506.
- Thompson, L. 2014. *A History of South Africa*. Yale University Press.
- Trimpi, W. 1970. "The Definition and Practice of Literary Studies." *New Literary History* 2(1), pp. 187-192.
- Turner, V. 1987. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage." In Wels, H. et al. 2011 "Waiting in Liminal Space." *Anthropology Southern Africa* 34(1-2), pp. 30-37.
- Vickroy, L. 2015. *Reading Trauma Narratives: The Contemporary Novel and the Psychology of Oppression*. University of Virginia Press.
- Watts, R. and De L'Horne, D. J. 1994. *Coping with Trauma: the Victim and the Helper*. Australian Academic Press.
- Whitehead, A. 2008. *Memory*. Routledge.
- Young, S. 2004. "Narrative and Healing in the Hearings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Biography* 27(1), pp. 145-62.
- Worsham, L. 2006. "Composing (Identity) in a Posttraumatic Age." In Williams, B. (ed.) *Identity Papers*. Utah State University Press.

### 11.3. Online Sources

"Trauma." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma>. Accessed 13th Feb. 2020.

## 12. Appendix

### 12.1. Zusammenfassung

Der zeitgenössische südafrikanische Roman wird stark von der traumatischen Vergangenheit des Landes beeinflusst. Auch nach dem Ende der Apartheid haben sich südafrikanische Autoren weiterhin auf die weitreichenden Auswirkungen der Vergangenheit konzentriert, die die Bevölkerung noch immer beeinflussen. In dieser Diplomarbeit werden J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* und Damon Galgut's *The Good Doctor* die zentralen Objekte der Analyse sein. Ziel ist es, die ausgewählten Romane durch Anwendung theoretischer Werkzeuge im Kontext von Trauma und Schuld zu analysieren. Nach der Definition von Trauma und dem Trauma-Roman liegt der Schwerpunkt auf der Identifizierung von Trauma-Ereignissen in beiden Romanen und der Analyse ihrer Auswirkungen auf LeserInnen. Das zentrale Ziel ist es herauszufinden, ob sie den LeserInnen helfen können, das Trauma und seine Auswirkungen auf Opfer und TäterInnen zu verstehen, und ob sie Versöhnung fördern können.

### 12.2. Abstract

The contemporary South African novel is heavily influenced by the country's traumatic past. Even after apartheid has ended, South African authors have continued to focus on the far-reaching effects of the past that are still influencing the population. In this diploma thesis, J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Damon Galgut's *The Good Doctor* will be the central objects of analysis. The aim is to analyse the selected novels by applying theoretical tools in the context of trauma and guilt. After defining trauma and the trauma novel the focus lies on identifying incidents of trauma in both novels and commenting on their implications for the readers. The central goal is to discover, whether they can help readers to understand trauma and its impact on victims and perpetrators and whether they can foster reconciliation.