



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
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FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

**EXAMINING TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE IN TWO NAMIBIAN TEXTS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE
AND MUKWAHEPO**

BY

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**THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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03 MARCH 2021

Declaration of original work

I, Saara K. K. Uusiku, hereby declare that the work contained in the thesis, entitled “**Examining trauma and resilience in two Namibian Texts: Making a difference and Mukwahepo.**”, is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university or other higher education institution for the award of a degree.

Signature:



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Certification page

It is Certified that the thesis titled “**Examining trauma and resilience in two Namibian Texts: Making a difference and Mukwahepo.**” submitted by Ms Saara K. K. Uusiku towards partial fulfilment of the Master of English and Applied Linguistics degree, is based on the investigation carried out under my guidance. The thesis has therefore not been submitted to the academic award at any other university or academic institution.



Prof Sarala Krishnamurthy. (Supervisor)

Dedication

First of all, I would love to dedicate this study to the Almighty God, who gave his strength and knowledge to me every day of my life. Every challenging work needs self-efforts as well as guidance of elders especially those who were very close to our hearts. My humble effort I dedicate it to my sweet and loving father and mother, whose affection, love, encouragement and prayers of day and night made me able to get such success and honour.

Along with my hard working and supportive siblings, Laura Uusiku, Frans Uusiku, Johannes Uusiku, Lysias Uusiku, Phillipus Uusiku and Simson Uusiku, I was able to complete my studies. I would also love to dedicate my thesis to my beautiful daughter Maya Bittler.

Last but not least, I would also love to dedicate this thesis to my fiancé Simon Kasita, who has been very supportive throughout my studies.

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I appreciate the great influence of my supervisor Professor Sarala Krishnamurthy. She believed in me more than myself.

Thank you.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine trauma and resilience in two Namibian Texts: *Making a difference and Mukwahepo*. The texts comprise of a biography and an autobiography respectively. The authors are two female Namibian authors who shared their experiences during the Namibian war of liberation. They present their stories from two similar experiences. The trauma and resilience theories were applied as a lens to try and understand how they suffered and what mechanisms they engaged to overcome their struggles. The study used a qualitative method to analyse the two texts. The text selection criteria was used to select these two texts. First, these texts are Namibian female-authored novels that were not previously studied, and therefore do not repeat a previous formal study. There are no previous established works of the Namibian literature that narrate liberation war historical events. These Namibian-authored texts offer a new set of understanding that nourishes that Namibian literary scene. There are very few literature authors and scholars in Namibia that it is merely impossible to conduct a proper literature review. The study results established that trauma could impact individuals in different ways depending on their traumatic experiences. The most traumatising experiences of Mukwahepo was living in poverty in independent Namibia after sacrificing a lifetime contributing to the liberation struggle. On the other hand, although Amathila did not live a life of poverty, liberation war memories still haunted her to an extent that she ended up divorced. This was because she spent long periods of time separated from her husband, Ben Amathila during the liberation struggle and in post-independent Namibia. Both Mukwahepo and Amathila overcame their traumatic experiences by sharing their experiences in autobiographical and biographical writing. Mukwahepo who was barren, resorted to adopting refugee camp children as a way of comforting herself. Similar-to Amathila, she devoted her life in health services developmental projects in independent Namibia. The study recommends that female Namibian liberation war veterans need emotional support from government and fellow comrades to heal them from their traumatic experiences of the liberation struggle.

Key words: Trauma, resilience, liberation struggle.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background of the study

This study presents a reading of two Namibian autobiography and biography; *Making a Difference* (Amathila, 2012) and *Mukwahepo* (Namhila, 2013). The texts were written by women just after Independence in 1990. An autobiography is a popular Namibian genre that provides a safe space for women writers while reflecting their true-life experiences. Real life events that happened during the liberation struggle are told without fear of censorship. This study seeks to analyse the authenticity of the two women's traumatic experiences, how their resilient personality or enthusiasm dealt with such experiences and to evaluate the success of their coping mechanisms thereafter. It appears that many survivors of the colonial era, especially those who witnessed and suffered the violence, brutal tortures, bomb explosions and gunshots, including the exile combatants have great stories to tell the subsequent generations. They perhaps have great moments to admire the free, peaceful and stable Namibia as opposed to the periodic nature of life that they had to endure during colonisation. On the contrary, the experiences they had gone through, the torments they persevered, the deaths and bloody, disabling bombarding, gunshots and floggings must undeniably be traumatising. A moment of suffering was when a woman was beaten by the apartheid government until she had a miscarriage (Namhila, 2015).

It should thus, be scary to imagine how resilient and persistent these heroes and heroines were in resisting their colonial oppressors regardless of how dreadful situations were and how thrilling it was to look at.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Traumatic experiences as recited in Namhila's books *"The Price of Freedom"* (1997) and Shaketange's *"Walking the Boeing 707"* (2018) present evidence of the unforgettable events they witnessed and consequently affected them in different faculties of their lives. Both of these authors confess the recounts of traumatic oppressions that they endured in the past.

Nahole (2019, p.82), argues that the psychological, social, economic and cultural impact of war on communities, the atmosphere of oppression, suspicion and fear that permeated the society during war, the military actions such as the violent nightly restrictions, the public representation of corpses and racial dispositions, were quite traumatising.

Thus, the autobiographies of Albertina Amadhila and furthermore, Nahole's article (2016) an investigation of the portrayal children as participants in the liberation struggle as illustrated in Ellen Namhila's *"The Price of Freedom"* and Lydia Shaketange's *Walking the Boeing"* held the view that, that there were no rehabilitation services that would help the survivors to deal with their traumatic experiences.

It is ridiculous to think how Ellen Namhila and Albertina Amadhila, (as demonstrated in their autobiographies), were still courageous to be directly involved in the quest for the country's liberation despite the horrendous awareness of what they had encountered, and eye-witnessed. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the kind of trauma these heroic women had, how they coupled that with resilience and the mechanisms they employed, in order to help them to face their life and appreciate the free Namibia.

1.3 Research objectives

The main objective is to examine trauma and resilience in two Namibian texts *Making a difference* and *Mukwahepo*.

The specific objectives are to:

- determine the types of traumas they have experienced because of colonialism;
- explore the traumatic experiences of these two women as soldiers in the liberation struggle; and
- evaluate how they have overcome trauma through resilience.

1.4 The significance of the research

This study intends to investigate the traumatic experiences of the two heroic women soldiers, determine the types of trauma they encountered by virtue of colonialism and establish practicable strategies they have used to overcome the identified traumas. The study findings will be significant in sensitising the Namibian about the kinds of traumatic effects that exilic survivors suffered or are still suffering as a result of the liberation struggle. The findings could aid decision-makers regarding those seeking for possible remedial rehabilitations that may help with healing the deep emotional, psychological and social scars of the colonial era.

The knowledge gained through this study could shape the kind of campaign for creating awareness and shaping the current generation who may not be able to fathom the damages war caused and/or can cause. The findings could also serve as a motivation and an appeal for the whole nation to treasure the freedom that was watered by the blood of the laid heroes, heroines and nurtured by the love of the surviving legendary warriors of our nation.

The ultimate study outputs may as well benefit the academic fraternity by availing the unsearched treasures of literary knowledge and appreciate the impact of the theory of trauma and the politics of literary form on the Namibian autobiographies. Hence, this research product would form part of resourceful and unique informative source in the Namibian research archives literature for the upcoming academic novices.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

This is an exploratory study limited to the analysis of the texts '*Mukwahepo*' (Namhila, 2013) and '*Making the Difference*' (Amathila, 2012). These are two postcolonial texts that present a historical and lived experiences of female liberation war fighters. The study applied the trauma and resilience theories with the aim of understanding how women contributed to the liberation struggle. The novels were specifically relevant to the study because both the autobiography and biography were written by Namibians. Their perspectives represent the first ever cohort of women to join the liberation struggle at a young age. These two texts

represent the majority of female fighters who joined the liberation struggle but could not write about their experiences, some of which died before the end of the liberation struggle or immediately after the Namibian independence.

1.6 Definitions of technical terms

- **Biography** – According to Char (2013) a biography is an account of a person's life written by someone else.
- **Autobiography**-is a story about a person written by the same person. It is a first-person account and sometimes the story can be highly personalised (Char, 2013)
- **Resilience**- According to Seibert (2005), resilience is the ability to recover quickly from difficulties
- **Trauma**- Mlambo (2014) define trauma as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.

1.7 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the introduction of the study. The background, statement of the problem and the research objectives were discussed. The chapter also defined several technical terms that are present throughout the study. The next chapter reviews literature related to the study following the research objectives.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study by informing the main objective and the three specific objectives of the study. The study's main aim was to examine trauma and resilience in two Namibian texts; *Making a difference* and *Mukwahepo*. This chapter reviews literature that is related to trauma and resilience in the context of the study. Conducting a literature review serves to give the researcher a deeper understanding about the focus area of study. In the process, the researcher evaluates sources to establish a research gap. Some of the sources may be used to make an argument in the discussion section of the study whether the researcher agrees or disagrees with the study findings of the previous research.

2.2 Notable studies on autobiographies, biographies, trauma and resilience conducted in Namibia

Namibia is a country that gained its independence from South Africa through the liberation struggle. It is common that after such an event, the Namibian people are left traumatised to an extent that some of the emotional damage will remain unhealed. During a liberation struggle fight, women are victimised because of their vulnerability. Single male warriors tend to demand sex from a lone female among them. If the woman denies, she is raped. Namibia's literary scene, especially in literature studies do not have many authors and scholars who have written or studied trauma and resilience related to English literature. Content on trauma and resilience is an area that still needs further development by African authors. A Namibian author and academic, Mlambo (2014) has devoted his writing towards the development of trauma and resilience literature. There are a few notable studies related to trauma and resilience that have been conducted in Namibia, notably Mlambo (2014), who explored chronotope, trauma and resilience from the Afrocentric perspective. The study further expressed that people who face socio-political and economic crisis can invoke resilience as a coping strategy. The study is in the form of a book with the title; *"Trauma, Resilience and Survival Strategies in Crisis Times: An Afrocentric Literary Approach"*. In addition to that

(Cloete & Mlambo, 2014), wrote the accounts of the plight of African citizens as paraded in African fictional literature and African contemporary literary texts. The study was an analysis of the experiences narrated in Tagwira's *"Uncertainty of hope"* (Tagwira, 2006).

2.3 Bravery as a resilience factor that drew female fighters to join the liberation war

The narrative from the women authors of Namibian autobiographies is centred at writing real life personal experiences encountered by the authors. The two texts studied reflect the difficulties that Namhila and Mukwahepo experienced in their endeavours as female liberation war fighters. Only the thought of a girl child leaving home to face the unknown by participating in the liberation struggle is a traumatising event on its own. It was an act of selfless bravery that could be endured by characters who were dedicated to the liberation of Namibia from colonial occupation.

Traumatic experiences can be mental or physical especially for women in combat. After they have been exposed to these traumatic experiences, they employed various strategies to survive. This action can also be mental or physical. It may mean confronting the causes of trauma. However, in some of the cases, women often suffer from mental sickness as a result of their traumatic experiences, little do the community know that it is a survival strategy that kicks in or a failed coping mechanism in the women's minds. This usually results when the women do not share their stories to let the painful experiences off their hearts. The two texts in this study are a true reflection that when the women write about their experiences during the liberation war, they are making a point. They describe the painful experiences that they went through. By writing, they find peace in their minds as an action that accounts for resilience. This chapter reviews literature under the following subheadings: Definition of trauma and resilience with relevance to literature studies, traumatic experiences faced by women in life, trauma related to colonialism and women in combat, resilience as a strategy to overcome trauma and finally critique of the trauma and resilience theory.

2.4 Defining trauma and resilience with relevance to literature studies

Trauma can be defined as a severe emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience. In modern studies, trauma and resilience are concepts that can be studied in multidisciplinary contexts and approaches (Steven, et al. 2014). The concepts originally emanate from the fields of psychology and neurobiology science, for example brain imaging, genetics and epigenetics. Morehead, (2018) defines trauma from the psychological point of view as the unique individual experience of an event or enduring conditions, in which the individual's ability to integrate his/her emotional experience is overwhelmed, or the individual experiences (subjectively) a threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity. The suffering of women is clearly exposed from these multiple definitions that trauma results when a person is exposed to stressful and painful situations. In an attempt to define resilience, Bowen (2011) as cited in Selye (1984) defined resilience as the human body's physiological response to stress as a means of coping with diverse conditions. When the person has the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness from the pain and stress, they become resilient.

The above definitions of trauma and resilience originate from psychology and neurobiology science. In literature studies, trauma is understood as a psychoanalytic theory method of literary criticism that was developed by Freud (Zuo, 2019). The trauma theory explores the impact of trauma in literature and society by analysing its psychological, rhetorical, and cultural significance. In the context of the present study, trauma is reflected in the works authored by several Namibian female writers. They express the painful experiences as women in a patriarchal society where men dictate all the societal rules. The men tend to ignore and extend their dominance to professions that can also be occupied by women. During the Namibian liberation war movement, women were punished by flogging for their roles of anti-colonial activism (Jones, 2018). The suffering that is endured results in trauma. Patriarchal societies for example, the Kwambi King *lipumbu ya Tshilongo* in 1932 punished a woman named *Nekulu* for resisting his sexual advances (Jones, 2018). The definition of trauma in literature studies can be extracted from cultural events such as these. When a woman runs away from the fear of abuse, it is one of the mechanisms of resilience that she can adopt as a method to survive the attack by the King. The other method of resilience is to disclose to

someone the traumatic experience. Writing literature can be used as a resilience mechanism by women authors.

Studying the experiences of women is necessary to indicate the traumatic situation that women encounter. The study titled, *"Tears of courage: Five mothers, Five stories, one victory"* narrates the real traumatic experiences of five women (Namhila, 2015). The study revealed the "hidden and untold sufferings of ordinary village women". This was during the formative period of the liberation struggle. Trauma and resilience are subjects that can be studied across disciplines. In a medical study that investigates resilience in the discipline of psychiatry and the discipline of medicine, the study focussed on the prevalence of resilience in the people with psychotic illness (Sweeney, 2015). This study reviewed some comparative aspects in the two disciplines. The study found out that trauma can be caused by individual experiences where resilience is adopted as a coping measure.

The present study defines trauma as brutal and stressful situations faced by women during the war of liberation while resilience is a strategy that is adapted by the sufferers to overcome the situation. Traumatizing a woman in a liberation war can include taking advantage of a woman in combat's vulnerability when several men make sexual advances resulting in rape. It is important to note that the definition of trauma excludes a situation when the woman is willing to participate in a relationship. Resilience is defined as survival mechanisms triggered by women to overcome the difficult and stressful situation.

2.5 Women's disclosure writing in responding to trauma and stress

Self-disclosing traumatic experiences tends to have a beneficial effect on physical health and psychological well-being (Bowen, 2011). Examples of traumatic experiences faced by women can be rape, brutal beating, abused by forced marriage or even to be killed because they might have refused to cooperate with the demands of the perpetrator. Women resort to telling their story to someone other than the perpetrator, a complete narrative of their painful ordeal. Disclosing a horrendous ordeal is a survival strategy. One of the most effective strategies for women in dealing with stressful situations is to tell someone about their bad experiences. Similarly, one of the reasons women authors write is to relieve themselves by

disclosing to the readers of literature about their traumatic experiences. These experiences can be the actual lived experiences through writing an autobiography or writing fictitious events that are likely to have been lived by another person elsewhere.

2.6 Trauma related to colonialism and women in combat

A handful of studies related to Namhila and Amathila's novels have been studied in the Namibian context. In reality, society seems to care less about the plight of women who continue to suffer traumatic experiences in the hands of their fellow male Namibians. The women who are abused suffer in silence as a strategy of resilience. Only a few are bold enough to share their situation with others while the majority die in silence due to cultural reasons. In a World Health Organisation (WHO) study, it was revealed that more than one-third of women in Namibia (36%) had experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, inflicted by an intimate partner at some point in their lives (World Health Organization, 2013). The two texts studied have the potential to raise awareness in the Namibian context on the traumatic situation caused by violence against women.

Meanwhile this study explores traumatic experiences encountered by the two earmarked women (of Namhila and Amadhila), having established the testimonies from their literary work, they left for exile in the childhood stages. Thus, Nantanga (2019) remarked that childhood trauma can be any negative experience that causes major stress for or on infant or child. Hence, a research by Bellany and Hardy (2015) introduces three risk factors of posttraumatic stress disorder namely, pre-traumatic risk factors, peril-traumatic risk factors and post-traumatic risk factors.

The ability to revive and recover from trauma and persist through difficult life circumstances to live a normal life. Being attentive to holistic growth and balance of the four areas of self: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. A reflection on Wagamese's work as cited by Fiddler (2013) stated that "When your innocence is stripped from you, when your people are denigrated, when the family you came from is denounced and your tribal ways and rituals are pronounced backward, primitive, savage, you come to see yourself as less than human. That

is hell on earth, that sense of unworthiness. That's what they [residential schools] inflicted on us".

On the other hand, Tempo (2014) discusses another type of trauma that focuses specifically on examining various and distinct ways in which East African writers use literature and art to translate and transmit the physical, vicarious and psychological trauma resulting from intra-state conflicts in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. These expressions can be equated to the Namibian literary scene where female authors have decided to resist from their past, present and future traumatic experiences through the writing of autobiographies and biographies. Two good examples of such female authors are Amathila and Mukwahepo. Their stories are told in such a sombre manner that refreshes and educates other women who thought that they were and still alone in their darkness of experiences.

2.7 Slavery and pre-colonial trauma studies

Rothberg, (2008) discusses some of the trans-Atlantic slavery implication events in the novel *A Woman Named Solitude* by Schwarz-Bart, (2001). The slaves described in the novel were forcefully captured, deported and raped from the African continent to places like Europe and the Americas during the Middle Passage. Slaves were given the identification as 'property' because they could simply be sold or traded for a better one in physical appearance. In this novel, the main character, Bayangumay gives birth to a daughter named la multresse Solitude, and after some years, Solitude also gives birth to her own daughter. She is later executed for her active participation against slavery. All these characters were automatically born as slaves. The events of the precolonial era were captured as history and reflected in literature that can be passed from one generation to another. It is here where new generations learn about the traumatic experiences of the African slaves and how they suffered during that time. Similar traumatic events can be compared to the liberation war events suffered by most African people including Namibian women fighters like Amathila and Mukwahepo.

2.8 Resilience as a strategy to overcome trauma

Traumatic experiences result in the sufferers adapting to resilience as a survival strategy. A study titled, "Trauma, Coping and Resilience Among Conflict-Affected Youth in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo" that was conducted to investigate the potential causes of traumatic stress and how youth employ coping strategies through mental health resilience (Cherewick, 2016). The study concludes that since the Democratic Republic of Congo is frequented by war conflict, the affected youth employ the use of their mental strength to resist the traumatic experience.

According to the Southerland and Bryant (2005), the term "trauma" is defined as a deeply distressing or self-defining disturbing experience caused by situations. It is an emotional shock following a stressful event which may sometimes lead to a long time neurosis. It is also defined as a physical injury.

Cubis' (2016) review of resilience to traumatic events in children and adolescents argued that, factors associated with the exposure, particularly injury and the experience being life-threatening, generally, increase negative outcomes and thus, unlikely to test resilience more. It is noted that such traumatic experience relates to dose-response gradient. This literary example means that 'the worse the exposure, the greater the likelihood of resilience to overwhelm'. In other words, as this study picks up some direct testimonies of the focused auto biographers, the severity of the traumatic experience determines the period of resilience.

As this research unfolds, the excruciating floggings, murders and vivid tortures suffered by Ellen Namhila's centrepiece (*Mukwahepo*, Libertina Amadhila and other Namibian martyrs), gave birth to traumatic results to survivors, which Namhila and Amadhila are part. In Namhila's (1997. p. 40) other literary work such as the Price of Freedom revealed that as a child of just 14 years of age, was exposed to the atrocities of war, leading to emotional wounds that are failing to heal to this age. There is no doubt that going through such experience can be traumatising. The nostalgic loneliness that was born out of racism and rejection also appears to have been the cause of emotional trauma as expressed by Shaketange (2009:102 *Walking the Boeing 707*).

A qualitative research approach of mental health has revealed that some of their participants developed responses on the effects of historical trauma shortly after they learnt about historical events (Godkind et al, 2012). Reactions included sadness, questioning and reflection on intense pain and the sufferings that this must have caused. On the other hand, Duran et al., (1998), argued that this historical trauma resulted from colonialism, acculturative stress, cultural bereavement, genocide and racism that has been generalised, internalised and institutionalised. Additionally, Dennyely (1998) noted that such trauma is cumulative, unresolved, historic and ongoing.

In a study on transcultural psychiatry recites the Sai John's family narratives that emphasize the resilient capability to surmount challenges, survive and learn from mistakes (Denham, 2008). The author extends that during these narratives, cliff remarked that the natives must remember the "strength of their blood, the same blood that flowed in their ancestor's veins." This speaks for a resilient heart. A study by Waldrum (45) on transcultural psychiatry healing and the idiom of historic trauma will continue to converge, if the notion of individual responsibility will be affected by evermore popularised discussions of the harmed unto the collective by the colonisers. The author discusses measures that must be put in place to foster resilience in the colonial survivors.

In another study, Kirmayer (2011) emphasised that in order for an individual and collective healing, restitution, resilience and recovery to be understood, there must be vindications of loops between politics, structural violence, public discourse and the embodied experiences. The present study relates the opinion of Kirmayer because the Namibian politicians and society had to compromise to accept women who suffered during the liberation struggle. Healing of scars after the liberation struggle needed all Namibians to cease all kinds of structural violence to heal the suffering of women.

2.9 Critique of the trauma and resilience theory

The theory of trauma and resilience is an ever-evolving theory that is used in multiple disciplines. The term trauma and the term resilience appear to be two theories that cannot be applied independently. The origins of the trauma and resilience theory is founded in the

discipline of psychology where only trauma or resilience can be studied on its own. However, when the theory is applied to literature studies, it can be applied successfully as trauma and resilience.

2.10 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed literature related to the study. The chapter discussed the literature according to the study objectives. Previous studies that feature types of trauma were reviewed. The chapter also discussed the traumatic experiences of Mukwahepo and Amathila during their time in the liberation struggle. Lastly, resilience literature was discussed. Resilience is a strategy for survival and return to normalcy after a sufferer's painful experiences. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework. Trauma and resilience are the two concepts of the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This section of the study seeks to define the theory of trauma and resilience based of its application to the present study. Trauma and resilience are two concepts that are related since trauma is the suffering of the victim while resilience are the methods used by the sufferer to overcome the pain and suffering. The theory will be applied in order to understand the existence of the research problem and to answer to the research questions of this study.

3.2 Trauma and resilience in literature studies

Trauma and Resilience are two theories which are interlinked; therefore, they cannot be separated. Trauma is a Greek word meaning wound. The word trauma thus refers to the sudden intrusion of new and unexpected knowledge into someone's psyche, usually a sudden confrontation with violence or death. Trauma, therefore, presents a unique set of challenges to understanding. Further, because traumatic events often happen due to social forces as well as in the social world, trauma has Trauma Theory that examines and attempts to understand the manner in which traumatic experiences are processed.

The importance of the literary theory is in the evaluation, interpretation, and preservation of literary works (Mlambo, 2013). The author's argument forms the theory and resilience basis as one of the main theories for critically analysing African literature. It is popularly believed that victims of horrendous and excruciating experiences eventually become victims of trauma. Andermahr's (2016) article on decolonising trauma studies: trauma and post-colonialism reveal how both the perpetrator and the victim are entangled by trauma but offers no resolution or prospect that the other will return the stripped pieces of self. The following account gives details about the two concepts of trauma and resilience.

3.3 Trauma applied to a literature text

Trauma is the memory of the event itself which arrives belatedly (Caruth, 2014). Since the theory of trauma is founded across multiple disciplines ranging from sociology, literary, cultural studies, anthropology and history (Herman, 1992), the theory can be significantly applied to literature studies. Scholars such as Sigmund Freud who was a neurologist who was

influenced by Charcot's work also contributed to the development of the trauma theory. Trauma is a central theme in Freud's work, an inherently political, historical, and ethical dimension. Trauma Theory examines and attempts to understand the manner in which traumatic experiences are processed.

Caruth and Felman, (2002) have radically altered the way we think about trauma. They have done so by insisting upon the importance of finding new ways to acknowledge the impact of events that can only be known belatedly and of listening to the power of experiences that can only be expressed indirectly. By showing that the onset of traumatic pathology (post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD) cannot be fully determined by, or located in, a given traumatic event, Caruth, (2014) proposes that trauma compels us to imagine that traumatic events do not simply occur in time. Rather, they fracture the very experience of time for the person to whom they "happen." Resilience is the capacity of a system, be it individual, a forest, a city or an economy, to deal with change and continue to develop. The term "resilience is reserved for unpredictable or markedly successful of adaptations to negative life events, trauma, stress, and other form of risk.

3.4 Resilience applied to a literature text

Resilience can be applied to literature studies by way of analysing literary texts with related themes. Resilience originates from the Latin word "resilience", which refers to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance. (Mlambo, 2014). Resilience began being used in terms of disasters, especially by the engineering community, and it was related to the concept of being able to absorb and recover from hazardous events. The theory is concerned with clarifying the strengths that people have within them. Seibert (2005) define resilience as the capacity for successful adaptation, positive functioning, or competence, despite high risk, chronic, or following prolonged or severe trauma.

3.5 Application of the trauma and resilience theory

Trauma and resilience are two concepts that are applied as inseparable concepts when analysing a novel while identifying themes that are related to 1. traumatic experiences and 2. analysing resilience by addressing survival strategies used by the sufferer to overcome the

painful experiences. The present study applies the theory using the tenets of trauma and resilience. In this context for example, both literary texts studied have many instances where both Amathila and Mukwahepo experienced suffering as women liberation war fighters. Amadhila suffered traumatic emotions of losing Comrade Nanyemba (Amadhila, 2012, p.25). On the other hand, Mukwahepo had only to arrive back home in Namibia from the liberation struggle to find most of her relatives deceased (Namhila, 2013). Trauma themes such as death of a fellow fighter, loss of childhood and becoming a child soldier were analysed in the present study. On the other hand, resilience was analysed as the survival mechanisms that were adopted by the authors of the two texts, *Making a difference* (Amathila, 2012) and *Mukwahepo* (Namhila, 2013). A thematic approach that groups and analyses similar data from the two texts was applied.

3.6 Chapter summary

Chapter three discussed the theoretical framework and how it can be applied to the two texts studied. The research design, approach and data analysis are the main things discussed. The following chapter discusses the research methods and procedures of the study. The research design and the text selection criteria were also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

4.1 Research design

This study will use a Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. This design has strong philosophical underpinnings and typically involves conducting interviews (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

4.2 Research paradigm

The study will be conducted from a trauma and resilience approach. It is through the lenses of these theories that the researcher will explore how the two women have experienced trauma during the colonial era and the how they have overcome the different types of trauma.

4.3 Research approach

This study will use a qualitative research approach which is described by Creswell (2015) as a scientific method of observation to gather non-numerical data. The type of research “refers to meaning, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things “and not to their “counts or measures”. The focus of all qualitative research needs to be on understanding the phenomenon being explored rather than solely on the reader, the researcher, or the participants being studied.

4.4 Text selection criteria

The consideration for selecting the two texts studied was based on merit that the texts are written by Namibian authors. This study focuses on two texts *Making a Difference* by Libertina Amathila and *Mukwahepo* by Ellen Namhila which were written after independence. There is some writing of Ellen Namhila but the researcher has opted only to use *Mukwahepo*. First, these texts are Namibian texts that were not previously studied therefore do not repeat a

previous formal study. There are no previous established works of the Namibian literature that narrates liberation war historical events. After several years, the Namibian literary scene will have a footing to stand on emanating from the present study. These Namibian authored texts offer a new set of understanding that nourishes that Namibian literary scene. There are very few literature writers in Namibia that it is merely impossible to conduct a literature study with a good base of literature review. This applies to both the authors and the scholars of literature who analyse these texts. There is the view that the Namibian government does not see the value of prescribing literature studies from early grades in primary school but only to selected groups in the final two years of high school. The other reason for selecting the two texts is that the texts represent the struggles of the majority of unsung female liberation fighters before, during and after the Namibian liberation struggle. After independence, there were not many female war veterans who could write for two primary reasons, illiteracy and the traumatic fear of retelling their story. The other firm why these two texts were selected is that they offer two separate narrative experiences by two different women. Mukwahepo, never left the refugee camps in search of education because she ended her earlier studies in primary school while Amathila went on to study outside the camps including Europe where she ended up a qualified medical doctor. Mukwahepo shares an experience of a lifetime full of struggle while Amathila lived a life of opulence as the Namibian Prime Minister in independent Namibia. Lastly, the texts offer language use that is not offensive but euphemisms where they can be applied. The texts reflect a wide range of experiences that represent the struggles and the roles participated by ordinary Namibian female liberation war fighters.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

There are no ethical issues expected to arise from the proposed research. However, the proposed study will abide by the institutional statement of academic honesty and integrity. All NUST ethical considerations will be followed. All sources cited in this study will be acknowledged using the APA referencing style.

4.6 Data analysis

According to Holloway (2005) qualitative research predominantly uses method of inquiry that produces texts rather than numbers. Textual data could include transcript of interviews or conversations, diary entries, case histories etc. the significance of textual data that, it allows people to express their thoughts and beliefs in their own thought and on their own terms. This study is a qualitative, content analysis research in *Making a Difference and Mukwahepo* text will be analysed. There will be no fieldwork, but only literary analysis of autobiography and biography were done. Works of other literary critics from journals, the internet, and other publications will also be referenced to build the information that will be used to interpret the study.

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the research design that was used in the study. The next chapter is about data analysis of the texts “Making a Difference” and “Mukwahepo”. Trauma and resilience were analysed. The chapter ends with a conclusion. The next chapter analyses and discusses the data from the two texts *Mukwahepo* (Namhila, 2013) and *Making a Difference* (Amathila, 2012).

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses trauma and resilience in the two texts *Making a Difference* and *Mukwahepo*. The analysis is presented thematically where events of trauma and the traumatic experiences in both texts are discussed. This will be followed by the section that analyses resilience in the two texts studied. The analysis will be conducted according to the following objectives of the study:

- 1 to determine the types of traumas they have experienced because of colonialism
- 2 to explore the traumatic experiences of these two women as soldiers
- 3 to evaluate how they have overcome trauma through resilience

5.2 Synopsis of the autobiography *Making a difference*

At the age of 22, Libertina Amathila went into exile via Botswana to Tanzania in the hope of liberating Namibians from the inhumane treatment of the apartheid regime. Under the SWAPO's Nationhood Programme, Dr Amathila received a scholarship to study in Poland, and she graduated from the Warsaw Medical Academy in 1969.

She also studied nutrition and public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, as well as epidemiology and French in Bamako, Mali. Unable to complete her studies in paediatrics in London, she voluntarily left for Lusaka, Zambia to work at the Swakop refugee camps, later transferring to Angola to work as the director of the children's centre at Kwaza-Sul.

At SWAPO's 1969 consultative congress in Tanzania, Dr Amathila became the deputy secretary for health and welfare on the party's central committee and director of the women's council. In 1987 she was awarded the Ongulumbashe Medal for bravery and service.

As a member of SWAPO Constituent Assembly from November 1989 to March 1990, Dr Amathila helped to draft the constitution. A year later she won the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner for Refugee Award and in 1999, she served a one-year term as the

chairperson of the World Health Organisation (WHO) regional committee for Africa. In 2000 she was elected as the president of the 53rd session of the WHO assembly. When Namibia gained independence from white minority-ruled South Africa on 21 March 1990, Dr Amathila was sworn in as the first minister of regional, local government and housing. Six years later, she became the minister of health and social services. In 2005, Namibia's founding president Dr Sam Nujoma appointed her as deputy prime minister, the first woman to occupy that position.

She initiated the San Development Programme to counter the dire circumstances San communities were living in. In 2006, the first resettlement farm under the San Development Programme was launched at farm Uitkomst (Otjozunjupa Region) where over 500 San people were resettled. Two years later the Uitkomst Community Trust Fund was initiated which plays a major role in the economic development of the farm. In 2006, under the watch of Dr Amathila, scholarships were given to San learners as well as other marginalised communities. Despite retiring from active politics 15 years ago, Dr Amathila is still making an impact on marginalised communities.

Mukwahepo women soldier mother (2013), is a biography written by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila, as told by Aguste Mukwahepo Yalmanuel. Through a series of interviews, Ellen Ndeshi Namhila recorded and translated Mukwahepo's remarkable story from Oshiwambo to English. In 1963, Mukwahepo left her Namibia and followed her fiancé across the border into Angola surviving hunger and war and eventually making it to Tanzania, where she became the first woman to undergo military training with South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), and was for nine years the only woman in SWAPO's Kongwa camp.

In her twenty-five-year period in exile, Mukwahepo took a more traditional woman's role, that of taking care of children in the SWAPO camps in both Zambia and Angola. Mukwahepo was a humble and less-recognised personality who made outstanding and remarkable contributions to the liberation of Namibia. Akawa (2014), defines Mukwahepo as "an ordinary woman who performed extraordinary duties for her country."

At Independence, Mukwahepo returned to Namibia with five children, who were reclaimed one by one by their biological parents or family members, until she was left all alone. Already

in her fifties, and with little education, Mukwahepo could not get employment. She survived on handouts until the Government introduced a pension and other benefits for veterans.

In a history of only the 'dominant male voice' among the colonised people of Namibia, Mukwahepo brings to light the hidden voice, the untold and forgotten story of an ordinary woman and the outstanding role she played during the struggle.

5.3 Synopsis of the biography *Mukwahepo women soldier mother*

Mukwahepo women soldier mother (2013), is a biography written by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila, as told to her by Aguste Mukwahepo Yalmanuel. Through a series of interviews, Ellen Ndeshi Namhila recorded and translated Mukwahepo's remarkable story from Oshiwambo to English. In 1963, Mukwahepo left her Namibia and followed her fiancé across the border into Angola surviving hunger and war and eventually making it to Tanzania, where she became the first woman to undergo military training with South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), and was for nine years the only woman in SWAPO 's Kongwa camp.

In her twenty-five-year period in exile, Mukwahepo took a more traditional woman's role, that of taking care of children in the SWAPO camps in both Zambia and Angola. Mukwahepo was a humble and less-recognised personality who made outstanding and remarkable contributions to the liberation of Namibia. Akawa (2014), defines Mukwahepo as “an ordinary woman who performed extraordinary duties for her country.”

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In a history of only the 'dominant male voice' among the colonised people of Namibia, Mukwahepo brings to light the hidden voice, the untold and forgotten story of an ordinary woman and the outstanding role she played during the struggle.

5.4 TYPES OF TRAUMA IN THE LIBERATION WAR CONTEXT

The central tenet of trauma is that it destroys an individual's character and identity by instilling fear that traumatises. The individual finds it difficult to remember the traumatic events. There are several types of trauma that may occur during a war. These include witnessing a disaster, remembering about violence and acts of physical abuse. These are the types of trauma that will be discussed as related to the two texts.

5.4.1 Trauma of being inferior among male comrades

Mukwahepo suffered trauma of inferiority complex because she was a lone woman among a group of male fighters (Namhila, 2013). As she was alone among her fellow male comrades, she was not even allowed to go to battle because the men felt that she was less qualified. The group of men that surrounded her did not consider Mukwahepo as a soldier, they undermined her war capabilities to an extent that she was left behind at the camp to do chores. The reason for this kind of action by the African men is that they see women as inferior to them. African men always challenge the females because of the patriarchal nature of their dominance in society. Mukwahepo suffered from the trauma of inferiority because despite not being married to them, her fellow male soldiers give a lesser value to the participation of women even though they are doing the same task.

Another area that women deserve attention is when they have their monthly menstruation. Mukwahepo did not get support to get sanitary pads from her fellow male comrades because they view it as less valuable. She was the only female working among men and she needed sanitary pads. They regarded this as her own business in the sense that they see it as inferior despite the importance of the adequate care needed for women during their monthly menstrual cycle. While Mukwahepo was in Zambia, she was assigned the role of a female caretaker, somehow to take care of the daily needs of children and their mothers who had just arrived from Namibia. There is the view that while she was alone among fellow male combatants, they did not feel that she can be assigned to combatant duties. Instead, they

send her to become a babysitter. The following narrative tells Mukwahepo's experiences as a lone woman among a group of male fighters.

*I had been in Lusaka for about a week when the SWAPO officials told me that I would be taken to the Old Farm, a farm on the outskirts of Lusaka. I was told that there were Namibian women and children staying there who had just arrived from home and who needed my support urgently, I happily joined them. I had expected the Old Farm to look like Kongwa, but to my astonishment I found men, women, youth and children at the camp. Oh, I was pleasantly surprised. For several years **I had been the only woman amongst men**, suddenly, I was in the midst of about fifteen fellow women from my country. They were living at the camp while their husbands were away for military training or fighting the war. This was a great joy. We got to know one another. Seemingly, the women had already been told who I was. The old farm leadership told them in my presence that I had to give them orientation about SWAPO and to help them adjust to life in the camps. The name Mukwahepo followed me to Zambia. Everyone at the Old Farm called me this. The only difference was that the Old Farm my name was modified to Meekulu (Grandmother) Mukwahepo. Even the people who were older than me called me this. I had found a new home amongst my fellow Namibians (Namhila, 2013, p .61).*

The context of Mukwahepo's narrative depicts the attitude of the male liberation war fighters towards the lone female in the camps. They did not consider her as their equal match in combat but to assign her some kitchen duties. The duties assigned to her meant being inferior among male comrades, but they could not openly tell her. They suddenly decided that she was not suitable to go into the bushes to join the actual battle fighting but they instead sent her from Kongwa to the Old Farm to perform 'kitchen and domestic duties', that is babysitting included. She is assigned the role of a caregiver who took care of women, children and the youth when their husbands were out in the battlefield. Mukwahepo seem not to notice or just to be ignorant that her fellow freedom fighters are assigning her to perform domestic duties. Her words have many things that were not said, '**I had been the only woman amongst men**'. When a woman is alone among men the first thing that comes to mind could be the question, who was her lover, was it still Shikongo shaHangula or these men fought over her. Her circumstances of ending up unmarried and barren were not clear. One fact for sure is that

being alone among men is very stressful. Her narrative feels that she felt being inferior among male comrades.

5.4.2 Trauma memory of remembering about violence

The bombing of the refugee camps in Zambia and Angola was a traumatic experience for the soldiers. When remembered, it becomes very traumatic. Amathila (2012), narrates the events of the Kassinga massacre in Angola on 4 May 1978 where over 600 Namibian refugees were killed. The following excerpt tells the circumstances of the Kassinga massacre.

Kassinga massacre

It was at this time that the forces of the South Africa apartheid regime attacked refugees in Angola at our centre at Kassinga, on 4 May 1978. Much has been written elsewhere about this dreadful attack. Over 600 Namibian refugees, who had just arrived in Angola from Namibia were mercilessly killed by the South African Army. The aftermath was that children who survived the bloodbath at Kassinga were sent to the then East Germany and Government there assisted SWAPO in taking care of them. This gesture of goodwill was much appreciated by SWAPO.

Many of the children were orphans but some were children of busy SWAPO leaders. A few Namibian women went to stay with the children and keep their Namibian languages and culture alive. The children stayed in East Germany until the fall of the GDR in November 1989. (Amathila, 2012, p. 92).

The above excerpt clearly defines the traumatic experience that was faced by Amathila, Mukwahepo and the rest of the Namibian population. The bombing at Kassinga is still commemorated in present day Namibia in memory of the Namibians who lost their lives. The colonial forces had the ammunition power and resources to launch an attack at any given time. Each time when their aeroplanes hover above the skies of the Namibian refugee camps, there was the threat of a bombing. It is at Kassinga where 600 Namibian refugees lost their lives. Amathila termed the massacre 'bloodbath'. After the bombing the trauma did not only affect the loss of their fellow Namibians, but children were left orphans. These children

were given away to needy families in East Germany. They were left orphans without parents and family. They were traumatised because of the violence. Children born after independence do not take the liberation struggle seriously because they did not witness bombing at Kassinga. The way the survivors narrate their story is emotional. They talk with tears in their eyes. They feel the pain that the violence was traumatic. Experiencing the Kassinga massacre was painful and the pain from the violence remain each time they remember about the bombings. The massacre was on 4 May 1978, so the Namibian government declared the 4th of May every year, to be observed as a public holiday in the memory of all the Namibian people who lost their lives.

5.4.3 Traumatic acts of physical violence

During the liberation struggle, women were vulnerable to acts of physical violence. Physical violence is when a person hurts or tries to hurt another person by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force (Moore et al., 2010). Amathila (2012. p. 83) reports about an incident of physical violence in her narratives when a group of men suddenly stormed the hospital that she was working while she was in Zambia. The scariest part was that they were armed. Considering that Amathila was in a work environment that was supposed to be safe, she felt very frightened by this act of physical violence. When this group of men left, she was left traumatised along with her nursing staff. The following are the words of Amathila when she explains the violence.

5.4.4 Rebellious attack on Amathila's life

Also in 1976, I was working peacefully in my hospital one day when suddenly we were visited by a group of young people walking around aimlessly. My nurses chased them out, telling them that this was a hospital and not a park. If they weren't sick and looking for treatment, they must get out. They left and we had no idea who they were or what they were looking for. However, later we discovered that these were some young people, recent arrivals from home, who were in PLAN and had come from the

front. They were confronting the leadership of the movement and one of our senior comrades, the secretary for Information and Publicity, Andreas Shipanga, was considered responsible for using them to stir up trouble.

*Some of these people were intercepted by the Zambian police and army; we learned after their arrest that **they were armed**. If it was not for the vigilance of the Zambian police and army there could have been lives lost, but they were apprehended on time (Amathila, 2012, p. 83).*

The above narrative by Amathila (2012), talks about an incident of physical abuse where some youth suddenly descended at the hospital that she was working at. The group of young men were there with the intention to cause violence against the occupants of the hospital. They presented the threat of physical violence, which was traumatic to Amathila and her nurses, they had to chase them away. If it were not for the Zambian police and army who later arrested them, they could have harmed them. These young men were armed with assault weapons. They were dangerous because they were sent by the secretary for Information and Publicity, Andreas Shipanga to carry out the attack. It is a common practice in politics that when a fellow comrade is disgruntled, he tries to unsettle the existing peace as a way of protest. The following example is about an incident when the Rhodesian military flew over the Namibian camp in Zambia. Colonial aeroplanes were known for mass bombings to kill occupants of refugee camps.

5.4.5 The threat of attack on Amathila's life

One day in late 1976, Rhodesian planes flew very low over our centre. We all took cover under trees and houses. The incident happened so quickly that we didn't have time to run further to hide behind bigger trees, so we hid under whatsoever was close. I remember that we ran out of the hospital with my midwife, meme Nanghonda, and male nurse Rafael, and took cover somewhere near the hospital. When the planes disappeared, we waited a little, and when we were sure the planes had gone we left our cover and planned to evacuate the centre (Amathila, 2012, p. 82).

When military aeroplanes hover around above the skyline of a refugee camp during the war, the refugees below are subjected to an eminent threat of being bombarded. Amathila, (2012. p. 82) mentions another traumatic act of physical violence in 1976 when the Rhodesian military planes flew over their refugee camp in Zambia. These planes had come from Salisbury now Harare to act on the camp refugees. Their purpose was not clear but could potentially bomb the camp. Amathila and many other refugees had to desert the camp to seek shelter under the trees. This fear of physical attack is traumatic. Until today she is still traumatised by this event as it can be felt in her writing in her autobiography.

5.5 The traumatic experiences faced by the women liberation war fighters

The discussion under this section is about the traumatic experiences that were faced by the two women fighters in the texts “Making a Difference” and “Mukwahepo”. Trauma result from unprecedented experiences that fragments the psyche (Mambrol, 2018). The original event was not traumatic in itself but only in its remembrance (Freud & Breuer, 1895). In the context of the study, for a woman to think about going to participate in the liberation war was an act of bravery. In any war, they are very high chances that the people involved at any level of participation can become casualties. It is worse for the female gender. The two characters in the texts experienced some of the most daring traumatic experiences that eventually render them deprivation of stable marriages resulting from the war. Trauma will be discussed following the events about the separation from family and friends, loss of childhood experiences, fear and witnessing of violence, hunger and rape, marriage disappointment and family disruption and finally death. All these traumatic events were experienced by Amathila and Mukwahepo during the liberation struggle.

5.5.1 The separation from family and friends

Amathila and Mukwahepo left home for the war of liberation when they were teenagers. That separation from family causes trauma. When a young girl child is separated from her family, she becomes disempowered because she relies on the family and friends for support, either

emotional or material. Mukwahepo and Amathila narrates about the manner that they left Namibia to join the liberation struggle as young girls. They both left their families at a tender age. They had not yet fully developed to adulthood. Mukwahepo herself was believed to have died while she was in exile as her family narrates. The following excerpt details the extent of how Mukwahepo felt when she learnt that most of her family members had died while she was in exile, especially her biological mother and her uncle who raised her. This is what happens when a family member is separated from her family at a young age;

My cousin replied, 'Many years ago, we heard that you had passed away in Angola, on your way into exile, in 1963. We held a vigil and a memorial service for you. People gathered and mourned you. We received condolences for your death. We were consoled, and consoled others. We made peace with it in our souls and accepted our loss. We buried you in our hearts and in our minds. When I had that returnees had come home, I could not think of you because my mind had already accepted that we had lost you in 1973. I therefore did not make any effort to come and look for you (Namhila, 2013, p .115).

The results that arise from family separation are detrimental and devastating. Mukwahepo was traumatised by her separation from her family on hearing that they had long forgotten about her. They presumed her dead in 1963. These kinds of situations are common especially when a family member is separated because of the liberation struggle. There are very high chances that Mukwahepo might have actually died during the war while on the other hand, her family easily believed a rumour and accepted her death.

5.5.2 Loss of childhood experiences

Girls who went to fight for independence cannot be compared with those who remained at home under the care of their parents and family members. Young girls who remained did not miss the full childhood experience. Mukwahepo and Amathila had the nurturing suddenly abandoned for the purpose of participating in the war of liberation. Their childhood memories were distorted because of their life as young female fighters. Amathila, (2012, p. 1) narrates

her childhood experiences as she details events that she could remember from their discussions with her grandmother.

I ran to my grandmother out of breath and shouted, 'Grandma, the teachers can also kaka, yes. I saw my teacher with my own eyes'. I saw him going to the bush and I couldn't believe my eyes, because the direction he was taking is where village people went to kaka and I decided to follow and to see what a teacher was doing there. I even went to where he was a behind a big mopane tree and there was this big kaka he had made.

That was the life of a real village girl. I was five or six years old and I still remember the incident. Later, as I grew up, I discovered that I was not alone in that trend of thought, my age mates also wondered about many things. We grew up in the era where, 'children were to be seen but not heard'. There many things we didn't understand. In our house there was a gramophone- His Master's Voice – and records that we overused. We used to sharpen the needles on stones. The records were fragile and broke easily but we kept playing them all the time until they cracked. My grandmother never complained about the misuse of this poor gramophone. I think she never listened to that music; all she cared about was to go to church and sing church hymns. One day the boys, my brothers, were about to chop the gramophone up to release the man who was singing inside it. They wanted to find out who he was. Such seemingly stupid stories will be laughed at by the kids of 2012, but in the 1950s, in a village where they were no radios and televisions, how would those children have known better? For them the logic was to open the gramophone and see who was singing. One of my older sisters overheard the boys and explained to them that there was no man inside; the music was on the records. These records, although so old, still played. (Amathila, 2012, p. 1).

The narrative given by Amathila explains about the significance of child memories. It becomes very unfortunate when new memories are interrupted because Amathila had to leave home at the age of 22 to join the liberation struggle. The liberation struggle is a game of adults and there is nothing involving family. Amathila and Mukwahepo alike had to abandon their childhood to participate in the liberation struggle. When they returned-home after many years in exile, they had to savage the only memories that were created at their teenage

stages. This means that both of them had to deal with the loss of childhood experiences. Amathila narrates memories about her teachers, her grandmother and how she loved playing music on the gramophone (Amathila, 2013, p. 1). The events that could be remembered in her future life as an adult could have been added had she not gone to participate in the liberation struggle.

5.5.3 Fear and witnessing of violence

While Mukwahepo and Amathila were participating in the war, they witnessed some events that were violent. These violent events result in bad memories which cannot be forgotten. During the liberation struggle, the most feared threat of violence was the sound of an aeroplane. Aeroplanes could be heard from a distance when they are facing the direction of refugee camps. These aeroplanes have once bombed Namibians at Kassinga on 4 May 1978 in Angola (Muller, 2019). A similar bombing incident happened to the Zimbabwe refugee camp at Chimoio and Nyadzonya in Mozambique in 1977 (Nutt & Bottaro, 2011). There were also other internal bombings that shook the country at the time. Village bases and camps that were suspected to shelter guerrillas and war collaborators were bombed and lives were lost. The Zimbabwean refugee camp was bombed by the Rhodesian white forces in an attempt to kill and weaken the liberation struggle. Since the bombing in Mozambique and Angola were all meant to kill liberation war fighters and their refugee families, the fear of violence was greatly felt as Amathila (2012, p. 82) explains:

5.5.4 Threat of attack

One day in late 1976, Rhodesian planes flew very low over our centre. We all took cover under trees and houses. The incident happened so quickly that we didn't have time to run further to hide behind bigger trees, so we hid under whatever was close. I remember that we ran out of the hospital with my midwife, Meme Nanghonda, and male nurse Raphael, and took cover somewhere near the hospital. When the planes disappeared, we waited a little, and when we were sure the planes had gone, we left our cover and planned to evacuate the centre (Amathila, 2012, p. 82).

We decided to move out of the camp fearing that this might have been a reconnaissance mission and that they may return to bomb us. We moved into the thick forest and stayed there for a week (Amathila, 2012, p. 83).

The fear of witnessing violence is traumatic. Amathila who is a medical doctor had her patients to protect but because of the violent working environment, she had to hide together with her patients. In the above excerpt, Amathila narrates a violent incident when the Rhodesian white colonial forces flew over their camp in Zambia with a jet aeroplane. The aim might have been to bomb the refugee camp or to put fear and intimidate the refugees. The aeroplane came to spy. This could mean that they came to map out in preparation to bomb. The fear of being bombed was made worse because during 1977, the Kassinga Refugee Camp had been bombed where more than 600 Namibians died (Hamann, 2012).

5.5.5 The vulnerability of being raped as female combatants

The term 'rape' is defined as the unlawful sexual intercourse or any other sexual penetration of the vagina, with or without force, by a sex organ, without the consent of the victim (Tracy et al., 2012). The predicament of female combatants is worse than that of males, women suffer from being surrounded by a large number of males who constantly keep on trying to seduce and demand sex. Mukwahepo, who was the first Namibian woman to join the liberation struggle was "the only woman amongst thousands of men" (Namhila, 2013. p. vi). There are situations where the female in combat just have to admit being violated unwillingly. That circumstance is called rape. Sexual coercion under the liberation war circumstances results in the female combatant being raped. Remembering about these experiences is what becomes traumatic to the female liberation war fighter. The circumstances discussed here have strong indications from the two texts.

5.5.6 Disappointment in marriage and family disruption

The disappointment of Amathila and Mukwahepo were brought about by their lengthy participation of the liberation war struggle. Under normal life situations, a woman may be ready to marry and start family in their ages of about 20s or 30s years old. Amathila was

married but her marriage ended in a divorce. In the case of Mukwahepo, she never had any children. These two experiences are traumatic for a woman because they have not achieved a family which most women wish to have. While Amathila's marriage ended in a divorce, Mukwahepo endured loneliness because she did not have her own biological children to comfort her. It was even made worse because she never had an opportunity to marry. She separated with her fiancée, Shikongo ShaHangala, (Namhila, 2013, p. 1) that she came with from Namibia. On the other hand, Amathila was married but she struggled to remain married to her husband, Ben Amathila (Amathila, 2012, p. 55). The liberation struggle circumstances of marriage life between Ben and Libertina Amathila caused them to end up in divorce. The two couples had many work-related and government responsibilities for which they spent months apart. Work stress and liberation struggle responsibilities did not give them a fair chance to remain married even after independence was achieved. The following narrative by Amathila paints some light into the traumatic stress of a marriage that ended up in a divorce:

Ben soon left for Sweden and I continued to work in Muhimbili Hospital for six months as a registrar. I joined him in Sweden in 1971. During that time I was also helping our SWAPO comrades who were in Tanzania. Marriage entered into during the struggle years have a high casualty rate of divorce because the pressure of work and long periods of separation takes their toll. Couples grow apart as time goes by. Our marriage survived 23 years, but we only lived together for the four years of my stay in Sweden and another six years in independent Namibia. Back in Namibia, finally at home, life became very hectic as both of us had demanding responsibilities. We both became ministers (Ben as Minister of Information and me as Minister of Local Government and Housing) at independence and again there was separation. We became so engrossed in our work that in the end, there was no time to nurture the marriage, so our marriage did not survive. We divorced amicably in 1998. We remain a family; there is no animosity to this day. Many people still don't know that we are divorced. Many struggle marriages have not survived the pressure of the struggle, but many individuals have remarried. I am not intending to remarry. I think that to be alone brings out the best of you. Ben is also still single (Amathila, 2012, p. 55).

The liberation struggle was not an easy task for many Namibians, especially for women. For women, once their hymen is broken, the virginity is broken, it cannot be restored so as to

their breasts lose shape after breastfeeding a baby (Carpenter, 2005; Leifer, 2013). Men can still pretend to be boys despite having been married before. Amathila just like Mukwahepo, suffered from the trauma of marriage disappointment and disruption due to the activities of the liberation struggle. Although Amathila tries to use the words “amicable divorce”, in the history of this world, there has never been a friendly divorce. People who divorce are traumatised and in pain. The pair of divorcees suffer from many sleepless nights. Divorce can bring on PTSD, specifically symptoms like night terrors, flashbacks, and troubling thoughts about the divorce or marriage (Shafer, et al., 2017). The reflections about their marriage with Ben Amathila shows that they lived together as a couple for four years in Sweden and for six years in independent Namibia. Their pattern of lifestyle was mainly disrupted because of the liberation struggle activities and government work in independent Namibia. Discussing divorce is not limited to the two, but it extends to the children that they had during their marriage. Their children also suffer from the consequences of a broken family. It is important to note that it may appear as women suffer the most after a divorce, but men suffer as much as women. Amathila and Mukwahepo both as women liberation war fighters suffered from the trauma of marriage disappointment and the disruption of family.

5.5.7 Traumatic irony of a barren “mother”

Mukwahepo shares her sorrow of barrenness. Unlike many other women who did not participate in the liberation struggle, she suffered unestablished relationships which resulted in her barrenness. She was regarded as a mother by many to an extent she was the mother of the nation when in fact she never had any children of her own. When a woman joins the liberation struggle as a young person, she has ambitions of one day finding a man who loves her and settle down to bare her own children. However, the commitment of Mukwahepo to the liberation struggle may have caused her to end up without a committed relationship. The end result of a woman who becomes old despite her circumstances is barrenness. Barrenness is a taboo in the African culture. The following excerpt details the sorrows of Mukwahepo’s barrenness from her own words.

“I never had children of my own” (Amathila, 2013. p. 121).

'The children whom I raised during the struggle, especially the two who remained with me in 2003, became the source of my inspiration. They gave me the strength to live on. They gave me love and comfort. They never tried to run away from me and my poverty. They were part of me. I treasured them, and maybe also became too dependent on them as a source of family strength because, even though I love children so much, I never had a child of my own. So, these children were a gift to me. If I really wanted to, I could have looked for their relatives as soon as we had returned to Namibia and sent them there. But I could not. I had raised them with a lot of love and care and had watched them grow. I was the only parent they knew, and they looked to me as they grandmother, calling me "Meekulu Mukwahepo". I had become so used to having them around me. I did not want a lonely life, and my children filled my life with meaning. I felt that this was my calling. I could never give them away or pushed the responsibility for them to anyone else; besides, if they went away, my life would be empty.

And yet, after independence, their parents and relatives took all of them away from me, and never looked back. It remained a disappointment to me, how the people who had left their children with me in exile while they went to study seemingly forgot about me completely once, we had returned to Namibia. It was as if we had left behind our solidarity and comradeship in exile instead of bringing it along with us to Namibia when we returned home' (Namhila, 2013. p. 121).

The above excerpt tells the details of how Mukwahepo felt about not having children of her own.

5.5.8 The educated and the uneducated

It was traumatising for Mukwahepo to think that she was not able to read and write because she never attended any school during the war. This meant that even after the war she could not perform or participate in gainful employment that required literacy skills. Women in combat rarely attend school to get some formal education. The opportunities that Amathila got until she became a medical doctor are rare. She travelled throughout the world alone until she returned back to Namibia as a recognised liberation stalwart. When Amathila reflects

on her life, she finds herself encountering some difficult challenges which were traumatic. She had to be brave because she always reminded herself that she wanted to liberate her people. On the other hand, Mukwahepo had similar challenges, she never got educated. She did not know how to read until the time of her death. On her return to Namibia at independence, her fellow combatants who were educated got employed by the new Namibian government while she was not. This meant that Mukwahepo lived a life of poverty. Her fellow former liberation fighters received good salaries and she did not. Here is an excerpt from the book Mukwahepo in her own words:

I also thought that I would be too old to work in an independent Namibia, I would perhaps be allocated a government house in which to live. I knew that the socialist governments in Eastern Europe had allocated government houses to elderly people who had served the party during difficult times. These people had workers to clean their homes, wash their clothes and cook for them. They were also provided with free medical services and other privileges from their government until they died. I therefore thought that, since SWAPO had been following the socialist model of development, if they won the elections, they would remember the SWAPO veterans, and I may be allocated a government house. During my stay in Tanzania, I had seen how the Tanganyika African Union (TANU) veterans had lived in houses allocated to them by the party after independence. I therefore assumed that the same thing would happen with a SWAPO government (Namhila, 2013. p. 105).

Mukwahepo voices that her old age is a great disadvantage to her since she had spent a very long time participating in the liberation struggle that would put the SWAPO government into power. She ended up becoming an uneducated and unemployed war veteran because of her participation in the struggle. She makes an aggressive comparison with the state of war veterans' wellbeing and welfare by governments which the SWAPO government emulated western models. Eastern European and Tanzanian governments provided housing and food for their aged war veterans. Contrary to that, the SWAPO government neglected her. She could not get employed because of her not being educated and old age. This situation represents many Namibian war veterans who felt that they were abandoned by the SWAPO government after independence.

In 2003, their parents finally found employment and their livelihood improved. As soon as they were in good financial and social standing, the mother came to ask me for custody of her children. I was left high and dry, and I was devastated. Today, I am cut off from their life completely. This hurt is almost too painful to bear. At the time, some community members reminded me of the cold saying, 'kamukweni nande kappa efima lakula'. (Even if you give the biggest share of the porridge to someone else's child, it will soon grow and realise who its mother is and abandon you.) (Namhila, 2013. p. 121).

The above expression by Mukwahepo painfully tells her experience about not being educated. She became financially vulnerable. The people that she had raised and thought that they were now her family, soon abandoned her because they later went back to their real families. She feels deprived so much because while the parents of those children she had raised were getting an education, she was busy raising them as a fulltime adoptive parent. Their parents would soon come to collect these children once their financial position improved. She felt used and worthless. Mukwahepo gives an idiom in the local Namibia language. *'kamukweni nande kappa efima lakula'* The idiom explains that no matter how well you raise another person's child, the child would soon leave when they realise that you are not the biological parent.

5.5.9 The traumatic experience of death

The loss of a fellow comrade while in exile is a traumatic experience. Amathila and Mukwahepo had to deal with death of the new family that they created in exile and the one that they had left back home in Namibia. They were to return to Namibia to find some of their relatives had died while they were absent. Recollecting those memories became traumatic events because they remain with a void that will never be filled. Both Amathila and Mukwahepo experienced the trauma of death of different occasions throughout their liberation struggle life. First Amathila expresses her grief that struck her emotions while she was in Zambia.

5.5.10 Trauma of death in Amathila's words

As I am writing this I am filled with emotions. It is very sad to know that comrade Nanyemba didn't live to see the independent Namibia that he fought so hard for. He died in a car accident in Angola on 1 April 1983 and I miss him to this day. It was a great loss to the country as far as I am concerned. I remember that day when the news came through, I thought that the person who told me was playing an April Fool's joke, but soon I learnt that it was really true. I was dumbstruck and so upset that it took me some time to react. Nanyemba had been a tall, strong, fearless, and friendly man and I was inconsolable at the news of his death

That is the nature of the sacrifices we made as liberation fighters. We fought not for ourselves but for the Namibian nation to be free. We lived from day to day, but we were not consumed by fear of death. I am writing this small narrative for those who didn't know about the struggle to learn of sacrifices people like the late Nanyemba had to go through on our behalf, for the liberation of our country (Amathila, 2012, p. 25).

This sombre narrative by Amathila expresses great traumatic pain resulting from the death of a fellow liberation struggle fighter. The emotions, suffering and memories experienced inform the readers about her experiences. These memories were painful to narrate. The most important thing was to tell the ordinary young Namibian people who did not participate understand the consequences of the liberation struggle.

5.5.11 Trauma of death in Mukwahepo's words

While Amathila suffered from the trauma of losing a fellow combatant, comrade Nanyemba, Mukwahepo had to suffer from the emotions of losing her family. She was only told on her return to Namibia while she was at Engela Reception Centre. The following are the words of Mukwahepo;

Whilst at Engela, I found out that my mother had passed away. I was also told that my uncle, Haimini yaHalweendo, who had brought me up, was also deceased, as was his wife, my aunt. This news was a blow to my spirit and tore apart my mental preparedness for this homecoming. I was shocked. I was told that their son, Viitu ya

Haimini, now lived at their homestead. Although this was my only consolation, I did not know whether Viitu would take kindly to accepting responsibility for me and my children.

This was a big problem for me. I was seriously concerned about where I would be going. I felt bad about the deaths of my mother and my paternal uncle. I had looked forward to seeing my mother. I had strong yearnings to see her, to hug her and tell her how much I had missed her and longed for her. I wanted to tell her that I had returned from exile. But she was no more. I felt sad. As a returnee, I had to look forward and be hopeful. Yet the news of my mother's death devastated my spirit. I tried to stop thinking about my loss, but no matter how hard I tried to suppress the thoughts and feelings, they kept coming back. As the saying goes in my mother tongue, 'Omukulunhu ohali ohonde notwila' This means that an elder has to eat blood and pus. There was no time to lose. I had five children and Kaino, and I needed to make a plan. The staff at Engela helped me to send a message to Kaino's family. A week later, her relatives came to take her home. I was very happy to see that she came from a very warm and loving family. (Namhila, 2013. p. 121).

Mukwahepo's narrative makes the reader's eyes wet. It was an experience of a lifetime with the loss of parents that brings back childhood memories. When Mukwahepo left home for the liberation struggle, she was just a young girl. The imagination of her experiences as a young girl could mean a traumatising lifetime surrounded by sorrow. It was good for women to participate in the liberation struggle but the emotions of family separation and only to be told on her return that her parents had long died. It was not only her biological parents who had died, but her uncle Haimini yaHalweendo whom she regarded as the one who raised her up. The love and care that her uncle gave to her, was missed, judging by the passionate manner which she first introduced him in the beginning of the novel. Death is a painful experience, and no one can ever get used to it.

5.6 RESILIENCE AS SURVIVAL STRATEGY BY FEMALE LIBERATION FIGHTERS

This section discusses resilience as a strategy that was used by the two females in the autobiographies for them to overcome challenges. Resilience is defined as the process of

adapting well in the face of trauma or tragedy, threats or other significant sources of stress (Southwick et al., 2014).

5.6.1 Adoption of camp children as the irony of motherhood

Mukwahepo became the mother of all the children in the camp despite not having her own biological children (Namhila, 2013. p. 61). Adoption can be a resilience strategy for barren individuals. The phenomenon of adopting strange children to become yours is usually a practice of the Western culture. In the context of the text 'Mukwahepo' (Namhila, 2013), she deliberately adopted and was a caregiver to many refugee camp children. Mukwahepo did not have her own biological children. It is innate in most women that they bear their own biological children because of their motherly nature. Her unsettled circumstances throughout her liberation journey contributed to her situation. In most cases during war, young girls are fed with a variety of family planning concoction of medication. This causes them to be sterile and prevent them from conceiving when they are ready to bear children. Mukwahepo had to resort to adopting random children whom she met in Angola. She used adoption as a mechanism for resilience. The following is an extract from the text '*Mukwahepo*' detailing adoption as a survival strategy.

*I loved this work. I was doing it for the community, but I was also doing it for myself. **These children gave me a family**, they gave me love. After having witnessed the tragedy of children dying during the war in Nambuanguo in Angola during our journey into exile, it hurt me so much to see children suffer in any way. What was required of me at Nyango was a willingness to serve these children, and to help the young mothers to take good care of them.*

*Apart from the sense of duty I felt to play **the role of mother** of these young mothers and their children, I was also inspired to set up what was an important social network system. When the parents of these children went to study further or to fight in the war, all the children had was us. We supplied the crucial parental relationships they needed. Many of these children did not even know their absent parents – they only knew us, the old ones who looked after them. If you asked one of them,*

'Who is your mother?'

'Mukwahepo', the child would reply.

If you asked further. 'Who is your father?'

'Mukwahepo' (Namhila, 2013, p. 61).

*I left the transit camp in Luanda in August 1989 and **together with my five children** and comrade Kaino, flew to Ondangwa via Lubango. On arrival at Ondangwa airport, we were greeted by a jubilant group of SWAPO supporters who had come to welcome us and to look out for their relatives who had gone into exile. Oh, I was extremely delighted to see our people, young and old, men and women, joyfully welcoming us back to our motherland. Some of the people had walked long distances from their homes and villages to Ondangwa airport just to welcome us home. We were told during the briefing we received at the airport that these people had stood for hours waiting for us, determined to give us a heroic welcome. And they did not just stand and gaze at us. No, they sang revolutionary SWAPO songs. Some of the songs I was familiar with; others I had not heard before. I realise then that singing was an art form that people used to show their solidarity and comradeship (Namhila, 2013. p. 113).*

The above excerpt is a clear narrative on how Mukwahepo managed to survive her bareness by adopting motherless children and their mothers at the refugee camps. Mukwahepo shared a deep sense of her need to become a mother by admitting that she was comforted by her motherly role. Mukwahepo was a determined mother despite having her own biological offspring. She identified her adoptive children as 'my five children' (Namhila, 2013. p. 113). Mukwahepo uses adoption as a resilience strategy to overcome bareness. In the above extract, Mukwahepo narrates her experience of her journey from Luanda back to Namibia. The irony of her motherhood is that she was barren and never bore any child, but she used adoption as a strategy for resilience. Adoption is not usually practiced in the African culture, unless the adopted children are children of deceased family members. Individuals who are barren usually attach themselves to objects that help them to sail through their struggles (Jisha & Thomas, 2016). Mukwahepo used this method of adopting some random and

abandoned children at the refugee camps as strategy for resilience. The narrative above further uses the pronoun 'we' and 'us' (Namhila, 2013. p. 113), consistently. Mukwahepo's actions reflect that she truly believed that all the camp children belonged to her. However, there are psychological effects that are caused by childlessness (Bahamondes & Makuch, 2014). The effects of childlessness can be more devastating in the African society because of social and cultural reasons. Women are called names for failing to bare children. Men usually abandon women that are barren because of pressure from family members and parents. Despite all these traumatic experiences, Mukwahepo succeeded in her parental obligations by raising an adoptive family of children throughout her lifetime. She used adoption as a strategy for resilience against barrenness.

5.6.2 Hope for the opportunity for freedom in the liberation struggle

There is always hope in the minds of refugees in the middle of a war crisis (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016). Refugees in a war crisis are always thinking positively about the prospects of their country's independence. Hutchinson & Dorsett (2012) debated that most authors who write about refugee crisis only concentrate on the refugees' traumatic experiences with little acknowledgment of the resilience and coping strengths demonstrated by the refugees. The hope for freedom was a mechanism for survival for many Namibians who were in exile. Most people would see the liberation struggle as a bad thing where total freedom is remote. Mukwahepo and Amathila never felt hopeless because they knew that freedom was coming. There are several events that were significant in the life of Mukwahepo and Amathila during the liberation struggle. They were always positive and hopeful that one-day freedom will come. The thought of a free Namibia made them to feel good. They listened to the radio, spoke with other comrades and their refugee camp leaders communicated with them too. In this incident, Mukwahepo narrates the following about her hopes for independence,

We received the news about the implementation of UN resolution 435 in June of 1989. We were at Kwanza-Sul, going about our business as usual, when suddenly there was a sudden call from the camp commander for all residents to speedily gather at the

parade. When we arrived there, we saw that we had visitors. The camp commande called the parade to order and immediately introduced Comrade Nekongo, the first camp commander of Kwanza-Sul, who had just arrived from the SWAPO headquarters in Luanda. Comrade Nekongo in turn introduced the visiting SWAPO delegation. He told us that the purpose of their mission was to bring the delegation from the United Nations to Kwanza-Sul. He said that they had to deliver a very important message in the presence of the UN delegates. And that we should listen well. He said that if we needed clarity, we should feel free to ask questions openly.

The official from SWAPO headquarters told us that the negotiations at the United Nations regarding the implementation of UN resolution 435 had been successful. The UN member countries, including those with veto powers, had all voted in favour of the resolution 435. This meant the beginning of the peaceful transition to independence for Namibia. (Namhila, 2013. p. 99).

Thinking about independence was something that always brought hope to the masses of oppressed Namibians before independence. It was the thoughts that made Mukwahepo and Amathila to be more resilient and to focus on their hopes that one day Namibia will be an independent country. Their dream became true when the news that they had waited for in a very long time were realised. The UN delegation and other SWAPO members came to the camp to deliver to the residents of the Kwanza-Sul refugee camp that they were finally granted the freedom that they want.

5.6.3 Recognition of Mukwaheho and Amathila

Recognition in the form of giving a reward is a way of encouraging someone to remain positive (Grant & Betts, 2013). After many years since the end of the end of the liberation struggle, Mukwahepo and Amathila were both recognised by the Namibian government. The following examples from the text give information about the recognition of the two women liberation struggle heroines.

5.6.4 Mukwahepo recognised by the Namibian government

In 2006, I received the greatest honour and gift from the Namibian government. A two-bedroom house with a sitting room, kitchen and bathroom was built for me right here, at our village at Onengali yaKaluvi, just for me! The year 2006 will remain memorable for me. It was the year that I finally tested the fruits of our independence. I was overwhelmed with joy to have been given a house, a shelter, a roof over my head by our government. I was so happy that I just sat down for a long, long time and cried.

This most welcome generosity came as a total and very pleasant surprise. I was not forewarned. People from a construction company just arrived at my sister's house one day, looking for me. They told me that the government had sent them to build a house for me. I could not believe what they had just said. Anyway, they started taking measurements and then left. Several weeks later, they brought all the building materials, bricks, cement, corrugated iron and so on. They brought the workers and construction commenced. Oh, it was true after all! I just could not believe my eyes. My government had remembered me. I was extremely happy. I felt like I was touching the stars. Although I was reconciled in my mind to my situation, this came at a time when I thought I had been forgotten by society, and especially by my comrades with whom I had struggled for the independence of our beloved country (Namhila, 2013. p. 137).

Mukwahepo shares a narrative of hope and survival after many years of living as unrecognised liberation war veteran. She appreciated her recognition with a great sense of delight. The Namibian government recognised Mukwahepo by awarding her a medal of honour for her brave participation during the liberation struggle. The second recognition came in the form of a building that provided her with descent accommodation at her village. These two gifts gave her new hopes that she had been remembered by her fellow comrades who were now leaders in government. Mukwahepo was the first woman to join the liberation struggle in 1962. The manner that she speaks about her gratitude reveals that she was very excited as a person who had been previously depressed. It is just before her recognition that she complained on several occasions about her neglected living conditions. She felt abandoned by the SWAPO party and her fellow comrades. At last, her recognition resolved her suffering

caused by the liberation struggle. Being appreciated was Mukwahepo's mechanism for resilience against poverty and neglect.

5.6.5 Amathila recognised by the Namibian government

Giving someone a gift makes them to feel good. It is a way of acknowledging one's contribution for their good deeds. In the case of Amathila, it was a way of appreciating her. Amathila was honoured by the SWAPO government when she was awarded the SWAPO highest honour, the Ongulumbashe Medal for Bravery and Long Service in 1987. She went on to be awarded the Most Excellent Order of the Eagle, first class that was conferred to her by the now former president of Namibia, Sam Nujoma. This was conferred on Heroes Day on 26 August 2002. The award was presented to her at the National Heroes' Acre in Windhoek. Other recognitions include assigning her to various government ministerial positions. She was the Minister of Health from 1996 until 2005. Her main successes were spearheading the HIV awareness and treatment programmes and building of clinics in rural Namibia. She became the acting President of Namibia on several occasions. She was also a member of the Namibian Parliament from 1990 to 2010. Her other recognised role was when she was appointed to be the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia from the year 2005 until 2010. All these discussed accolades were positive gestures that comfort Amathila and thank her for her contribution in the liberation struggle. She would later retire from all these duties on 21 March 2010. She is now practising farming in Grootfontein in Namibia. These rewards were a way of resilience and being comforted after many years that she had spent in the liberation struggle.

5.6.6 Autobiographical and biographical writing as a form of resilience

Autobiographical writing helps the writers with the process of healing. In the process catharsis takes place. The writer brings back their deep forgotten memories and shed some tears at some point in their narration of events which works to heal their painful wounds. In the novel *Mukwahepo* (Namhila, 2013), Mukwahepo voiced her emotions throughout her narrative.

The following narrative are the words of Mukwahepo when she was bitterly criticising the SWAPO government and her fellow comrades.

5.6.7 Mukwahepo speaking out against SWAPO government

*I waited and waited but nothing happened. The day my hopes and dreams never came. I realised that my expectations of independence had been based on a false dream. I was that the comrades who were young and educated were getting all the jobs, both in government and the other sectors. I was confronted with the reality of the Oshiwambo saying, '**Omajoka taadi mumwe nomifuwa**' (When you separate snakes from rags, the snakes move on while that rags remain behind). Many of the young people with whom I had been repatriated got jobs and moved away, while most of us who had aged in the struggle had limited job opportunities. My comrades with whom I had shared all the years in the struggle began to be separated from me, mostly due to poverty. Yet regardless of this harsh reality, I did not give up hope. I still thought the day would come to enjoy the fruits of our hard-won independence.*

*In 1997, seven years after independence, I turned sixty. I was still totally neglected and living under the shame of poverty. My thoughts ran away with me. I looked back, reflecting on how, **yet in an independent Namibia I was facing starvation**. Some people told me to forget, to stop dreaming because I was now old. I was told that, in our country, one was disadvantaged if one was old, unlike in exile where everyone just worked despite their age. I was sixty years old, but I still had energy to work. Looking around me, I realised that I was not the only one in this situation. Most of my elderly comrades were being supported by their children. As I did not have children, I had to rely on other members of my family. This reality was difficult, but all I could do was face the facts (Namhila, 2013. p. 131).*

Mukwahepo openly criticised the SWAPO party out of bitterness because she felt that the SWAPO party had abandoned her and not compensated her enough for her contribution during the liberation struggle. She spoke bitterly about her fellow comrades having forgotten her but only to be remembered with a Medal of Honour and a house. The medal that she received was just a piece of metal because she had to return home that evening only to sleep

with an empty stomach. She felt deprived because she had to be fed and cared for by her relatives who never went to war. Society laughed at her for her participation in the liberation struggle. The other reason why she felt abandoned by the SWAPO party was because of her old age. She was about sixty years of age when she returned from exile, at the same time she was not educated. Only the young people could be employed. She spoke about her facing starvation in independent Namibia. Those elderly war veterans who had children, were cared for financially by their children. It was to the great disadvantage of Mukwahepo because she never had any biological children of her own. Speaking honestly about these painful realities helped heal Mukwahepo. Despite her being deceased, readers appreciate her for telling them the reality of life as a former war of liberation struggle heroine.

5.6.8 Amathila's retirement from government

I retired on the 21st March 2010, I made a farewell speech and received a standing ovation from the Members of Parliament in the National Assembly. This was an unusual gesture of appreciation from Namibian parliamentarians. I received many moving tributes from other Namibians, expressing their appreciation and recognition for the work I have done for the Namibian nation. The office of the Prime Minister gave me a wonderful farewell party. Amongst the letters of tribute, I want to single out four letters...I feel grateful and blessed and thank everyone who phoned or wrote wonderful tributes to me. I'm grateful to be alive and to hear how people appreciate my work. Normally such tributes are showered at one's funeral and unfortunately, they are told to your dead body in the coffin, and you cannot hear them. I am among the few who are alive and can hear and can appreciate what my contribution meant to my nation. I would like to thank everyone for their kind words. May God bless you (Amathila, 2012, p. 258).

Amathila does not speak out openly against the SWAPO government. Her reasons for resigning from active politics and government were not clear. The manner which she told her story can be understood from the perspective of an ordinary person not as a minister. In her autobiography she was retelling the real-life conditions of the hospital. When she became the Minister of Health and Social Services from 1996 to 2005, she delivered with great understanding of the needs of the Namibian people. Despite not having to criticise the

SWAPO government, Amathila still managed to write her life story as a way of expressing her survival from the dangers of the liberation struggle. She expressed her deep thoughts and feelings especially when she became a leader of government among a group of men. She might have had trouble working with them and silently decided to resign from politics. After all, she had contributed enough to the liberation struggle of the Namibian people.

5.6.9 Speaking out as a strategy for resilience

The two female authors overcame the pressure of keeping their stories to themselves. The moment they decided to write, they overcame the silent is golden rule because built up emotions can cause harm to oneself. Speaking out about their liberation struggle and sharing their experiences gave the two female writers a great sense of relief (Griffin, 2012). Mukwahepo shared her story much more realistic considering talking about everything that happened to her during the liberation struggle. On the other hand, Amathila told her story in a lighter way and avoided talking about more aggressive real-life experiences. Mukwahepo reported about one incident where they survived on stolen food (Namhila, 2013, p. 15). This example of a realistic experience is an observable difference between the two stories. However, the fact that some experiences were shared, they offloaded what was inside their hearts. The writing of Amathila her biography and Mukwahepo's autobiography was a form of resilience that brought healing to these two female writers.

5.6.10 Amathila's community development projects to overcome her past struggles

Amathila just like Mukwahepo who engaged in welfare upkeep of camp children, embarked on various community projects to keep herself free from worry. These engagements kept her away from rethinking bad war time events. It was a way of resilience by sharing her past struggle experiences for developmental purposes. She called these developmental projects 'Urban renewal'. Her first project was the Katutura Facelift project where she turned Katutura from a 'dustbowl and a rampant place for tuberculosis' into a habitable place. The following is a review of some of Amathila's community development projects.

5.6.11 Rundu Open Market

I targeted Rundu for a market similar to the Horseshoe Market in Windhoek. I found the women there selling food under the trees in the dust and dirt. The Luxemburg Development Agency, LuxDev, was working in the Rundu area and I asked them to assist in building a market with proper facilities. They agreed, and with the Town Clerk, Mr Muhepa, we started building. LuxDev built a well-designed, beautiful and spacious open market, but when it was complete, vendors didn't want to move in. The women continued to sell their produce on the streets but later they were persuaded by the town council, who used veiled threats to make them move. The same rumours that were spread when we built the Horseshoe Market in Katutura were repeated in Rundu, such as that the stalls will be expensive, the women would lose customers, and so on. Later, however, this market became very popular. Today it is a clean and comfortable place to do business. Butcheries are found there, and the place is booming (Amathila, 2012, p. 141).

The above narrative by Amathila about her engagements on various projects gives her a sense of satisfaction that she had contributed to the Namibian society. She did not only wait to worry about the impact of the liberation struggle on her personal life, but to use that as an opportunity to improve the lives of previously disadvantaged Namibians. She looked for funding through her experience and contacts from the time that she lived in Europe while training to become a medical doctor. Amathila also used the influence of her office as a Minister and a government official. Her actions were not selfish opposed to some other corrupt ministers who use the power of political influence to solicit funds for personal gain. Amathila remembered her struggle in the liberation war and devoted to her experience for the good of the Namibian population. It is similarly to when she was the Minister of Health, she built clinics for Namibian rural communities to improve the quality of health delivery services. It was important for Amathila to embark on community development projects as a way to overcome her past struggles.

5.7 Discussion

There are not many previous Namibian studies conducted on the two texts studied, therefore there will be not many comparisons made using previous Namibian studies. The two authors studied, (Namhila, 2013 and Amathila, 2013), told their stories from the actual lived experiences. Mukwahepo spoke through the means of a biography while Amathila wrote in person in the form of an autobiography. They narrated their real-life experiences during the liberation struggle, from the time they left Namibia, arrived in Angola, went to Zambia, Europe and ended with Namibia's independence when they finally returned home. The toll of time affected with old age. They spent most of their time away from home with strange people, they felt longing for home, they were traumatised, they managed to eventually overcome because their goal, the Namibian independence had finally been achieved. Trauma and resilience are two inseparable theories that can be applied to the analysis of a literary text. It is important to understand that events of the liberation war struggle were so challenging that the only way the stories could be told and passed down from one generation to another, was through literature. The two works of art presented the readers with several types of trauma. Trauma is when a person is faced with a distressful situation that can be overcome by resilience (Litz, et al., 2018).

Unlike Mukwahepo who narrated her real-life experiences, Amathila seem to avoid writing about difficult events in her life during her time as a liberation war fighter. She only wrote about her life success stories. She seems to have censored all traumatic events in her novel. That is the notable difference between the two biographies and autobiographies. Perhaps the reason could be that Mukwahepo had Namhila write for her while Amathila wrote on her own.

5.8 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the two texts with relation to the objectives of the study. Trauma and resilience were analysed with specific examples from the texts *Making a Difference* and *Mukwahepo*. They are several key critical events discussed are viewed as traumatic in the two texts. Amathila and Mukwahepo had to leave home as teenagers to participate in the Namibian liberation war. It is unlikely for teenagers to leave their families behind under

normal circumstances. They had to live a life of loneliness and witnessing violence from war disasters as they participate in the liberation struggle. These were traumatic circumstances which were experienced by the two female fighters. The two women resorted to various strategies to overcome the challenges that they experienced. Resilience is a coping strategy that is employed by a person who have suffered from acts such as violence and the witnessing of a war disaster.

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The present chapter summarises the research findings, make some recommendations and conclude the study according to the following research objectives:

- to determine the types of traumas they have experienced because of colonialism
- to explore the traumatic experiences of these two women as soldiers
- to evaluate how they have overcome trauma through resilience

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOLLOWING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

6.2.1 Types of trauma experienced by Amathila and Mukwahepo during colonialism

The study found out that there are several types of trauma experienced by Amathila and Mukwahepo. Although the traumatic experiences are similar, Amathila avoided talking about the most gruesome of her traumatic experiences. She was somewhat preventative. She told stories without mentioning her experiences in the battlefield. Her contribution was her work as a service doctor treating those who were injured in the war. On the other hand, Mukwahepo, contributed partly to battle and spend most of her time as the guardian at the Kongwa and the Old Farm refugee camps in Zambia.

The study found out that there are several types of trauma experienced by Mukwahepo and Amathila in the texts *Mukwahepo* (Namhila, 2013) and *The Price of Freedom* (Amathila 2012). Both Mukwahepo and Amathila were regarded as inferior among their fellow Namibian male comrades. Women were regarded as inferior because they were assigned kitchen and babysitting duties while their fellow male combatants went into the battlefield. The example of Mukwahepo who became popularly known as the mother of the camps by the children in the camps. It is traumatic when a woman who had joined the liberation struggle is assigned tasks that avoid the primary reason of their liberation struggle ambitions. The other type of trauma identified were the memories of violence at the Kassinga bombings in Angola on 4 May 1978. About 600 Namibians lost their lives. The South African colonial forces wanted to

disrupt the liberation struggle. The survivors were left traumatised. There is another incidence that left Amathila traumatised. It was when a group of young men stormed the camp hospital where Amathila was practicing her medical duties and they presented violent actions. The nurses and the hospital staff were left trembling. Both Amathila and Mukwahepo suffered from the loneliness of separation from family and friends at a young age. The longing of the separation is traumatic. They experienced the loss of childhood experiences. They felt homesick but chose to continue with the liberation struggle. Having left home for an extended period of time means that loved ones die, and they are buried in your absence. This type of trauma is agonising. Human beings can never get used to death. The death of a loved one is a painful experience.

6.2.2 Traumatic experiences faced by women soldiers

(Pasi & Mlambo, 2018) expressed great concern about issues surrounding violence against women and children. Their study outrightly explored autotelic violence in selected Namibian short stories. The experiences of the two women were similar in that they were both the most vulnerable members of the liberation struggle during a war. They were prone to be raped by soldiers from the opponent side and the soldiers on their side of battle. Men usually take advantage of the vulnerability of women as objects of sex or to use rape as a weapon. They relate to similar experiences with a few differences such as Amathila was educated while Mukwahepo was not educated. They both left their families as teenagers to embark on a frightful journey that only the brave could endure. Amathila almost attacked by a group of youth who suddenly descended at a refugee hospital camp where she was working together with her colleagues. The one big shared traumatic experience was the Kassinga bombing, they suffered the same traumatic reality of war (Baum, 2012) because they knew some of the people who perished on that day. No one can ever get used to the death of a fellow comrade, despite not personally knowing the deceased. The fact is that fellow Namibians perished in the bombing.

6.2.3 Resilience as a strategy to overcome trauma

When a person experience trauma, they can invoke resilience as a coping strategy (Mlambo, 2014). Trauma can be overcome by invoking senses of survival that seek to defeat the difficult situation. These can be mental or physical. In the case of the two women soldiers studied, they adopted various strategies to overcome traumatic situations. Mukwahepo had to become the mother of children in the camp to cope with her rejection from her boyfriend whom she had come with from Namibia and her bareness too. Bearing a child is the most gift a woman can be proud of, especially the African woman. Society tends to identify barren women with a lot of negativity. Mukwahepo had to counter that by taking care of all the camp children and claiming them as if they were her biological children. The study further revealed that expressive writing and sharing traumatising experiences is a healing intervention (Baraitser, 2014).

6.3 Recommendations

The following are some of the recommendations that derive from this study:

- Female Namibian liberation war veterans need emotional support from government and fellow comrades to heal them from their traumatic experiences of the liberation struggle.
- The two Namibian autobiographical texts; *Making a Difference* (Amathila, 2012) and *Mulwahepo* (Namhila, 2013) can be analysed using other theories as lenses of literary criticism such as feminism, colonialism or as post-colonial.
- A comparative study of the two texts can reveal some analytical areas that are not addressed by the same analysis conducted in the present study.
- The role of the male characters can be discussed to determine whether they contributed to the suffering women in combat.
- Researchers from other countries other than Namibia must be encouraged to study Namibian authored autobiographies to bring a different perspective to the literature arena.

- Literature studies can thrive if the Namibian Ministry of Education makes literature as a compulsory subject from primary school up to the last grade of high school.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter gave a summary of the study findings and the recommendations following the objectives of the study. The autobiography by Amathila and the biography by Mukwahepo represent the experiences of other women who were traumatised by the war of liberation who remained silent after the war. Writing about their experiences is a method of overcoming their challenges because they have spoken out publicly to encourage other women to also tell their stories through writing or speaking to someone. Resilience was employed to heal from the damages caused by the experiences of the liberation war struggle. The chapter discussed the study findings, conclusions, and recommendations. One major observation of the study was that there is a dearth of previous literature written by Namibian scholars or scholars outside Namibia who write about Namibian literature. The Namibian literary scene needs more authors and scholars to conduct research on Namibian novels.

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