

Engendered Militancy in War Time: An exploration of select female authored autobiographical writing in Namibia

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the Degree of Master of English and Applied Linguistics at the
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I, Magdalena Wilhelmina Cloete, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis, entitled Engendered Militancy in War Time: An exploration of select female authored autobiographical writing in Namibia, 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 educational institution for the award of a degree.

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ABSTRACT

Africa was colonised and subjected to brutal colonial rule. Namibia, through South African rule was subjected to apartheid which was a localised form of colonialism tailored to oppress Africans. Namibia gained independence on 21 March 1990 after a long and costly war for freedom. Several African freedom icons have published their life narratives for different reasons, so did the three female authors whose texts are under study in this thesis.

Existing studies on the Namibian female autobiography do not necessarily approach female life writing as an intertextual narrative. This study revealed that the intertextuality of the three texts places it in a favourable position to enforce or counteract historical documentation. The three autobiographies under study are: *The Price of Freedom* by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila (1997), *Making a Difference* by Libertina Inaaviposa Amathila (2012) and *Taming my Elephant* by Tshiwa Trudie Amulungu (2016). The three autobiographies do not only contribute to the Namibian literary archive on the liberation struggle, but narrate private as well as public spaces that are usually neglected in narratives of a gendered space such as war. The three texts enlighten women's contribution to the liberation struggle, their experience in exile and integration into independent Namibia. It proves that Namibia should integrate and value the experience and knowledge of all Namibians for a better Namibia. It also illuminates the central role of art in daily life.

The trauma inflicted through apartheid manifests itself on all socio-cultural levels, therefore a wide approach that will expose the impact of trauma on all these levels and people's response and their way of coping with trauma is necessary. This study proposes a complimentary approach of both western theories focussing on trauma as event and contemporary socio-cultural theories that regard trauma as a prolonged process to give insight into other knowledge systems in order to achieve plurality. Concepts of classical Greek theatre act as framework to enlighten how women overcome fear and establish cultural *nomos* to push forward the spirit of freedom. A comparative approach between European and African literature reveals that Africans have their own concepts to enforce cultural lessons and through exploration of literature these concepts can be comprehended and applied universally.

The female authored autobiography is an important tool to illuminate matters of identity in the newly liberated Namibia. It becomes a lens through which to explore racial, tribal, gender, and class relations. All three authors testify to the discrimination they have to deal with in Namibia after independence. Their personal experiences testify to how apartheid oppressed and divided Namibians at all levels. As educated, strong-willed women they are instrumental in breaking down biases to achieve plurality.

The positions that they occupy in an independent Namibia embodies the transformation that they fought for. Namhila qualified as in the field of Library and Information Science and held several influential positions in this field in independent Namibia. Amathila held several positions in the Namibian government, embodying dynamism and transfer, while Amulungu is active in achieving language plurality in Namibia. The authors thus become symbols of a liberated Namibia.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late grandparents Nicolaas Johannes and Johanna Cloete

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ENGENDERED MILITANCY IN WAR TIME: AN EXPLORATION OF SELECT FEMAL AUTHORED AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING IN NAMIBIA

Chapter 1

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Namibians and Namibian Literature, as part of African Literature, were affected by the socio-political processes that underpinned the ideologies of apartheid and colonialism and were relegated to the positions of “other” and “subaltern”. These processes were premised on racial hierarchy, segregation, white supremacy, forced occupation and forced removals amongst others and inflicted physical, psychological and cultural trauma. Frantz Fanon (2008) opines that all forms of exploitation are the same, therefore colonial racism is no different from anti-Semitism or slavery. The same theories and concepts used to investigate historical trauma in the Holocaust and slavery can be used to investigate the trauma of colonialism and apartheid. However other theorists such as Visser (2015), Erll (2011) and Craps (2010 & 2013) emphasise the need for theoretical lenses that will give insight into trauma on socio-cultural levels and address the depth of the suffering of minorities. Literature, such as all socio-cultural and political products in society, is represented from and through a patriarchal point of view. The genre of autobiography was the privilege of the Western males and was individualistic in nature. Raditlhalo (2012, p. 153) regards autobiographical writing as a textual construction of the self that rests on the Western forms of learning, hence earlier black authored autobiographies had a sense of, what he calls, “borrowedness”. Ngwenya (1996) indicates that the black authored autobiography is more concerned with the articulation of collective experience than the celebration of individual accomplishments. The select texts for this study are authored by black females, thus adding the gender category to the inquiry. Were (2017) enunciates that black women’s chances were silenced by the apartheid’s regime and in spite of their contributions to the struggle they remained marginalised because of the patriarchal-orientated wings of the struggle movements. Their texts should be read as the public enactments of their public political goals. The focus on the representation of the female voice is a continuous thread throughout this study. Concepts such as aesthetic wit(h)ness bearing and the body as testimony to trauma are explored to enlighten the female experience. Through investigation of the effect of *catharsis* it is explored how subjects express and respond to fear. Parallels are drawn between the state under apartheid and the Theban city under plague. Classical figures such as Oedipus and Antigone are used

as metaphors for modern subjects.

Autobiographical texts are presented from the first person point of view, possess a non-fictional character and are introspective in nature. The three select texts for this study are: *The Price of Freedom* by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila (1997), *Making a Difference* by Libertina Inaaviposa Amathila (2012) and *Taming my Elephant* by Tshiwa Trudie Amulungu (2016). The texts provide the element of intertextuality to investigate and problematise the representation of ambivalences such as private space and public space; group affiliation and the idiosyncratic voice and individual and national identity in the autobiographies. The study focuses on the deconstruction of the autobiographical space; how singularity is reworked to represent the plurality that the autobiography by social minorities such as blacks and females is perceived to represent. After independence, the autobiography is the preferred genre for Namibian writers. The study therefore advocates for the autobiography to be regarded as part of the Namibian literary cannon and part of Namibia's cultural heritage. The texts represent the journey of the three authors from childhood, life under the racist South African regime, life at the frontline, their years in exile and the return to a liberated Namibia.

Mohatt, Thompson, Thai and Tebes (2014) explain that historical trauma is perceived to function as a narrative with personal and public representations in the present. These theorists claim that psychological trauma operates on two levels of narrative: internal dialogue and memory as constructed representation of the traumatic event. The social models of trauma look at injury inflicted due to exclusion from participation in communal rights. The study investigates the representation and the consequences of bearing witness to this trauma and how identity in the newly liberated Namibia was impacted as a result.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Literature has always been an instrument through which meaning and identity were represented and constructed. The select literary texts, being authored by black females are produced by individuals who occupied minority status on various levels. The writers, being witnesses to oppression, narrate historical trauma as well as trauma from those spaces that are associated with the matrixial domain and are easily overlooked because it is not be the objective of historical documents. The ways in which women respond to trauma and construct identity textually expand the national archive of Namibian Literature. This study explores how meaning and knowledge are constructed during a time of war and how it impacted identity after independence. It further explores if this knowledge constructed through individual consciousness can be applied to make meaning in the national

sphere.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore representations of engendered militancy in the three select autobiographical texts as a literary form. The specific objectives are:

- to investigate witnessing trauma during war time
- to analyse the cathartic effect in the select texts
- to explore the construction of identity in the new liberated Namibia

1.4 Significance/Contribution

The study ventures into an area of Namibian literature that has not been widely explored, namely the female authored autobiography. Trauma theory is not extensively used to critically appraise Namibian literature. The three select texts have never been the subject of study in a single paper. Therefore the study will simultaneously add to the archive of Namibian literary research as well as valorise the use of this theory as a lens to critically evaluate Namibian autobiographical writing. It is the hope of this researcher that the research will benefit students, especially at Namibia University of Science and Technology for future research and that it will encourage them to undertake research on local matters.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The study is restricted to the analysis of the three select texts.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This research is influenced by the fact that no literary publications on Namibian female authored autobiographical writings could be located. Therefore literature on South African and African female autobiographies was reviewed. During the course of the study, one influential publication on Namibian literature was released. The publication added valuable information and insight to the study.

1.7 Definition of technical terms

1.7.1 Autobiography

The autobiography is described by Smith and Watson (2010) as the act of people representing their

own lives. The teller of the story is both the observing subject and the object of investigation, remembrance and contemplation.

1.7.2 Trauma

Trauma is considered by Mohatt et al. to consist of three primary elements:

- The wounding
- The trauma shared by a group of people
- A multi-generational time span

1.7.3 Catharsis

Originating from classical Greek theatre the concept relates to the release of the emotions of fear and pity.

1.7.4 Identity

Identity refers to who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others (Voicu, 2014).

1.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher upheld academic honesty and integrity and was guided by the policies and procedure of the Namibia University of Science and Technology. All information and material were treated with respect and sensitivity.

1.9 Orientation of the study

The study is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the study and comprises of the following sections: background to the study; statement of the problem; objectives of the study; significance/contribution of the study; delimitation and limitation of the study; definition of technical terms and ethical consideration.

Chapter 2 presents a review of existing literature on the topic.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework. The study is inform by trauma theory and uses both classical and contemporary concepts.

Chapter 4 explains and discusses the research methodology.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study.

Chapter 6 recommends future explorations and concludes the study.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature that informs the study– “Engendered militancy in war time: an exploration of select female authored autobiographical writing in Namibia”. The literature review is directed by the research objectives. The notions of trauma, catharsis and identity are explored through Western as well as African concepts. The literature review aims to show what is already known about these concepts as well as to reveal gaps in the literary archive, the latter which the study zooms in on to explore in an attempt to expand the existing body of knowledge. The literature review is structured into sections and subsections. It commences with the intersection of history and literature, followed by a discussion of autobiographical concepts that serve as framework to conceptualise the study. It is followed by the three sections: witnessing trauma in war time, the cathartic effect in the select texts and the construction of identity in the newly liberated Namibia. It ends with a summarising conclusion.

2.2 Intersection of history and literature

History and story share the same semantic root. Taylor (1938) as referenced in Burkeywo (2015, p. 23) suggests that history and literature are complementary as they are both testaments to man’s growth and because they are the products of a common vital need existing in human beings to explain those tangible forces of life which become the most noticeable of all motivations. Burkeywo explicates that imagination is a vital element in attempts to reconstruct a comprehensive past as through the imaginative faculties of literature people can try to recreate and connect with their ancestors and carry forward the spirit that kept them alive and motivates them. History also relies on imagination as in the construction of historical events the historiographer also encounter spaces that can only be filled through imaginative reconstruction. Violence and destruction play a very significant role in history. Witnesses to historic events are subjected to violence that fractures memory which in turn impacts the notion of truth in historical documents (Burkeywo, 2015 & March 2017). Krishnamurthy (2018) agrees that trauma can cause memory to be altered, downplaying some events while intensifying others. Only through a multiple-angled approach can a historical event be reconstructed. During the process of reconstruction, it is impossible to exactly replicate. Burkeywo says that because history is articulated by those in power it represents their perception of historical events and society and neglects the view point of those on the periphery of society. If history is

reconstructed from the reality of minorities, a rethinking of what is believed to be fact and fiction is demanded. It is only when the full spectrum is considered that the impact of trauma can be comprehended.

2.3 Autobiography

2.3.1 Introduction

This section presents scholarly perspectives on the autobiography. The autobiography presents the lived experience of the writer, yet it is also a genre of literature.

2.3.2 Features of the autobiography

The autobiography is generally regarded as a text about the life experiences of the author. Butterfield (1974), as referenced by Ngwenya (1996, p.2), states that the autobiography produced by members of marginalised social groups such as women and ethnic minorities cannot be regarded as a single experience. Butterfield describes the communal nature of such autobiography:

The self of black autobiography is not an individual with a private career, but a soldier in a long historic march toward Canaan. The self is conceived as a member of an oppressed social group, with ties and responsibilities to other members. It is a conscious political entity, drawing from past experience of the group.

Ngwenya articulates that the self and selfhood in the black Southern African autobiography cannot be defined in the narrow, phallogentric Western perspective, but should be defined in relation to the broader social context to which they belong, explaining that the autobiography was predominantly the domain of Western males and the content usually denied the autonomy of the African and other minorities such as women and children. In the postcolonial milieu it is the tool whereby Africans expose the trauma inflicted by hegemonic Western regimes or other local variants such as the apartheid government in South Africa which was modelled after these regimes.

This view is shared by Gilmore (2001, p. 1) who elucidates that contemporary life writing has become the domain of the “youngish” whose lives are emblematic of a cultural moment. This results from the modern culture of testimony and confession that contributes to the popularity of the genre as mode of self-representation. Gilmore shares that Gayathri Spivak (1983) regards testimony and confession to be pivotal in the articulation of pain and trauma of the subaltern. The coincidence of trauma and self-representation poses challenges to the boundaries of the autobiography. Gilmore explains that challenges such as truth-telling can force the autobiographer into silence, reflecting the

ambivalences inherent in autobiographical writing. As the autobiography of minorities also serves as a mode of representing group interest, violence and trauma of the group are regarded as inflicted upon the self, adding to the ambivalent nature of the autobiography. The matter of self-representation is enlightened by using the Latin phrase *e pluribus unum*, meaning “out of many, one”. The case of the autobiography of Rigoberta Menchú; *I Rigoberta Menchú* (1983) is used as example to explain this democratic ideology of the interrelationship of individual and collective representation in the autobiography of the minority. Menchú, in her autobiography presented imagined incidents of harm to herself and people close to her while in actual fact, these incidents happened to other people, subalterns, like herself. Self-reflection enables the author to be representative in many cultural spheres. Menchú substitutes herself for members of her group, implying that the harm inflicted on those members would also have been inflicted onto her if she was in that space at their specific time.

The three elements that are irrefutably constitutive of the autobiography are that it is non-fictional; the subject of the text must be the author and there is a process of introspection of the self through reminiscing the past. Lopičič (2008) regards representation of identity to be the most fundamental feature of the autobiography. The autobiography of minorities highlights aspects of group affiliations such gender, race, ethnicity and religion on the author’s identity and progress. Lopičič analyses the autobiography of Dragan Todorovič, *Book of Revenge: A Blues for Yugoslavia*, written in the author’s new homeland, Canada. The reminiscence of past events assists the author in recapturing a self that is threatened by displacement and uprooting. Lopičič enunciates that the autobiography helps the writer to realise that the self emerges in the constant process of becoming rather than be in a fixed state of being. The sharing of memories represents a process of preserving them through the process of writing and helps to reach a higher objective than self-realisation, as the individual is a product of socio-historical and psychological forces. Lopičič explains that when an author sets out to write his autobiography, he has to alter his intended goals as unexpected images and incidents of the past are triggered when writing. These memories from the psyche are more valuable than those on the surface. Erll (2011) supports this view, claiming that the person experiencing these events is another person than the one narrating. The process of observing his live from the vantage point of an outsider changes the narrator.

Autobiographical writing is a way of participating in the struggle for equality and activism. It encodes information about cultures and people and social change that has an effect on literary productions. Coullie (1994) considers the autobiography of black people as a departure from praise poems and

auto/biographical poetry. She enunciates that the shift from poetry with its african character to autobiography which is a more western model embodies a shift in the way subjects perceive themselves and their places in the world. The narrative involves objectification of the self and rests on individualism. The subject of the praise poem is constructed in a more splintered way and lines from other poets are sometimes incorporated into the poem which results in a difference in the narrator in a praise poem and the narrator of autobiographical narrative. Autobiographical narrative, according to Coullie is structure-bound which already contributes to meaning. The autobiographer will construct a narrative which language and culture can conceive and has an audience. Those writers whose lives are of interest in certain political, economic and social conditions will be published; therefore the autonomous self sometimes has to take a step backwards for the stereotypical self.

Autobiographical writing involves a reconstruction of the past into the present by the autobiographical writer who is both subject and object of the narrative. Were (2017) elucidates that autobiographical writing involves the reader sharing in the private experiences of the author's own life. She says that this tendency appeals to the truth. The element of truth and the exchange between author and reader are distinguishing characteristics between autobiography and fiction. Were (p. 8), cites Smith and Watson, (1998), who consider the characteristics of the autobiographical theory to be history, memory, truth, retrospection, creativity and voice. She claims that autobiographical truth is characterised by consistency, cohesion and the seriousness of the subject in their realistic projection of events. Therefore notion of truth in autobiographical texts is sometimes complemented by oral narratives as told by elders and paratextual features such as letter, photographs and speeches.

Howart (1978, p. 364) proposes that the autobiography be viewed from the perspective of an artist-model namely a self-portrait. He articulates that "the dualities of space and time, illusion and reality, painter and model exist in the same portrait". The artist must at the same time pose and paint, resulting in a process that is simultaneously reductive and expansive. It is proposed that in the autobiographical account of an author's life, vision and memory are the essential controls; space and time the central problems and reduction and expansion the desired goals. In his opinion the dualism of author-narrator poses certain restrictions, but at the same time provides opportunities.

During the 1970s and 1980s there was an increase in autobiographical studies and it was to a large extent part of what is generally regarded as a concern with the limitations of what constituted autobiography and literature. Mc Cooey (1996) writes that the expansion in autobiographical writing

during the past two decades were influenced by postcolonial history, feminist theories and cultural theories that embarked on writing previously marginalised subjects such as women, indigenous minorities, people of colour and children into existence. Autobiographical writings were built from the viewpoint of deconstruction and reconfiguring of a human subject that was universalised as male, European, self-present and autonomous. Mc Cooley mentions that it was a deliberate effort to deconstruct the secure limits of selfhood.

It is generally accepted that art mimics life and life mimics art. In this interpretation, life would be created through the same kind of human imagination that art or narrative or text is created. Literature is human experience organised in a specific way through cultural schemata and shared experience. Bruner (2004, p. 697) elucidates that the autobiography should be viewed as procedure for 'life-making'. He explains: "eventually the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of life narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organise memory, to segment and purpose-build the very events of a life." The result is that people become the autobiographical narratives they tell about their lives.

Narrative unfolds on a dual landscape; the landscape of action and the landscape of consciousness which Bruner describes as the inner worlds of the protagonist entangled in the action.

2.3.3 Conclusion

This section presented the characteristics of the autobiography as regarded by theorists and also contextualised the autobiography of minorities. The next section presents a review of existing literature on the research objectives of the study.

2.4 Witnessing trauma during war time

2.4.1 Introduction

Witness bearing is a pivotal concept in trauma studies that elucidates the effect of trauma on survivors. Some theorists generally referred to as the classical theorist, use the event-based model to trauma, but others suggest theoretical frameworks that will reveal the traumatic effect on socio-cultural epistemologies. The study employs both these models to give insight on trauma during Namibia's struggle for independence.

2.4.2 Laub's three tiered concept

The concept of witness bearing to trauma is extensively investigated by classical theorist, Laub (1992) with regard to Holocaust trauma survivors. Laub identifies three distinct levels of witnessing: the first level of being a witness to oneself within the experience which he claims originates from autobiographical awareness as a survivor; the second level of being a witness to the experience of others and the level of being witness to the process of witnessing itself. In his case, being an interviewer of survivors of the Holocaust.

Laub says that he realises that survivors do not only need to survive to give account of their experiences, but that they need to express their experiences to survive. He maintains that one has to know, what he refers to as, 'buried truth' in order to overcome trauma. The survivor is driven by a need to tell and to know. He articulates the dilemma of the survivor of a traumatic event as follows:

The witness is haunted by the desire to tell and to be heard. Yet no amount of telling seems ever to do justice to this inner compulsion. There are never enough words or the right words; there is never enough time or the right time and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in thought memory and speech. (Laub, pp. 64-65).

Laub says in the incident of bearing witness to an event, the truth of the event can be recorded in perception and in memory; thus from outside or from inside. Laub denotes here a paradoxical situation where an event that is so traumatic that it cannot be located needs to be located to help the survivor reconstruct a past. There is a concordance between Laub, Caruth (1996) and Hartman (1995) with regard to the paradoxicality of coping during the aftermath of a traumatic experience. The three authors whose texts inform this study are survivors of the trauma of apartheid and the ensuing liberation struggle for independence of Namibia. All three went into exile and have insights in how propaganda was used by South Africa to turn Namibians against the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and in doing so, prolonging foreign occupation and oppression of Namibians. They testify of the suffering of survivors of the armed struggle and as autobiographers, they are witnesses to their own suffering by remembering the past. Literature always engages the reader as witness. The authors appeal to those Namibians who were not physically part of the struggle by going into exile by engaging them as readers.

Murray (2009, p. 2), quotes Young (1988), who explicates that people incorporate new experiences into existing cognitive structures, thus making experiences comparable and comprehensible. The Holocaust has become a metonym for trauma and a set of symbols that reflect the formal

codification of the event. Concepts relating to the Holocaust are cognitively mapped onto traumatic experience through systemic violence such as colonialism, political violence and racism as being experienced in the Southern African context. Apartheid and colonialism resulted in epistemological and ontological disconnections that impact future generations. The author proposes that at some stage, the witness to trauma identifies with both the victim and perpetrator and become a participant in the construction of knowledge, thus proposing that trauma becomes communal. African societies embrace the concept of Ubuntu – a person depends on other people to be, therefore the individualised, event-based conceptualisation of trauma may not always succeed in capturing trauma of Africans. Because the verbalisation and understanding of trauma is cultural and social, testimony and witness bearing to trauma should be contextualised culturally and socially.

Murray (2009) agrees with Laub that during a traumatic event the observing and recording mechanisms are temporarily short-circuited, leading to malfunctioning and misrepresentation. Hence, trauma as an event is not fully integrated into the cognitive frame of reference of the victim and therefore there exists inadequate or no linguistic reference for the experience. Murray investigates the dynamics at work during the process of witnessing with reference to the work of Antjie Krog, shedding light on the challenges that the complexity of trauma pose to collective identity in post-apartheid South Africa and how writers develop strategies to address the burden of trauma on memory.

Murray elucidates that the reader is the witness to trauma to which the characters testify. The situation is problematised, because the reader might not only identify with the victim, but also with the offender. Krog creates an autobiographical text in which the reader is confronted with their possible complicity in creating the socio-political space in which the atrocities occur. Krog breaks silences as she searches for new ways to uncover co-implication at personal and political levels in attempts to articulate her own story as well as those of the larger group. Testimony requires both speaker and listener playing a part in the creation of knowledge, both of whose respective functions of observing and recording are negatively affected by trauma. Murray questions the twofold conceptualisation of victim and witness, explaining that such dichotomous constructions allow the witness to place itself in a space of innocence. Krog's texts expand the position of the witness in such a way that identification with other role players is possible. The work of Krog especially confronts the witness with roles of identification of both victim and perpetrator. She constructs a space of dialogic interaction where narrative and history intersects. Murray shares that this type of representation also runs the risk of making trauma mundane and that one of the witnesses whose story Krog

narrates has objected to her way of representing it, saying that she did not capture his pain. Murray thus supports the view of Laub who says that the traumatic event, although real, happens outside of the parameters of normal reality such as causality, sequence, place and time. The observation of the witness can relate to a belief that somebody who has not experienced the isolation and pain of apartheid is unable to reflect his pain or it can be indicative of trauma that has shattered his ability to recognise his own trauma as represented by the author.

Autobiographers employ several methods of depiction to overcome the limitations of the genre, such as to incorporate photography or graphics, however Krog fuses poetry, epistolary form and autobiographical elements to overcome some of the challenges and to deal with the gaps of trauma, integrating testimonies of witnesses before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with her own identity as an Afrikaner woman in the new South Africa. She narrates from a psychic space, both in the sense of giving testimony and of being moral witness. Murray (p. 10) elucidates that Krog's story as well as those that she is witnessing, are constituted at the nexus of gender, race, and class, ethnic as well as social difference.

Narrativisation not only helps with the recovery from trauma, but it opens up space to envision female solidarity, recounts (Silva, 2017) in her study "Gaps of silence: trauma, memory and amnesia in *Le baobab fou*", on the autobiographic novel of Ken Bugul. Due to the subject's suffering to narrate her story as a result of trauma inflicted by the neglect of her mother, she transfers her story and pain to the baobab tree – a technique called *prosopopeia*. In African mythology, the devil has turned the baobab tree upside down, causing the tree and the population to die. She explains further that in the Pan-African world, trees are believed to be a special connection between ancestors and the living and operate as a bridge between the material and the spiritual world. Cathy Caruth, as quoted by (Silva, 2017, p. 1), claims that there is a latent period before a trauma survivor is able to narrate the traumatic story. It is further explained that events from the present link the traumatised subject to a haunting past, thus memory and imagination intersect and symbolic, discursive and epistemological violence are represented through the text. The protagonist is abandoned by her mother, leaving her to grow up with her father and his many wives. The women throw her out, leaving her to fend for herself. She pushes amber from the tree into her ear, resulting in deafness and subsequent muteness. Later, when she finds herself in Belgium she is exposed to the violence of racism as she looks in the mirror and realises that the difference between her and the French women is her skin colour. However, exactly because of her race and the resulting discrimination, she finds alliances with Arab and Antillean women, also minorities in France. During the trauma of these racist incidents, she

experiences flashbacks from her childhood that reconnect her with her African heritage, enhancing her recovery from trauma. She finds love with another woman. Through this love she negates the views of the Négritude movement of Senghor and Césaire, through their emphasis on the aesthetics, objectify women. This type of self-actualisation resonates with the views of McClintock (1995) as quoted in Silva, 2017 p. 6):

In so many narratives, mothers are symbols of continuity and survival, embodying the land and thus become interchangeable with it. Women become the elements of fertility and survival and are excluded from direct action as national citizens, women are subsumed symbolically into the national body politics as its boundary and metaphoric limit...women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied direct relation to national agency.

Hinton and Kirmayer (2013), explain that cultural context and community dictate the specific ways in which people respond to the aftermath of trauma and that these responses should be investigated to give insight into what therapeutic methods should be attempted in the healing process. Domains that are endorsed by local ontologies would enlighten people's conduct when confronted with a traumatic event. The therapeutic practices may operate in such a way that they enable the person to access cultural cognitive structures to deal with the pain. They continue that trauma related disorders are sustained by multiple interactive systems of which they identified six broad domains: persistent nervous system states; models of bodily experiencing; cognitive- attentional biases; alterations of memory; representation of self, body, world, spirituality and behavioural dispositions.

2.4.3 Literary images

Tembo (2017) underwrites those theorists that regard art in itself as a witness to trauma. He explains that texts can articulate factual as well as socio-cultural elements and values embedded in the narrative. Therefore art allows for deeper reflection of personal and cultural values and to mitigate meaning-making with the listener. At the same time, Tembo cautions against aesthetic, formalist writing in arts that renders manmade disasters such as colonialism, slavery and apartheid to be everyday violence that befalls victims. Just as trauma can be distorted for stylistic effects, it can also be amplified for personal gain by both writers and witnesses.

Literary images function as vehicles for articulating trauma and are avenues to provide access to the past. Literature is an abstract space in which identities and the writer's obligation can be rethought and reshaped. Trauma is, according to Tembo, mainly represented through two concepts: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and through autobiographical memory. PTSD is regarded as

inadequate to demonstrate the survivor's inability to construct a coherent sense of self and belonging, which results in the creation of liminal identities. Tembo investigates witnessing trauma during the Rwandan genocide of 1994. There are certain historical facts that Tembo mentions that forms parallels with the Namibian context. The political context that first Germany and later Belgium established relied on ethnicity/racial supremacy. The identity card that Belgium introduced reminds of the racial classification system in South Africa and Namibia and the passes that people had to carry on them to gain access into certain areas.

The trauma of victims is articulated through an aesthetic witness, the artist, who speaks for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Remembering and forgetting are read through the road chronotope, consisting of, the journey motif and the threshold motif to show the interconnectedness of time and space. The spatial and temporal parts of people of all social classes, religions, nationalities and ages interconnect. Exile and homecoming are described through the journey motive and the shattering of memory through the threshold motive. The road motive represents the victims' attempts to make sense of the violence and the threshold motive embodies encounter. Studying Leah Chishugi's *A Long Way from Paradise*, the interconnectedness of time and space is emphasised as the distance travelled stands in direct relation to the amount of time lapsed. Chishugi's physical flight is paralleled by an internal metaphorical journey driven by fear and paranoia. Judith Herman's model of trauma symptoms is used to illuminate Chishugi's trauma. The concept of intrusion is represented by thoughts and images that pop up when the survivor does not want to think of it; constriction embodies feelings of powerlessness and paranoia, causing the survivor to doubt everybody and feeling constantly under surveillance. Tembo explains that PTSD, as theorised by the American Psychiatric, consists of a model called Dissociative Fugue which is "characterised by sudden, unexpected travel from home" (p. 44) or one's customary place, which affects one's perception of one's own identity. Memories of the atrocities haunt Chishugi in nightmares in her new places of refuge. To add to her burden, she is once grabbed and pushed into a car in Cape Town by thugs in what turned out to be a case of mistaken identity. The incident causes her to flee with her family to England. Fleeing Rwanda was one way of coping with her loss and pain, yet it reincarnate what Tembo, calls something dark, something that has disappeared, but reappears.

Truth telling is regarded as fundamental and ethical in life writing. Tembo uses Foucault's notion of *parrhesia* to explain Umutesi's contradiction of President Kagame's assertions that the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front did not retaliate against the Hutus. Umutesi uses her experience as a

witness inflicted upon the Hutus to reconstruct the political narrative. Through the journey motive she narrates the horror and suffering of dying compatriots along the road, left behind by fellow refugees who cannot assist them. Seeing dying people have become such a normal occurrence that people fleeing glance at them and then continue their conversations and their journeys. Tembo reads these actions with the Freudian concept of repression, explaining that the painful experiences are blocked out by psychological defenses so that the events are not experienced in the presence. Repression is linked with the inability to mourn and dislocation from culture and society. The trauma witnessed is the overwhelming experience that Caruth mentions. Umutesi testifies on behalf of those who are too traumatized to testify themselves.

2.4.4 Conclusion

This section reviewed existing literature on witnessing trauma during war time was presented. Literature on both the event-based model as well as cultural models was reviewed. The complimentary application of these models increases the scope of the concepts as well as the analytic tools available to interpret the notion.

The next section presents a review of existing literature on catharsis.

2.5 The cathartic effect in the select texts

2.5.1 Introduction

The concept of catharsis originates from Classical Greek theatre. It has been expanded to include all genres of art and all types of emotion. Literature is life and therefore literary concepts are adapted and transformed to construct meaning in real life.

2.5.2 Fear, excessive emotions and purgation

Through the concept of catharsis the study will be investigated how individuals responded to trauma and challenges in construction and realisation of selfhood. Catharsis generally means “purification” or “cleansing”, gesticulating the removal of the disturbing and the painful in anticipation of healing that may follow, (George & Jung, 2016; Cherry, 2018). The construction of testimonial literature encompasses a re-confrontation with the pain, the event, the object or subject that caused the trauma in order to facilitate healing.

The concept of catharsis comes from the Greek word *Katharos* which means pure (Kanonias, 2018). It

further evolved in the word *Kathairein* which means cleanse. In Greek tragedy, catharsis is an important process in the protagonist's journey to self-realisation.

McCumber (1988) elucidates that catharsis is the purgation of excess fear and pity, but that through extension, the concept has been stretched to apply to all other emotions. Catharsis can be investigated through the religious, medical and biological paradigms. In his paper: "Aristotelian catharsis and the purgation of women", McCumber applies the biological paradigm to investigate catharsis in *Oedipus Rex*, the tragedy by Sophocles. Biology precedes medicine and therefore provides a deeper layer for investigating the concept. The paper commences with the contextualisation of metaphorical references - Thebans are called children of Cadmus – the earth; the land is engulfed in waves of blood and it is the night of the full moon.

Mimesis provides the structure of the play, while catharsis is the purpose of it or the telos (p. 56). The unity of the play is of central importance. McCumber underlines that catharsis does not only apply with reference to the audience, but to all elements of the play, hence adhering to the unity that Aristotle proposes. Aristotle regards the art of healing to reside in the patient as well as the doctor. The doctor does not produce healing, but modifies a normal process and so contributes in the process of healing. As such the tragedian manipulates emotions already existing. Both patient and disease are objects for manipulation and because they are dominated they are feminised in a traditional male-space; the doctor's office. The biological view of catharsis leads to the traditional, patriarchal view of women. It is explained that Aristotle was fascinated by blood and menstruation and that he regarded menstruation as the discharge of excess nourishment. Blood carries elements that are good for the body, but the excess of it has to be discharged. This discharge is linked to weakness of the female body to contain that which is good. Weakness is equated to be covered with blood or differently stated, to be engulfed in fear. Fear is polarised with courage – the courage of the tragic hero.

Oedipus is blood-stained, although he does not know it when he undertakes the investigation into the cause of the plague. When his transgressions are discovered, it results in his banishment. In ancient Athens, women were barred from political life. McCumber (p. 62) explains: "They were, in sum, condemned to pay, whether they had actually harmed anybody or not, the penalty for blood-pollution. The psychological catharsis effected by tragedy thus mirrors in the male, the biological process undergone monthly by the female." The biggest fear of men was relegation to the position of a woman. It is also explained that catharsis is located in Oedipus himself. The mutilation that Oedipus inflicts on himself is equated to an act of self-castration.

Gardener (1985) investigates the scope of catharsis by presenting the work of certain artists from Aristotle to the works of Gwala. Aristotle saw all art as imitative or representative of reality. Through this perception, he established a link between the art and the physical world. Aristotle modelled the concept of catharsis with regard to tragedy, illuminating that tragedy arouses the emotions of fear and pity in the audience because the audience identifies with the tragic hero and by means of catharsis an outpour or purgation of such emotions is achieved and the audience is cleansed and in a way the emotions of fear and pity are also purged and altered. Aristotle thus proposes a transformation of these emotions in tragedy, but through generalisation, it was expanded to include all emotions and all literary works to cover a dual process of intellectual and emotional cleansing, which assisted in the creation of new meaning. With reference to the work of Wordsworth it is shared how emotion is recollected in tranquility “until by a species of re-action the tranquility gradually disappears and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation is gradually produced” (p. 31). The second pleasurable emotion is the source from which the poem is brought forth. Gardiner elucidates that from this perspective of Wordsworth, the process of writing itself is cathartic. Insight, thus, is fulfillment through participation in the process of creating a work of art. This process is also accomplished by the writer, for himself. Catharsis is viewed in terms of inner and outer structures; it is viewed in terms of the individual as well as community, representing the point at which conscious and unconscious assimilate. To enlighten this claim, Gardiner analyses poems by Milton, Wordsworth, Livingstone, Serote and Gwala to show how catharsis is achieved through juxtaposing powerful, ironical and paradoxical expressions that generate movement in the psyche and outside. With regards to the poem *Banned* by Mongane Serote, Gardiner clarifies that the title encloses the socio-political injustices of apartheid, explaining how the person is silenced through political processes, using the destruction of nature to transfer meaning of silence, loss and death. The drought-stricken landscape becomes a metaphor for the man’s position as banished from the land.

The communal aspect of the poem is carried through the word *brother* and Serote’s voice is described to be personal and representative.

Honeycutt, Nasser, Banner, Map & Du Pont (2008) explicate that catharsis encompasses emotional release of anxiety and fear. One way how these emotions are released when individuals lose family members and loved ones during traumatic events, is to contemplate imagined interaction such as imagined conversations with the deceased. During these interactions the survivors imagine themselves in a variety of roles where they perform several functions such as rehearsals, compensation for guilt and relational maintenance which help them to psychologically maintain their

relationship with family members. The period immediately after the traumatic event is regarded as critical in the survivor's recovery as during this time, a narrative event that is part of the strategy dealing with the event, is constructed parallel to a process of cognitive processing of the traumatic event. Honeycutt et al. explain that psychological effects of traumatic events include intrusive, painful memories; avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and increased physiological arousal. Categories such as age, gender, ethnicity and social networks are regarded as mitigating factors during the occurrence of dysfunction such as PTSD.

The importance of social networks or social systems is emphasised. It is supposed that ecological models that place individuals in the context of family or other social support systems can enlighten the paradoxical effect of these systems on trauma survivors. Edwards (1998) as quoted by Honeycutt et al. (p. 233) claims that the buffer that social networks perform can be both supportive by providing a conducive environment for healing and burdensome by encumbering the individual with the responsibility of the well-being of members in the group.

Titi (2015), enunciates that trauma due to physical or mental injury causes internal transformation and forces characters to re-investigate the previous ontology, in the process, becoming agents of themselves. The transformation that the survivors undergo leads them to the point of catharsis and because they experience this state of catharsis, they are able to dismantle the corrupt system causing the trauma and are able to enter into a new phase. Titi expounds that Kushner in his play *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* parallels the political situation with illness. This illness causes internal transformation resulting in both individual and social catharsis. This ritual of catharsis results in the creation of a new society, which might still contain imperfections, but is in the process of transformation. Catharsis is regarded as a necessary process, reconciling an undesired past and a better future, thus vital for the continuation of the society. Titi elucidates that Kushner's use of similar images for body and politics implies that politics is inscribed on the body. Corporality is one of the most important elements in postcolonial trauma studies suggesting that the traumatised body is a trauma text.

Using Aristotle's explanation of the effect of tragedy on the spectator, Titi enlightens that human suffering arouses purification of negative emotions such as fear, pity and anger which leads to renewal and restoration of hope. In the ancient Greek tragedy the tragic hero is a man of great stature who suffers due to his own hamartia.

Wright, Masten and Narayan (2013), say that scientific studies of how people respond to immense

trauma emerged around the 1970s when researchers began to notice the phenomenon of positive adaptation among children who were regarded to be at risk for developing psychopathology. It was a new path as earlier studies focused on risks and the disorders caused by the risk. Researchers now realised that existing psychopathological models lacked scope and usefulness to explain how positive outcomes were achieved by these children in the context of adversity.

2.5.3 Narrative voice

Autobiographical writing equips the female with a voice - a tool for self-exploration, self-discovery and self-actualisation. Muchiri (2008), articulates that the autobiography reflects an author's pursuit for voice, the desire to be heard. It allows writers to define themselves as individuals, distinct from those images fostered by society or by cultural stereotypes.

The writers prove that no incident is too minor or insignificant to be woven into the autobiography because all experiences shape who we are and who we become. The genre allows writers to examine difficult memories, thoughts, feelings, and social concerns such as sexual identity and power. The writer who is also the subject of the story narrates the events with her own voice, adding tone and nuances where she wants the emphasis. The narrative voice is also a cohesive tool that ties the narrative together.

2.5.4 Gender and response to trauma

Gender relates to social differences between men and women and the experiences of men and women with relation to spaces and their environments. Gender as a societal construct that recognises the diversity of social practices, beliefs, cultural behaviours, historical contexts and political structures and the change in meaning that can occur from society to society or within societies over time.

Le Masson, Norton and Wilkinson (2015), elucidate that most societies face gender imbalances due to the detriment of women. Le Masson et al. (p. 17) quotes Dankelman (2010) who postulates that gender relations throughout the world entail asymmetry of power between women and men which implies that gender is a social stratifier, and in this sense, it is similar to other stratifiers such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, place and age, that in themselves all affect gender roles and meanings.

Gender policies and programmes acknowledge that there exist inequalities that may deprive one group and benefit another. The ability to reduce gender imbalances therefore can reduce vulnerability for certain groups. They claim that attention to the vulnerability of certain groups during

natural disasters has only received attention recently.

Certain individuals possess an ability to recover and thrive in the face of adversity. Mlambo (2011 & 2013) has written widely on the literary representation of the coping strategies of individuals in socio-economic and political crisis. Mlambo explains that when faced with challenging situations some characters display the human capacity to be creative, innovative and protean in order to survive (p. 61) while others fall victim to their situations. He illuminates that literary representation of how ordinary Zimbabweans respond to crisis shows an inspirational fortitude of the African spirit.

The multiple dimensions of the crisis manifested in extremely challenging times, characterised by change that was happening too fast for many people. Yet amidst all the challenges, the people's resilience prevailed in inspirational ways. The ordinary people's inborn quality of transforming to a different way of being to become better and intuitively protean at handling turbulent change, non-stop pressure and life-disrupting setbacks. (2013, p. 61)

Mlambo coins oxymoronic collocations to explain the ambivalence in people's actions. A defiant person is a victor, not a victim; responds not reacts; becomes better instead of bitter; cope and not crumble. In his paper he analyses the coping strategies of the protagonist, Sarah from Charles Mungoshi's short story "The Hare" and shows how she is able to cope and in the end overcomes the hardships after her husband is laid off. While her husband Nhongo is unsettled, falls into depression and traces the nostalgias of his childhood, Sarah is able to move forward and spiral upwards, creating a better life for her family. Her resilience is anchored in feminist thought and tradition. She establishes a network of friends and is able to locate and cultivate her unused, inner resources, finding a way out of poverty. According to Mlambo a resilient person is known for being able of personal transformation. Sarah becomes the breadwinner of the household and she thrives, but her husband is not able to accept the reverse roles. She becomes a new, resourceful and strong-willed Sarah. Mlambo (2011) explains that such a person does not aim only to survive, but to reconstruct themselves and their lives in fast changing times, therefore taking on the personality of agency.

One of the approaches employed to explain how culture influences human behaviour and molds identities is to view it in the context of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory which identifies an interdependent micro through to macrosystemic level. It is explained that the macro level usually sets the tone (p. 26). In global context, global culture would be macrosystemic. The culture at the macro level enhances norms, beliefs and values that can develop or constrain positive development at micro level.

Theron and Liebenberg (2015, p. 31), quotes Yosso (2005), who explains that culture should be viewed as a communal fund of knowledge and that it consists of the following six forms of capital:

- aspirational (maintaining hopes and dreams);
- navigational (the capacity to maneuver through social and psychological spaces by drawing on individual agency and social networks);
- social (networks of people and community resources);
- linguistic (intellectual and social skills attained through multilingualism);
- familial (a broader understanding of kinship that includes extended family and community and the continuity of community history, memory and cultural intuition);
- resistant capital (behavior that challenges and resist oppression and inequality).

2.5.5 Conclusion

In this section the effect of catharsis was presented in relation to the Greek tragedy as well as how characteristics of the concept reflect in African and Namibian literature. The next section reviews literature on the concept of identity.

2.6 Identity construction in newly constructed Namibia

2.6.1 Introduction

Creative literature reflects the act of intellectual appropriation of the world by aesthetic means (Winterveldt & Vale, 2011). They emphasise that literature is a crucial mode of self-identification of societies in transition. The author's perception reflects in the literary product and art encompasses the aesthetic encoding of the social world. Namibian autobiographical texts reflect the cathartic effect of colonial past and liberation, fusing history and story. They explain that from a sociological perspective, literature can be analysed either as structure or process, depending on the observer's focus. Literature encompasses a reality of its own, portrayed by means of language in two aspects, namely the production of meaning and the production of cultural commodity. The social space in which the author creates a literary work comprises of cultural traditions, socio-economic structures and human agency. Cultural products reflect evidence of power struggle between hegemony and domination.

2.6.2 Familial influence on activist identities

The family is a social network and as such oppressional social systems should also be investigated at familial level. The black women's autobiography is a site for investigating the intimate space of the family as a private world of resistance (White, 2005). White regards resistance, power and efficacy as concepts that are usually viewed from a patriarchal perspective, ignoring women's particular modes of resistance which centre on production and reproduction, self-respect, confidence and dignity, leading to a false dichotomy in the relation of the public and the personal spaces of resistance. She argues that the family is a microcosm where race, class and gender converges and can thus provide insight into women's activists' strategies.

Traditional ideas and customs act as cognitive scaffold to construct intersecting spheres of oppression. In contrast Were (2017), argues that systemic oppression such as imperialism and colonialism engender positive resilient strategies in gender relationships that challenge traditional structures and can lead to transformation. The family stands traditionally under the leadership of women; therefore motherhood is one of the constructs that should be explored in investigating familial strategies on activism. In the case of the three women; Mamphela Ramphele, Winnie Mandela and Francis Baard, who were partnered to struggle icons who were incarcerated frequently and for long periods of time, their activist strategies should be investigated from the perspective of insider; a member of the family as well as outsider, concerning gender subordination as women usually create families that reflect the social transformations that they advocate for which include three main points namely challenging traditional family structures; modelling an activist identity and creation of new social systems.

Occupying the space on the boundary of fact and fiction, the autobiography authored by females is not only concerned with the deconstruction of history as a continued process, but also with gender issues such as the absence of women's voices, subjugation, knowledge, power, sexuality, memory and collective identity (Hagimoto, 2012). It is a powerful tool that helps them to break through the narratives that have been constructing their lives for centuries and helps them to reconstruct history, telling their own story in their own voice. Investigating how language is employed to represent cultural identity in the novel *Fantasie: An Algerian Cavalcade* of Assia Djebar, Hagimoto shows how Arabic and French are used to seek healing and reconciliation with a self that is shattered by oppression, saying that Djebar uses the collective voice to find her own, individual voice. Through telling the story of the women fumigated in the Djebar caves she connects with her cultural self, translating their stories from Arabic to French.

Hagimoto explains that Merle Collins in her autobiographic novel, *Angel*, uses different levels of language to construct cultural identity. Patois, the national Creole of Grenada is used to represent the voices of older females; English Creole to represent the younger voices; and Standard English to represent the figure of the reader. Both texts can be regarded as polyphonic texts. Williams (2013), enlightens that the contemporary polyphonic novel, with variant forms that are called amongst others the composite novel, the hybrid, the multigraphic novel goes beyond the concept of heteroglossia as it through it writers can represent simultaneity, contradiction, the empty space between voices, cacophony and multimedia intrusions into the genre.

2.6.3 Agency

Hassim (2014), in her paper “A Life of Refusal” investigates the role the late Winnie Madikizela-Mandela played in the South African freedom struggle, as reflected in her personal narratives and shows how she constructed her own identity, refusing to be defined by others. The complexities in defining the tenets of the genre of autobiography are highlighted by Hassim who emphasises that due to her position as wife of Nelson Mandela who was detained numerous times and who was constantly under police surveillance and due to her involvement in the military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela never had time to sit down and write down the story of her life. Her autobiography should therefore be composited from the articles she wrote, interviews to journalists, her presence and conduct at rallies and the documentaries and films about her life to which she consented. The two texts *Part of my soul* and *491 days* which portray her life in her own words were written in the public eye and are multi-modal and multi-faceted, evident of the complexities of autobiographical narrative.

The challenge in researching these events is posed by the very fact of Madikizela-Mandela’s hyper-visibility in the public sphere, and the awareness that she herself is constantly constructing her own life story in the full glare of an international audience. She is hyper-visible, her movements recorded by the police and by the media, she speaks often and yet her words are carefully curated for political effect. She has been the subject of at least three biographies, a biopic, and several documentaries, all of which are based in part on an archive that includes multiple interviews. (2014, p. 65)

Context is regarded as the facilitator of life writing, stressing temporality and purpose. The personal narrative of a political activist must be treated with carefulness as it is crafted in a purposeful rhetorical strategy. She claims that it is in the revelation of the inner and intimate – feelings, fear and longing that individuals comprehend their own sense of capability to act (p. 66) and that the public interprets their actions. Personal narratives of politicians aid in the understanding of political events.

Hassim elucidates that there is a dichotomy in the portrayal of Madikizela-Mandela by the African National Congress in their grand narrative and her own personal narratives. The political movement portrays Madikizela-Mandela as the mother of the nation, connecting her to maternity of nurturer and peace-maker, while Madikizela-Mandela was linked to several violent events that she explained as speaking to the aggressor in a way that he understands, in some instances contradicted the image crafted by the movement. Madikizela-Mandela claimed that the brutality of the South African regime instigated violence in people like her who could not stand the vicious oppression anymore. Hassim stresses that in the case of Madikizela-Mandela the lines between justified violence as an answer to the atrocities of the regime and individual criminal activity are sometimes blurred and very difficult to establish and suggests that the notions of identity and representation should be carefully interrogated when an individual with the stature of Madikizela-Mandela, avowed the identity of the mother of the nation in the grand narrative of the liberation struggle and in her own personal narratives takes on a different, at times opposing, agency in support of retaliating violence with violence. By suggesting that interviews should be regarded as part of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's personal narrative, Hassim is able to use the response of Madikizela-Mandela in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing to show that her home where she harboured youths was not a safe place and that violence were used to instill discipline.

Hassim also addresses the issue of testimony, showing that autobiographical representation can be fragmented, shaped and influenced to reflect only what the author regards as important. Madikizela-Mandela's response to allegations of torture was at times one-worded denials, which Hassim interpret as refusal to give testimony. These responses can be regarded as reflecting masculinity. It reflects military language of command, which might be indicative of the effects of the numerous detainments and interrogations. Her notes from the time of her incarceration in 1969 are written in short, simple sentences, revealing the psychological effects of the physical imprisonment. She became suicidal and went on a hunger strike. The extent and depth of psychological torturing is evident in the fact that she was separated from other political prisoners and put on death row.

Goredema (2009) elucidates that African women's identity was always ambivalent – two identities competing in the same body; one which has historically been oppressed and the other that understands privilege and thrives. African feminism is a feminist epistemology that endorses the experience of women of Africa and of African descent, inclusive of those women who lived or lives in the diaspora, against mainstream feminism. African feminism is premised on a temporal scale of pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial. Goredema regards African feminism as a social movement that

aims to create awareness through past experiences, present situations and future. It is further stressed that there exists a certain tension with regard to culture. The following five categories are iconic in the focus on the differences between African and Western feminism: culture/tradition, socio-economic and socio-political issues, and the role of men, race and sex. These categories shaped the Western Feminist movement and embody the difference between it and African Feminism.

The three autobiographers under study lived in postcolonial African countries and were educated in Europe. The study reflects on how these prominent women rethink and reconstructs women's identity through their lived experience, anticipating elevating the plight of women.

Jacobs (2009) voices that translation takes place at border crossings between cultures. Etymologically 'translate' means "to carry over, from one language to another, from one country to another and from one culture to another". The post-apartheid South African national anthem is cited as the perfect example of translation at a cultural border crossing. The anthem consists of four of the official South African languages, hierarchically arranged in such a way that the oppressed national languages occupy the initial positions. Jacobs uses the collective; Nguni, Sotho and Germanic to refer to Xhosa, Southern Sotho and English and Afrikaans, thereby expanding the scope to include culture. The other seven languages are represented through group affiliation. In the anthem the transfer from one language to the other represents a linguistic threshold and marks both a moment of inclusion and exclusion. In Jacob's opinion, the anthem reflects the spirit of dialogue, representative of post-apartheid South Africa. It is elaborated that traditionally, translation took place hierarchically from the dominant to the subjugated, embodying a subject-object relationship. During the Renaissance, a transition took place whereby it was understood that communities exist alongside each other and translation takes place horizontally between cultures establishing a subject-subject position.

Jacobs (p. 43), references Jan Assmann (1996), who identifies three types of cultural translation:

Syncretism which represents a kind of merging between distinct cultures in such a way that cultural identity is not abolished, but decoded into a third set of cultural and linguistic practices with a new kind of transparency requiring double membership of both the original culture and the general culture. Assimilatory translation involves transfer, conversion and absorption into the dominant culture, while mutual translation occurs within a network of economic and cultural exchanges, establishing community by communication, mutuality and reciprocity. All three types of exchange have occurred in South Africa's encounter with Western culture. Jacobs argues that the

autobiographical act merging between self and language, a narrative through which the autobiographer can reply to the injury inflicted, providing opportunity for reconstruction and re-imagining of the self. Autobiographical remembering recreates a pre-textual, wordless pass into languages and thereby a conversion into lived experience. Jacobs studies the autobiography of Sindiwe Magona, *To My Children's Children*, to explain how cross-cultural translation shapes identity. In her first encounter with white people, Magona perceives them to speak nonsense, gibberish and mimics them in her response, reasoning that they will understand what she says because that is what they have spoken to her. In her autobiography, she provides the Xhosa translation in parenthesis, providing for a parallel reading of her mother tongue with English and through this access, exemplifying cultural binarism. Later, she discards the Xhosa "idikazi" meaning husbandless woman (p. 52) for the English "has been". She provides translation and retranslation, recaptured in the process of self-discovery. South Africa is a polyglossic, multi-cultural society and discourse is not simply conflicting, but also supplementary. South African history therefore is double encoded, articulating the various translations that have taken place into narrative allowing for traditions to be reinterpreted or appropriated. The trauma of apartheid fractured culture, rendering the past inaccessible, therefore there is the need for a discourse that allows for mutual interpretation.

The three autobiographers under study lived in postcolonial African countries and were educated in Europe. The study reflects on how these prominent women rethink and reconstruct women's identity through their lived experience, anticipating elevating the plight of women.

2.6.4 Voice

André Brink (1998) suggests that silence should not be regarded as the "other" of language, and the sayable and the unsayable should not be seen as binaries at the opposing ends of a scale, but rather as points in continuum. The experience of apartheid in the Southern African context has demonstrated that silence cannot be explained in simplistic terms, but rather that difference levels of silence, imposed by certain historical junctions exist. Brink explains that certain areas of knowledge were put outside of the reach of language by law enforcement agents like the police and the military and the banishment of writings by certain individuals and movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) that were barred or censored. These actions silence whole territories of historical consciousness in favour of the dominant discourse in order to make them inaccessible to other voices. In other cases the distortion of certain facts such as Black people's right to land, the subjugation of the native people of Southern Africa through religious indoctrination and the violation of the environment represent the complexity of silence.

Brink enunciates that the liberation struggle also imposed silences through torturing and murder in training camps of the ANC in Angola. The political context also imposed silences on literature as writers who would write about everyday experiences and engaged in imaginative literature were accused of occupying themselves with fantasy while ignoring the dark realities of the oppressive regime. He explains that the literature produced in such circumstances creates binaries. Brink proposes that historiography and textuality should not be seen as mutually exclusive, but should be regarded as complimentary and read as responses to silence.

Masemola (2013, p. 67) analyses the worldliness of autobiographical text and context, calling it a double temporality that is symptomatic of being-in-the-world rather than merely creating a text in itself. Prominent figures use popular culture reference to establish contact with their audiences. Using Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* and Mamphela Ramphele's *A Life*, Masemola shows that such reinforcement of what is already known, establishes cultural memory, a belonging to and becoming with. Ramphele steps out of the government imposed exile, by disguising herself as a young man, enabling herself to travel on a bakkie, undetected. Ramphele is able to transfer herself over physical and cultural space, engendering reference to the Scarlet Pimpernel that Mandela refers to and in doing so, becomes one with the movement – the ANC and defies the South African apartheid's government. This concept is known as nomadism and was developed by Deleuze. Nomadism is defined as a distribution of the self in such a way that it steps over barriers such as race, gender and class. "The wandering subject, such as exemplified by Ramphele and Mandela, confirms the politico-cultural logic of movement that explicitly repudiates the logos of stagnation imposed by the state" (p. 68). Nomadism is regarded as both a movement of solidarity and singularity, being one, but through shared memory, becoming one with the other. There are no limits to the self, other than confined in a space. Masemola explains that Ramphele's revolt represents an Antigone becoming. She rejects the imposed restrictions of the authorities in the same way that Antigone in the Greek tragedy resists the authority of Creon.

Masemola argues that what is important is the road travelled, the journey, where one ends up, the experience of actor and witness and role by the unforeseen.

Were (2017), emphasises that the African woman's autobiography presents individual lived experience as a platform to advocate the personal and the collective. She identifies a three-way construct namely, representing voices of the individual, the collective bodies that constitute identity politics such as maternity and political subjectivities and the national biography. Were (2017, p. 39) says:

African woman's autobiography is at the same time a historical process and a product of history. As a process it enables narrators to demonstrate a gendered historical consciousness. It also re-imagines black women's public-life particularly by redefining political acts because it facilitates an interaction between awareness of self and history.

The self is interpreted as "consciousness" is unitary and history as "experience" is relational. Were enunciates that black women's chances were silenced because by the apartheid's regime agendas and in spite of their contributions to the struggle they remained marginalised because of the patriarchal-orientated wings of the anti-apartheid's movements. Their texts should be read as the publicly enactment of their public political acts. The four metaphors of selfhood proposed for self-interpretation are sisterhood, motherhood, political widowhood and warriorhood. Sisterhood represents a bond of 'power' in their shared history of oppression; motherhood suggests mothering as a form of political agency. Motherhood has been stereotyped to exploit the biological endowment of women by emphasising their capabilities of reproducing and caring as better than those of men. Political widowhood represents the plight of the African women who had intimate relationships with men involved in the struggle, citing as example how Steve Biko's ideas and the Black Consciousness Movement lived on as a result of the involvement of Ramphela. Warriorhood refers to literal and ideological militancy in the 'battle-field'.

2.6.5 Cultural memory

Wang & Brockmeyer (2002), as referenced in Demuth, Abels and Keller (p. 319) enunciate that autobiographical memory and self are interconnected meaning systems that are constructed in macro- and micro-cultural contexts. Cultural conceptions that exist in a certain group referred to as macro conceptions complement to different categories of autobiographical memory for persons in the group, on this level considered as micro perceptions, which in turn establish and sustain culture specific memories of selfhood that realise into continuity and transformation.

Cultural memory is a theoretical perspective that comprises processes of biological, medical and socio-cultural nature which connect past and present and covers both the individual and the collective viewpoint. This perception covers both remembering and forgetting. Concepts such as mnemotechnics and intertextuality which Erll (2011), calls literature's memory; canon formation which is regarded as cultural heritage; and memory and identity are investigated. Photos are regarded as digital memory and are regarded as a crucial part in reminiscing a past that might not have been otherwise accessible and available to make meaning. Through the multi-modal approach

of incorporating photographs and text in autobiographical writing, memory is expanded and enhanced, becoming a way to fill in the spaces of traumatic memory. Literature and orality are modes of reminiscing the past by coding memory into aesthetic form such as narrative structures, symbols and metaphors. Autobiographical writing is an important way in which memory and remembering are presented in the Southern African context. It is a mode of memory in transnational and transcultural context, being a tool of negotiation of colonialism and decolonisation.

Culture is socially constructed. It is measurable. It is entangled with race and ethnicity and the identities that leads to it and diverge from it (Liebenberg and Theron, 2015). Culture is associated with tropes such as individualism and collectivism; independence and interdependence; individual ideas and communal values and indices such as dress, dance, music, language and choice of role models.

Cultural context directs human development and behavior. As a macrosystemic influence it shapes identities and value systems at universal, national and local levels. They explain that this idea is constructed in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory that regards people to be embedded in ecologies of interdependent micro- through macro level systems. The macro level shapes values, believes and practices of microsystems at familial level such as morals and social interactions, where resilience play out.

2.6.6 Power

Kornberg (2018) investigates the notion of power in testimonial writing. She claims that testimonial writing represents a confluence of individual perspectives with larger traumatic events. Both the two novels that she analyses centres around the liberation struggle. *Marrying Apartheid* by Ndeutala Hishongwa was written during the pre-independence period, promoting the struggle for independence and *Meekulu's Children* by Kaleni Hiyalwa, taking place during the war, aims to tell the history of those who fought in the struggle. She elucidates that while marginality is associated with lack of participation, reciprocation and belonging, the texts are proof that restricted power does not equate powerlessness. She refers to the perceptions of Vaclav Havel former president of the then Czechoslovakia and bell hooks an American feminist writer who emphasise that power is not only located at the centre or through organised groups, but vests in individual acts. Kornberg introduces her paper by making reference to the historical space awarded to Joseph Diescho's *Born of the Sun* (1988) as Namibia's first novel as opposed to Hishongwa's novel that was published two years earlier. She cites the form of the narrative and the matter of mastery of the English language amongst others

as possible contributing factors for denying Hishongwa the nominal place. Kornberg's argument is in congruence with those of Fulkerson-Dikuua (2018), March (2017) Sarah Mills (2010) that the form and intension of the female authored texts differ from that of male authored text. It is therefore important to rethink the nature of power and marginality and not to compare indiscriminately.

2.7 Conclusion

This literature review explored existing literature on the research topic: "Engendered militancy during war time: An exploration of select female authored autobiographical writing in Namibia" and was informed by the specific research objectives: witness bearing to trauma during war time; the cathartic effect in the select texts and the construction of identity in the new liberated Namibia.

The literature review enlightened that the autobiography of marginalised groups should be studied through both classical Western concepts and contemporary concepts that focus on socio-cultural representations in the genre. The female autobiographies in this study are produced by diasporic subjects that were influenced by African and Western exposure. Therefore they are the converging point of many cultures and tradition and their autobiographical tests testify to the living experience of it.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

Literary theory represents a specific form of literary criticism that entails the application of academic, scientific or philosophical approaches employed in a methodical way in the analyses of literary texts, (Baker, 2012, as referenced by Azmi, 2018, p. 58). These approaches impose a particular line of intellectual reasoning and literary theorists integrate concepts from systems of knowledge outside the realm of literary studies which demand a rethinking of traditional literary theories and methodologies to expand the scope of these theories.

Grant and Osanloo (2014), regard the theoretical framework as the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed for a research study. The authors use the metaphor of constructing a house to enlighten their reasoning that the theoretical framework serves as the structure and support for sections of the research. The theoretical framework offers a conceptual basis for understanding, analysing and designing ways to investigate the objects under study.

The theoretical framework that will enlighten this study is trauma theory. In this section trauma theory will be discussed and contextualised with reference to the select texts. Both the classical, event based concepts and the contemporary approach that considers socio-historical circumstances will be discussed.

3.2 Trauma theory-Introduction

Trauma theory has its roots in psychoanalysis though it strongly influences literary practice. The psychological approach to trauma theory focusses on a single event of great magnitude and how it affects the individual. This conceptualisation is regarded as Manichean and encompasses the polarisation or dualisation of concepts in oppositional binaries. The classical approach to trauma is regarded to reflect binary oppositions such as knowing and not-knowing; bypassing and registration while the contemporary approach focusses on prolonged trauma on socio-cultural systems. The classical model is presented first, followed by the contemporary approach

3.2.1 Classical trauma theory

Pierre Janet a student of Jean-Martin Charcot, developed formulations about the effects of traumatic memory on consciousness. He regarded the memory system as the crucial apparatus for

categorisation and integration of all aspect of experience in enlarging and flexible meaning schemes. Van der Kolk & Van der Hart (1995) articulate that Janet formulates the word “subconscious” to denote the collection of automatically stored memories that direct interaction with the environment. The memory system consists of a unified memory of all psychological facets such as sensations, emotions, thought and actions related to a particular experience. According to the authors, Janet beliefs that the spontaneous transformations involved in synthesising and adjusting new perceptions into existing schemes make it tremendously difficult to interpret the exact nature of the specific memory and its role in behaviour. He believed that a healthy, psychological system was linked to the proper operation of the memory system.

In *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth (1996) writes that trauma encompasses nightmares and repetitive reenactment of behaviour by people who has experienced a traumatic event and that the person does not have control over the event, nor is the actions of their own doing. Using the example from the Greek mythology in which the warrior Tancred cuts into a tree and the tree releases the voice of his beloved Clorinda; Caruth explains that the voice is released through the wound inflicted on the mind. The wound on the mind is described as been experienced too soon, too unexpectedly to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again. Thus, she claims, trauma is not located in the first event, but in the way it was not known (p. 4) and returns as a repetitive nightmare and the survivor’s inability to leave the experience behind. Caruth (p. 3) explicates that it is the “striking juxtaposition of the unknowing, injurious repetition and witness of the crying voice that represents Freud’s concerns with the traumatic experience”. She clarifies that the concern with the knowing and the not-knowing is shared and is a common interest, between literature and psychoanalysis and that the two disciplines converge exactly at this intersection.

Caruth describes trauma narratives as the representation of a duality, the narrative of a belated experience, or the ongoing experience of having survived it, calling it the oscillation between a crisis of death and a crisis of life. She refers to this paradoxicality as the parable of trauma.

The main focus of trauma theory is on the relationship of words and trauma, also called the language of trauma that help in “reading the wound” with the aid of Literature, elucidates Hartman, (1995). According to Hartman the theory embodies questions such as what kind of knowledge is art and what kind of knowledge does it foster. Hartman proposes the concept of traumatic knowledge – a kind of knowledge that cannot be made known without misrepresentation. He agrees with Caruth that the knowledge that stems from trauma is paradoxical, containing two contradictory elements,

namely the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced because it bypasses perception and consciousness and falls directly into the psyche, and a kind of memory of the event in the form of a perpetual trapping of it by the bypassed psyche. Trauma theory suggests the existence of a traumatic kind of knowledge that cannot be made entirely conscious because it cannot be fully retrieved from the memory system without alteration (Hartman, 1995, p. 537). Hartman believes that knowledge of trauma comes from dichotomies. The one is the tragic event registered rather than endured. It is regarded as such as it seems to have bypassed or severely split the psyche. The other is a memory of the event as it splits the psyche. He maintains that the mentioned contradictory elements can be related to the literal and figurative level in literature, therefore any description of trauma-runs the risk of being figurative itself. Figurative language explores the interruption between experiencing and understanding in which words replaces images. Literary construction relates to the negative moment in experience, to what in experience has not been or cannot be adequately experienced. The artistic representation modifies that part of the desire for knowledge which is given by images. Trauma theory illuminates figurative or poetic language as something other than enhanced imaging or repetition of prior experience. Hartman says that for a generation, literature has been increasingly looked at from a political angle. There is a desire to make the literary object more connected to what goes on in the real world. The focus is on disclosing an unconscious or not-knowing a potentially literary way of knowing- combining insight and blindness.

Historical trauma encompasses complex and collective trauma suffered by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation and circumstance Mohatt, et al. Historical trauma can be regarded as containing three primary elements:

- A trauma or wounding
- The trauma shared by the group of people
- The trauma spanning multiple generations

A characteristic of historical trauma is that members of the group may experience trauma related symptoms although they were not part of the group who suffered the traumatic event or exposure. Many critics believe that trauma has a language of its own. Mohatt et al. distinguish two levels of traumatic narrative:

- an internal logic describing a cause-effect relationship between the event as experienced in the past and its present symptoms, and
- a memory constructed of the event.

Trauma as a narrative contains both private and public components and directs focus to the development and impact of present day representations. Trauma narratives connect history with

present context and provide opportunity for systematic and methodological investigation that aims to establish links between the past event and the present condition. They explain that conceptualising historical trauma as public narrative avoids problems with projecting contemporary theory back in time as the narratives of historical trauma are connected to real events. Trauma begins in a state of helplessness and alters the relationship between victim and environment.

3.2.2 Cultural-based concept of trauma

Trauma theory emerged in the mid-1990s and promised to infuse literary studies with a new relevance. Trauma theory proposes itself as an essential apparatus for what happens in the real world and having the potential for change (Craps, 2010).

Caruth opines that a textual approach in which all reference is indirect can afford unique access to history rather than causing a departure from history. Craps suggests that:

Conjoining a psychoanalytic view of traumatic memory with a deconstructive vigilance regarding the indeterminacies of representation in the analysis of cultural artefacts that bear witness to traumatic histories makes it possible to gain access to extreme events and experiences that defy understanding and representation (2010, p. 52).

Craps echoes those who believe that trauma has a language of its own that demands new mode of reading and listening to the silence of its mute repetition of suffering. Craps quotes Allan Young (1995, p. 5) who says that

The disorder is not timeless, nor does it possess an intrinsic unity. Rather, it is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed studied, treated and represented and by the various interests, institutions and moral arguments that mobilised these efforts and resources’.

In discussing the narratives of Middle-Eastern women Hashem, (2016), says that applying the concept of Western feminism does not reveal the complexities of their lives. Women of Middle-Eastern origin are regarded as repressed, living heavily under the weight of male subjugation. The image that exists in the metanarrative is that they are happy to be housewives and rearing children. In her study, Hashem wishes to contribute to the destruction of this homogenised, reductionist label. One of the ways in which to destroy this view is to create a counter narrative, resembling the writing back response in postcolonial studies. By analysing artistic representations of contemporary artist from the Arab world, it is validated that Arab women respond and not react (Mlambo: 2011 & 2013) to their situation. She illuminates that contrary to Western believe, Arab feminism can be traced

back to the early 19th century. In what can be seen as an attempt to capture the scope and complexity of trauma in war time, she uses multi-modal art by Arab artist namely; *The Story of Zahra* (1980) by Hanan al-Shayh, a portrait series by Majdal Nateel titled *If I wasn't there* and photographs by Nour Kelze depicting the ever-changing political landscape, described as an ongoing process.

By using Judith Herman's (1992) trauma model to analyse Hanan al-Shayh's novel, Hashem at once responds to the metanarratives of the West and patriarchy in the Middle- Eastern setup. Herman proposes a three stage recovery approach to trauma:

- establishment of a safe space
- remembrance and mourning
- task of creating a future

Hashem supports the view that trauma redefines the relationship between victim and environment. Zahra is a victim of rape by her uncle. She marries the uncle's friend to escape the attention of the uncle. Her husband Majed married her for prestige and to fulfil his own sexual desires, trapping her in a traumatic environment. She suffers from depression and what are called "nervous fits". To escape the harassment, she establishes a safe space by locking herself up in the bathroom, separated from human interaction. In this safe place or refuge, her traumatic life is reconstructed through flashbacks and the reader is exposed to her childhood trauma. Later, back in Beirut, she feels safe when the bombs and gunfire rage the City, because she can hide in her safe spot. In the second stage of remembrance and mourning, the victim confronts the trauma by reconstruction of images and bodily experience. Zahra engages in a sexual relationship with a sniper and for the first time in her life she finds sex enjoyable. She falls pregnant and the sniper promises to marry her, allowing her to create a future, but he shoots her while she is walking away from him, her mind filled with happy thoughts of her future life.

3.2.3 Social model of disability

This concept explains disability in relation to the oppression of black people in South Africa during the apartheid regime. Inarticulacy is a disability that literature relates to colonialism and apartheid. The rights of black people were not acknowledged by the regime thus they were placed in a position where nobody would listen to them even when they were able to articulate their thoughts and claim their rights. Hannah Pagan (2015) refers to the claims of Michael Olivier (1996) in his paper "Understanding disability: from theory to practice" in which he advocates that disability has nothing to do with the body. She explains that Olivier deviates from the historical view that focused on

physical impairment and shifts the focus to oppressive institutional structures that are the cause of disablement. Due to the deprivation suffered during apartheid, people struggle to express themselves in the cultural and social environment. This social model is addressing the shortcomings of the medical model which is fixed and defines disability in biometric terms. The medical model defines disability as:

impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function;

disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

(World Health Organisation, 1980, p. 47; p. 143)

Pagan articulates that the medical model has come under criticism for enforcing a dichotomy between disability and normality and that recovery is, in some cases, not possible as, for instance, amputees who cannot recover lost body parts but have to use a wheel chair to be moveable. According to the social model which is pioneered by Oliver and the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) disability is defined as:

The disadvantage or restrictions of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them for participation in the mainstream of social activities. (UPIAS, 1976, p. 14) [3]

Social organisations are defined as ranging from economic structures, cultural prejudice, and inaccessibility of buildings to people with disability and segregated education. The social model therefore explains exclusions in the terms that black people were excluded from social practice by the apartheid regime.

Pagan uses the social model of trauma to discuss inarticulacy, racialisation and disability with reference to J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The novel depicts an unnamed Empire in an ambiguous time and place, but other specific details suggest that the novel refers to the South African context. The barbarian girl is tortured and has multiple physical impairments and is found begging on the street and living in utmost poverty. These conditions are linked to the findings of the Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) of 1997. The girl is unable to verbalise her torture at the hands of the Empire. Her silence is a confirmation that she is disabled in her cultural surroundings. Her inability renders the Magistrate unable to establish the truth of her experience. He therefore interprets her experience through her body.

By examining the Magistrates efforts further, however, it is clear that the inarticulacy is founded on a cross-culture divide. The barbarian girl's creation of a hermeneutical impasse for the magistrate is based on her inarticulacy, but this disablement of speech is intrinsically linked to her categorization by the empire as a barbarian. (2015, p. 2)

The physical disability of the girl makes it impossible for her to engage in sex and therefore robs her of social and cultural pleasure, such as, having children. The Magistrate as belonging to the "Other", the Empire, can only interpret the girl's inarticulacy after his own torturing; after being relegated to 'other', the barbarian and uttering screams described as barbarian language. His torture inflicts the same disabilities as those suffered by the barbarian girl. Pagan describes psychological impairment by referring to the novel *Mother to Mother* which is a fictionalized account of the murder of Amy Biel. She employs the social model to suggest a prolongation of the social incapacitation of black South Africans even after apartheid. A young boy, Molise's ability to articulate is described as him being able at the age of four to distinguish between the 'bang!' of a gun firing and the 'goop!' of a skull cracking after being set alight. The murder of the two boys after he has identified their hiding place 'struck him mute'. Onomatopoeic sounds are reinforced to emphasise the link between the apartheid's era and democratic rule. His silence is diagnosed as 'sickness of the heart' (p. 3).

The body is an important concept in autobiographical trauma writing - the primary aspect being the narrative that comes from the violated body and subjection of this body to truth telling. In socio-political discourse the female body has always been stigmatised and presented as a passive object (March, 2017). Trauma theory is an appropriate lens through which to investigate harm to the female body and if the narrative is authored by a female, how language and linguistic constructions are appropriated through devices such as metaphors and images to represent women's issues such as reproductive rights, sexuality and rights to sanctuary and safety and the resilience demonstrated by female characters in their attempts to overcome adversity. Bloom (1999) as mentioned in March (2017, p. 2) defines psychological trauma as the way in which a person's mind and body react to traumatic experience. Bloom enunciates that early childhood separation may cause damage to all neuro-biological and social systems. The fragmentation can affect response mechanisms, vulnerability and the cathartic reaction of cleansing and healing from trauma. March claims that during exposure to trauma, memory can be affected in such a way that the individual loses the ability to match words to the incident, causing a narrative breakdown.

3.2.4 Trauma narratives as speech act

Kristi Mickiewicz, (2013), voices that there is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of

you. She explains witness bearing is in itself a resilient process who has power and strength for the individual involved as it encompasses obtaining empathy and support to enlighten the emotional load, referring to it as a sort of catharsis. The process of witness bearing through talking about the incident is widely confirmed as treatment of trauma. She says that being a silent witness is an emotional process and not-telling becomes a trauma in itself.

Bryson (1999) regards trauma narratives as speech acts. Working through a traumatic memory (in the case of human inflicted trauma) encompasses an adjustment or shift from being the object of someone else's (the perpetrator's) to being the subject of one's own experience. This act is realised through witness bearing and transformation of traumatic memory into coherent narrative and in doing so, establishing reconnection to selfhood. Narrative memories can help the survivor to gain control over trauma. A traumatic event is an event that is perceived by the survivor as life-threatening, human-inflicted, smashing the survivor's belief in the world and results into a disconnection between the self and humanity. The self is constructed in relation to others and thus communal. In this account, Bryson differ from philosophers such as Descartes who believe that one can differentiate the criteria for one's identity over time and independent of their social context. Bryson supports the theories that account for relational aspects of the self and see the self as a set of continuous memories, an on-going narrative of one's past extended with each new experience. In this view person A (at time 1), is identified with Person B (at time 2) if B remembers having the experience of A.

In Bryson's view, all traumatic memory is regarded as cultural memory. It is encountered in a cultural context with accompanying words, and secondly, because the traumatic event becomes memory by how it is perceived by others in the survivor's cultural environment. However, traumatic memory is verbalised in a way which is less dependent on linguistic representation and more dependent on sensory representation than narrated memories. Further, traumatic memory is regarded to be more sensory in nature and tied to experiences such as blows to the body and bodily movements. This view correlates with Laub's that in telling self-narratives, an audience is needed. Laub, in his interviews with Holocaust survivors realises his importance as the interviewer to this process of witness bearing. Bryson writes that in the process of witness bearing there is a transfer of traumatic events from the teller to the listener as well as a retransfer to the teller in order for the teller to make meaning of it. The autobiographical writer is the teller, the listener to his own experience and the interpreter who makes meaning of it.

3.2.5 Cultural trauma

3.2.5.1 Introduction

Trauma that is shared by a group constructs a collective memory. Cultural trauma may not have been experienced by all members of a group, but has an influence on their identity. It causes gaps in the cultural memories that are transferred from generation to generation and results in loss of meaning-making.

3.2.5.2 Collective identity and cultural trauma

Eiermann (2001) investigates the formation of an African American identity through the application of the theory of cultural trauma. In this theory slavery is regarded as a form of collective memory that grounded identity formation of a people. Eiermann further elucidates that slavery was a cultural process. As a cultural process, trauma is arbitrated through various forms of representation and linked to the formation of a collective identity and the alteration of collective memory.

Eiermann enunciates that the memory of slavery in works of art and speeches played an important role in grounding an African American identity. Cultural trauma is characterised by a loss of identity and meaning for a group that experienced some sort of social cohesion. National trauma is an event that cannot be dismissed and has enduring repetitions that become ingrained in memory. Eiermann explains that in Caruth's account of trauma, there is always a latent period in which the trauma is forgotten. If trauma is a reflexive process that links past to present the psychoanalytic account can lead to distorted identity formation, where subject positions becomes overwhelming. It is further argued that although cultural trauma is located in a traumatic event, it is not necessarily located in the experience of it. Because cultural trauma and national trauma are mediated through mass media, it creates a meaning struggle because events are selected and created through selected memory.

Eyerman supports the account that memory is a part of development of the self or personality and thus assists to understand human actions and emotions. Collective memory is associated with how societies remember and it relates to recollections of a shared past. Past and present are linked through the daily activities of the individual. Eyerman agree with Halbwachs (1992) who regards memory to always be collective memory as an individual is part of a family or a community and this shared memory is created through reflection.

The question is whether traumatic memory is different from memory about everyday events and how it is different. Van der Kolk et al. share that memories of traumatic events are usually relived as

isolated sensations, relating that some individuals are only able to construct a narrative that verbally describes their experience through language after an amount of time has passed.

The authors attest that when the same questions about happy events and about traumatic events in their lives were asked to subjects under study, they have found that subjects regard the questions about non-traumatic memory nonsensical. No one had olfactory, visual, auditory and kinesthetic reliving experiences with regard to these events. The subjects also did not have vivid dreams or flashbacks about them; neither did they experience incidents of amnesia about that time. Environmental triggers also did not bring memory back about them. Subjects suffering severe trauma reported that they had initially no narrative memory about the event, regardless of the fact whether they had known that the trauma has happened or they have later retrieved memories about the event. The subjects experiencing trauma also claimed that they experienced recalling the trauma through somatosensory and flashback experiences.

Irene Visser (2015) articulates the need for a decolonised trauma theory, especially when dealing with postcolonial trauma studies. She envisages changes and additions which aim for inclusiveness and expansion to accommodate violations to non-Western culture and belief systems, and the role that rituals and ceremonies in the process of healing. She warns that the classical model of trauma runs the risk of excluding those that have suffered under Euro-American colonialism. Visser emphasises the need for tools that can assist in the intellectual, ethnical and political task of revealing continuant, prolonged forms of racial, gender and ethnic violence. Visser differentiates between Holocaust trauma and postcolonial trauma by pointing out that in the case of the Holocaust the temporal space is more defined and the victims and the perpetrators more clearly definable. One is forced to contemplate that if trauma is a social phenomenon that affects people's culture, the contemporary approaches to trauma theory could reveal Holocaust trauma that was not revealed by the classical model. Visser shares that trauma theorists propose a rethinking of concepts to highlight people's coping strategies and not depict survivors as victims. As such concepts such as melancholia and fragility that emphasise weakness could be substituted with concepts that stress acting out and working through trauma.

3.2.6 Conclusion

This study utilises trauma theory as lens to investigate representations of trauma in the three select autobiographies. Apartheid was a prolonged process and socio-political construct that inflicted physical, psychological and cultural injuries. Battles such as Cassinga and the South African attempt

to infiltrate Namibia in 1989 while the latter was preparing for democratic elections are proof of violence inflicted t events that inflicted trauma. It is therefore vital that the theoretical framework utilises tools that would reveal trauma in all these spheres.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology that will be used to conduct the study. Methodology encompasses the overall research of scientific and systematic application of methods that will be used to collect and analyse data to gain knowledge and contribute to the existing archive. It specifies the data collecting tools for the specific tasks that the research comprises of to enable optimal results with cost-effective use of time. In this study, electronic and printed articles, books and the three autobiographical texts are the tools utilised to undertake the study. Kothari (2004) as referenced by Liswaniso (2016, p. 40) defines research methodology as the systematic resolve of a problem.

Pandey & Pandey (2015) explain that research literally means to search again and is therefore a systematic activity to gain new knowledge. Pandey & Pandey (p. 7), quote Best (1986), saying that: “The Secret of cultural development has been research, pushing back the areas of ignorance by discovering new truths, which, in turn, lead to better ways of doing things and better products.”

Research methodology enlightens the reasons why specific tools are used in a specific study. This chapter discusses the research design, procedure, data analysis and ethical concerns.

4.2 Research design

The research design is the overall conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It comprises the entire process of research from formulating the research topic, generating the research objectives, data collection, analysis and conclusions. The research design accounts for effective and economic strategy to collect optimum data with minimal effort. It specifies what methods are going to be used for collecting and analysing data and how the research questions are going to be answered. Research design allows for the smooth operation of the project and ensures that processes are not left out. The research design focusses on the end product. The research objectives are the starting position for the design. The design should be developed in such a way that it minimises bias and enhance objectivity.

According to Creswell (2014) the main decision is what approach fits the study best and as such the researcher will choose amongst qualitative, quantitative or a mixed method approach. Bloomberg & Volpe (2008) enunciate that the research approach is dictated by the research problem. They explain that a qualitative approach is appropriate for activities such exploration, discovery and description, while a quantitative approach suits studies that investigate relationships such as a cause-and-effect relationship. Qualitative research focusses on interactive processes and events while quantitative research focusses on variables. Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

According to Creswell, the research design is the procedures of inquiry that will inform the research. The components of the design are constructed in a transparent and logical manner that enables the researcher to address the questions. The components of the study include data collection, measurement of data, analysis and interpretation amongst others (De Vaus, 2001).

Pandey and Pandey (2015) regard a research design as a blue print for collection and measurement of data that should characteristically minimise opportunities for bias and maximise chances for objectivity and reliability.

According to Coghlan and Brydon-Muller, (2014), research design follows a characteristic cycle of exploration during which comprehension of the problem is undertaken; followed by development of strategies of intervention strategies; the action phase when observations are collected and the interventions carried out; after which the cycle starts again. Maxwell (2004) however cautions against approaching a qualitative research design as a linear, one-directional sequence of steps. Especially in the case of qualitative research, any part of the design may need reconsideration or rethinking during the research process that can impact the other components of the design. Research activities such as data collection, analysis, designing research questions and revising theories can happen simultaneously and impact one another. Maxwell advocates an explicit research design so that strengths and challenges can be easily comprehended and addressed. Therefore he suggests an interactive model comprising of the following five components: goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity.

The philosophical assumptions of the researcher which could be ontological, epistemological,

methodological or rhetorical, will inform what approach to choose. Ontological assumptions relate to the relationships between concepts and categories; epistemology refers to methods of knowledge generation with regards to methods, validity and scope; methodological assumptions centers around the methods used and establishes clear links between research objectives and findings; rhetorical assumptions involves aspects such as figurative language and acts of persuasion.

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) identify four schools of thought that influence approach. These are positivism; which, due to its empirical methods, suits a quantitative approach; critical theory is informed by the assumptions that every research contains agenda and action that holds that that will result in reform. It holds that the researcher will overtly engage in activities of empowerment; pragmatism with emphasis on the social context and social constructivism which has as its foundation the assumption that reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed. Meanings that derive from the personal experience can be applied to create pluralistic and multiple meanings.

Qualitative research locates the individual in the world. It endeavours to discover meaning from pluralities that transform the world. It adopts a holistic, naturalistic interpretive approach. This study is informed by a qualitative, desktop research design that collects information from electronic journals, books and other printed texts.

4.2.1 Qualitative inquiry design

In the qualitative research approach, the five main research designs that are identified are phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case studies and narrative research. Phenomenology focusses on the experiences of groups of individuals such as communities or cultural groups. Ethnographic studies involve observation of a large group of participants in their natural setting. In case studies, an issue is explored with reference to one or more cases in a setting. Grounded theory encompasses the generation of a theory by studying a large number of participants. Narrative research design involves the study of texts or narratives. Creswell explains that qualitative research is a method that allows for the exploration of texts in an attempt to understanding the meaning individuals or groups assign to a human problem. The study investigates how people make meaning during a time of trauma by exploring three autobiographical texts. Therefore, narrative research design will inform this study.

4.2.1.1 Narrative research

Any text can be called a narrative. As such the three select texts for the study are also narratives. The word narrative can also refer to the method of inquiry with special emphasis on events as experienced by individuals. Creswell (2007) enunciates that a narrative study can illuminate how people are enabled or constrained by social resources. In autobiographical writings by minorities such as in this study of the three female authored texts, narrative inquiry can be applied to investigate how the socio-political milieu in pre-independent Namibia restrained Namibians and how the changed social circumstances enabled Namibians to construct their own identity.

Czarniawska (2004) as referenced by Creswell (2007, p. 56) elucidates that narrative research inquiry encompasses a deconstruction of the stories, an unmaking of them by such analytic strategies as exposing dichotomies, examining silences and attending to disruptions and contractions. This study will expose unequal social relationships and dichotomies with regard to race, class and gender and the cathartic effects that emerge from these dichotomies.

4.3 Content analysis

This study follows a qualitative, narrative design that encompasses content analysis that relate to the objectives. Neuman (2003, p. 139) contends that qualitative data is soft data, in the form of expressions, words, sentences, photos, symbols, and so forth." Data is collected in the immediate setting of the participant and is typically interpreted from the specific, moving to the general.

Mc Neill & Chapman (2005) identify reliability, validity and representativeness as the three main aspects of research design.

This study will be a desktop study that does not require interaction with human participants. It will utilise sources such as books, journals, printed articles and the internet. The primary resources will be the three select autobiographical texts; *The Price of Freedom* by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila (1997), *Making a Difference* by Libertina Inaaviposa Amathila (2012) and *Taming my Elephant* by Tshiwa Trudie Amulungu (2016).

The procedure for undertaking this study commenced with studying autobiographical Namibian texts and academic articles on the texts. During the course of this initial research a research gap was

identified with regard to scholarly study of female authored autobiographical texts. Female authored texts were listed and a selection was made based on amongst others, the following: the prominent positions that the authors occupy in post-independent Namibia; several concepts regarding autobiographical theory were studied and the concepts of trauma, catharsis, witness bearing and identity were selected from the global context as main concepts for the study due to the relevance to the Namibian context; several thematic concerns such as exile and home coming, agency and voice, cultural memory and construction of identity in private and public space were selected to be studied in the research. Through a critical reading academic articles and books that informed the study were selected.

4.4 Research ethics

Ethics in research revolves around a code of ethics that regulate the relationship between research subjects and researcher. It protects the rights of the research subjects and guides what is regarded as acceptable behaviour by the researcher. It further encompasses the handling of data by the researcher. These guide lines by the scientific community are aimed at eliminating practices such as plagiarism, falsifying and fabricating data while promoting objectivity and the preservation of integrity and reliability. It sets guidelines with regard to data sharing, co-ownership, compliance with the law and confidentiality.

Mouton (2001) states that the scientific community themselves decides what counts as morally acceptable behaviour for a researcher. Scientists themselves set the codes of conduct to regulate conduct of researchers. The codes of conduct in research are enforced by professional societies such as universities and donor organisations.

Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton and Richardson (1993) enunciate that research produces and amplifies an unequal relationship between researchers and researched, with the researcher in the beneficial position. They claim that language itself should be the point of departure when considering ethical issues. They use the conceptual frameworks of ethics, advocacy and empowerment for situating the relationship between researchers and subjects. Ethics is described as finding an acceptable balance between potential conflict of interest of those involved in the study. Proper research practice would involve obtaining people's consent and guard against violation their privacy and dignity. Advocacy might be present for the researcher from the beginning due to political or other obligation or it could develop during the cause of the study. The authors acknowledge that the

knowledge and social position of the researcher could place him in a favourable position for advocacy, but that it should not influence objectivity and that scientific observation should not be blemished by value judgements. They caution that empowerment should not be approach from the narrow monolithic perception that it is the redistribution of power away from those who have more power to those who have less power. Many dimensions of power operate concurrently in a social setting. Subjects can be powerful with regard to a social identity such as race, but can at the same time experience challenges because of their gender. A white gay man can be privileged because of his race, but is oppressed because of his gender association.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Section 5.1

TRAUMA DURING WAR TIME

5.1.1 Introduction

This section discusses the representation of witnessing trauma during war time in the three autobiographical texts: *The Price of Freedom* by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila (1997), *Making a Difference* by Libertina Inaaviposa Amathila (2012) and *Taming my Elephant* by Trudie Tshiwa Amulungu (2016). The study approaches trauma by employing the psychoanalytic event-based models as well as the socio-cultural models that emphasise the longevity of the effects of trauma. The study uses theories of Laub (1992) and Ettinger (1992 & 2006) as referenced by Pollock (2010) as prisms to enlighten witness bearing to trauma in subsections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3. Subsection 5.1.4 discusses collective memory of trauma, focusing on the forced removal of people.

5. 1.2 Aesthetic wit(h)nessing

Art itself can be a powerful witness to trauma. Texts articulate socio-cultural elements embedded in language. Ettinger as referenced by Pollock (2010, p. 831) suggests that aesthetics is shifting from phallic territory to matrixial sphere, therefore, the concept of matrixial in aesthetic practice should be used to supplement the phallocentric approach in relation to the major challenges we face as we seek to understand to acknowledge trauma. Feminist concepts should therefore be used alongside traditional concepts to investigate responses to trauma. Ettinger amplifies the concept of aesthetic witnessing to aesthetic wit(h)nessing, thereby expanding the legal and testimonial meaning of the concept of bearing witness to crime against the other to being with, but not assimilated to, and to being beside the other in a gesture that is much more than ethical solidarity. The aesthetic properties carry new possibilities to access and apprehend knowledge that is out of the reach of phallocentric concepts. Applying both conceptualisations side by side would redress notions such as the fragmentation and representation of trauma and promote transformation and change. Pollock (p. 832) explains that art becomes a keeper of historical memory for the injured other by creating the site for a novel trans-subjective and trans historical process that is simultaneously witness and wit(h)ness.

Ettinger's proposal resonates with feminist theories such as African feminism that advocate for the parallel application of practices that would advance women's position, but not negate cultural norms. Ettinger regards beauty as the ethical capacity of the aesthetics, its ability to stimulate what she names *response-ability*, the ability to respond to the humanness of the other, to her vulnerability. This *response-ability* is not because of the artist's good intentions or identity, but is a result of the way in which formal and aesthetic processes can generate affects by means of artworks that solicit fragmentation and sharing. The concept resonates with notions such as activism that appeals to supporting ideas and principles and does not require physical presence.

Writers that narrate traumatic human experiences are not just witnesses, but share in the pain of the victims/survivors. The three autobiographical texts in this study would be a way of remembering for the other through art and aesthetic encounter and the authors themselves articulate from the subject-position as witnesses to their own trauma and the trauma of others. Namhila was at Cassinga the day of the airstrike and was both witness to and victim of the attack; Amulungu, who was a resident at Cassinga a few months earlier, and Amathila are witnesses to the trauma of the survivors. Amulungu (pp. 126-127) mouths the horror experienced by the Cassinga survivors who joined them: "the pain and scars of the attack were clear on the faces of many of them. They told us the story. It was a horror. Whenever they heard a banging noise, their first reflex was to look for a hiding place." Amulungu is a witness to the responses of the survivors to the trauma they were exposed to. The survivors experience everyday incidents as pseudo-attacks, causing pain to themselves through the re-experiencing of the attack and subjecting those around them to witness their pain. Through reminiscing the tranquility of nature and joyful, personal memories of Cassinga, Amulungu juxtaposes it to the stories of the survivors. She is convinced that she would not have survived. Human vulnerability is emphasised by Namhila's and Amathila's accounts that Cassinga was a civilian settlement.

Amulungu interrupts her wit(h)nessing of the trauma of the Cassinga survivors to tell an unexplainable experience of her own. The switch in narrative style heightens the senses of the reader. Her relational account where other people are the subjects the story is interjected to share an account of an incident experienced by herself that could at the same time be real or a haunting nightmare of a previous encounter.

One night, something unexplainable happened to me. I am sure it was not a dream. As I lay in bed, I all of a sudden heard white male voices, right in the corridor in front of our room. Since they were speaking Afrikaans, I could not understand what was being said, but one thing was certain in

my mind: the other students were also awake and moving along the corridor. They were being taken away. I wondered when someone would open the door. No one seemed to have noticed that we were still here. I held my breath and waited. There was no way that I could check with my roommates to establish whether they were also scared as I was. Moving or whispering might compromise our safety. I chose to remain dead still. Who knew, the four of us might be the only survivors to this ordeal. Gradually the voices faded away and the night went silent. So, we survived. Motionless, the rest of the night dragged on. I waited to look in the panicky eyes of my three roommates and share their anguish (Amulungu, P. 127).

The study will refer to this incident as the UNIN incident as she was at the United Nations Institute for Namibia in Lusaka (UNIN) when it happened. Amulungu opines that this episode is triggered by news of the Cassinga attack that she heard before the arrival of a group of survivors and by the accounts and reactions of members of this group and through her own imagination of the attack. This passage is arresting because it invokes a sense of strangeness and confusion – Amulungu motions between images of a haunting memory and an actual incident with such ease that dream and reality are so intertwined that it is difficult to separate them. The style of narration resembles that of a suspense thriller with eerie sounds of movement resembling a nightmare, yet information that she heard people speaking Afrikaans and heard people moving along the corridors points to reality. The first two lines are significant; firstly it is only Amulungu who is aware of this occurrence and, secondly, the fact that she has to enforce that she is sure it was not a dream- appealing to a witness, not only as an observer, but a wit(h)ness that can share in her anxiety and fear by believing her, reliving this encounter with her. This experience of Amulungu's conjures the memory of her earlier account (p. 74) of the night of 19 April 1977 when they were taken away by men whom they later learn are People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) armed forces. At this time, reality sounded like a dream. She qualifies it: "You know the kind of dream which would not make sense the next morning?" Amulungu relates the UNIN incident to the rumors she heard about the Cassinga attack and the accounts of the survivors, but seems to be totally oblivious that this experience and the event of 19 April 1977 mirror each other. It seems that these events can only be coupled by the reader as witness. The question begs to be asked why Amulungu is not connecting the two incidents. The consciousness of the reader as witness is beckoned to make meaning between Amulungu's UNIN experience and the incident of 19 April 1977.

These two incidents mirror each other in certain aspects: both happen at night in the female dormitory; the intruders are male; people, including Amulungu, are taken away by the soldiers; some people are left behind and people were scarred. While it is evident that the sameness of the events

fits into the theoretical framework of classical trauma theory, the significance should be investigated in the differences: During the 19 April 1977 incident the soldiers and the learners speak to each other; Amulungu and her friend Claudia whisper to each other, concocting plans not to go with, however, during the UNIN incident Amulungu hears white male voices speaking Afrikaans therefore she could not understand them; she is unable to communicate to her roommates as moving or whispering could jeopardise their safety; Amulungu and her friends remain as survivors. The difference of the two incidents is located in the sphere in which literature, trauma and identity converges- language.

In reading these two events through the lens of the classical model of trauma, the UNIN incident can easily be perceived as a traumatic memory of the 19 April 1977 event, a trauma that has bypassed the psyche and is experienced belatedly, fracturing the experience of time for the witness, haunting the survivor later on (Caruth, 1996, P. 4). A traumatic event is, therefore, a strange sort of an event because once it is understood as a belated consequence of a “missed encounter”. Interpreted in terms of the classical model, Amulungu would have this dream because she did not fully perceive the event of 19 April 1977 and therefore this event is absent from her cognition and only experience belatedly. The autobiographical text functions as archive from which the knowledge is retrieved. Amulungu responds positively to her abduction by the soldiers and it seems that she does not experience it as traumatic. The relationship between the intruders and those affected by their actions can be investigated through concepts such as marginality, gender, power and voice. Germani (1980) as quoted by Kornberg (2018, p. 244) elucidates that as a social, economic and political position, marginality is generally defined by lack of participation, reciprocation, capital, choice or belonging among other things. The male intruders catch the inhabitants of the dormitories off guard by invading at night while people were asleep. They have the advantage of clear-headedness over the girls who are confused and vulnerable. Socio-cultural consciousness of the position of men in society counts in their favour. The vital, evident difference between the 19 April 1977 event and the UNIN experience is located in the area of voice. In the former a coherent conversation, instigated by the intruders takes place between the learners and them. The intruders address the fear of the learners by offering to shake their hands, thus appealing to their cultural upbringing. The learners are put at ease and do exactly what the soldiers command them to do. During the UNIN experience, Amulungu cannot understand what the white male voices say as they were speaking Afrikaans – a language that she does not understand.

Language acts here as the element that establishes the boundaries of power. Through the socio-

political conditions prevalent at the time, the identity of the white male voices can be established as South African soldiers, the instigators of trauma in the Cassinga attack. Another element that alludes to the use of linguistic communication is whispering. When the soldiers entered their dormitory on 19 April 1977, Amulungu and her friend Claudia are able to whisper to each other, trying to devise plans to escape from going with the men. During their conversation, certain information emerges, causing them to decide that it is safer to go along as the men might burn the building after leading everyone out. This act by the two girls absolves them from a situation of total powerlessness. They make a conscious decision to join the PLAN fighters. What would normally be regarded as an abduction, is described by Amulungu as assistance to join SWAPO (p. 101).

The two girls make a decision although under duress, to leave Namibia and join SWAPO in exile. The Cassinga survivors either left Namibia through a decision of their own or were “assisted to join SWAPO”. When fellow students succeeded in escaping, PLAN soldiers did not pursue them. This is the reason why Amulungu experience the incident of 19 April 1977 as “positive”. South African soldiers pursued those who join SWAPO into foreign territory. Their choice, which is here equated to *voice*, is violated.

There is also the possibility that the fate of the Cassinga survivors makes Amulungu think of the fate of these who stayed behind in the school hostel. Retrospectively she acquires the knowledge that the South African soldiers burn down the residences of people and that her friends might have suffered the same misfortune. Amulungu’s belief that it is the Cassinga attack that was the catalyst for her UNIN experience is therefore placed beyond reasonable doubt.

In her short reference to the Cassinga attack, Amathila enforces the account of Amulungu’s and Namhila’s that refugees were attacked. It was new arrivals from Namibia that were followed into Angola and bombed. Amathila enunciates that the orphans were taken to a safe place- the then East Germany, accompanied by women who would look after them to assist in preservation their culture and language. The importance of the preservation of culture and language symbolises the hope of freedom and restoration and a space where Namibians will be able to use their languages.

The autobiographical texts by these three female writers share the experience of women and the subjugated residents of Cassinga through the authors’ sharing in their pain and availing a textual space through which readers can witness their trauma.

5.1.3 Testimonial Bodies

In this subsection, the study will focus on how damaged bodies function as readable traumatic testimony of gendered and racialised violence inflicted by the apartheid's regime. Brown, (2008), vocalises that in postcolonial writings, the figure of the mother is intrinsically tied with language, body and space. The violated female body becomes a metaphor and sometimes a substitute for the land.

War and the human body are intrinsically connected. Brown (2008, p. 30) opines that all colonised bodies are marked by traumatic suffering and are testimonial bodies, attesting to the atrocities of oppression. The memory of colonial trauma is inscribed on the body and the body itself becomes a textual testimony of the trauma inflicted. The mutilated bodies of Namibians testify to physical and psychological violence afflicted by the policies of confinement of apartheid's legislation which entrapped the subjects in a physical and psychological state of trauma. Namhila sketches a visual, horrifying image of the mutilated bodies and environment left in the aftermath of the Cassinga attack. She portrays the camp in a stream-of-consciousness technique: the trees, the clinic, the offices, the food store burned down; the corpses with gaping wounds. These images of death and destruction are in stark contrast with her earlier account of people going about their everyday chores around the camp.

Brown enunciates that all colonial bodies are feminised as they are relegated to the space of "*other*" due to colonialism. The land that was forcibly invaded is placed in the same position as the female subject. The phallogentric apartheid's regime is represented by the South African soldiers. The trauma of Cassinga will be read through neurobiological, psychoanalytic lenses as well as the social context. Namhila (p. 42) shares that after the Cassinga attack, many people fell ill.

Particularly afflicted was the twelve- to fifteen year old girls. The patient would faint, and stop breathing for about ten minutes, until her body stiffened. Sometimes even more than 10 girls would faint at the same time. When they regained consciousness they would not struggle but be calm. This sickness attacked only Cassinga survivors. What was strange about it was that it could not be diagnosed medically. We referred them to the hospitals in Luanda where the attacks were kept under control. But as soon as they got back to us they would start fainting again. They were in and out of the hospitals as long as they were in the camps. However, once they were sent to schools outside Angola, the sickness left them.

The survivors imitate a situation similar to soldiers going into cover during an attack. They do it in such an exaggerated way that they stop breathing and their bodies stiffen, a situation that can end in death. Brown refers to such action as hypochondriacal behaviour. A hypochondriac is a person that constantly believes that harm is done to their body and that they might die. The recurring, repetitive nature of these enactments remind of a nightmare repeating itself. In Caruthian terms the original injuries are inflicted on the mind. The wound inflicted on the mind shatters consciousness of self, time and the world. This type of event is described by Caruth (p. 4) as being experienced as too soon, too unexpectedly to be fully known. Cassinga was a civilian camp, housing refugees and not soldiers. Namhila articulates that some people were singing, parading and rallying while others were cleaning their living quarters when the airstrike happened. What she describes is a civilian, domestic situation that correlates with activism and not armed struggle. Survivors are thus trying to make meaning of the violence that befalls their peaceful existence. The Cassinga attack can be categorised as a tragic event in terms of Judith Herman's (1992) definition of psychological trauma. It is an armed strike on powerless civilians; the victims are overwhelmed and confused, not able to make sense of what is happening to them. The attack is an atrocity to those in search of control over their country and peace in their lives for future generations to come. The behaviour of the survivors conforms to Herman's three stages of trauma: hyperarousal – a stage during which the survivors are on the alert for the recurrence of such an attack; a state of intrusion during which defensive mechanisms are put in place by acting as if an attack is happening and constriction – a state of unconsciousness represented by their actions of playing dead. Herman's suggested conditions for recovery are:

- establishment of a safe space
- remembrance and mourning
- task of creating a future

The long and challenging process towards recovery is witnessed by Namhila. The survivors seem to get better when not at Cassinga, but their condition deteriorates when back in the camp. It only improved when they left Angola.

Texts articulate socio-cultural elements and values that are embedded in them. The autobiographical texts explored in this study are postcolonial texts by female Namibians and thus lend themselves as spaces to interrogate interaction of parameters such as age, body, gender, language and geography. The girls are aged between twelve-to fifteen years. Age is tied to biological development and in biological terms this period is regarded as puberty – a stage when childhood transforms into

adulthood. This period is characterised by innocence, uncertainty and lack of knowledge as the individual does not always understand the changes to their bodies. The girls find themselves thus in a border space. The situation of these girls is foregrounded against the behaviour of other survivors and in the milieu of racialised, colonial violence to the Non-European other. The biological changes to their bodies can be read as a parallel for the neurobiological and socio-cultural changes that the attack brings about and which they do not understand.

In ecofeminist studies the female body becomes a metaphor for the land. The South African soldiers attacking Cassinga intrude into a private space. Metaphorically it constitutes rape of the female other by the intruding phallus. In the larger context it represents South Africa's occupation of Namibia. The Namibian people, just like the inhabitants of Cassinga are the innocent victims. All they want is to go on with their lives, unhindered in the same manner a human body would transform through normal development. The oppressing patriarch deprived the subjects from autonomy over their own bodies, mirroring South African opposition to Namibian independence. The physical landscape is transformed to a threatening, uninhabitable space. The river that was sustaining life turned into a dead trap that day as many people could not swim and drowned. The tranquility of the river is reminiscent by the authors as source of water for domestic use and Amathila's beloved garden. Nature that was a refuge conspired with the enemy that day to destroy innocent civilians. Namhila articulates how the rock that she was aiming for as a hiding just to see how it turned into an angry fire which destroyed everything around it by the multitude of bombs that were dropped on it.

The trauma of the girls embodies a type of communal nature that lends itself to be interpreted through feminist concepts. The girls sometimes faint in groups totaling up to ten. This symbolises sisterhood, female solidarity and activism. The girls would usually be calm when they come to after an episode. The feminist concept of silence is depicted through the word "calm" and operates here in contradiction to its usual properties of absence of speech and deprivation of a voice as through their silence, the girls speak, drawing attention to their suffering.

Ettinger claims that the aesthetics of art is shifting to the matrixial sphere. The body features as a core concept in feminist literature. These girls have lost control of their bodies and are exposed in public. This image testifies to their vulnerability. However, the exposure to the world as witness results in wit(h)nessing as many countries see the atrocities inflicted on the Namibian people and send medical staff and other assistance to alleviate the suffering. The African body known for its

otherness acts as a synthesising agent of human suffering. In Caruthian terms, this voice that cries out from the wound, is heard by the international community and is listened to.

As a nurse, Namhila is in a position to have access to the health statistics. Her account functions complimentary to public media coverage that focusses on war casualties. She is witness to a situation that may never be revealed in historical texts. Namhila is in a position of wit(h)nessing as she is fourteen years old at the time- the same age as the afflicted girls. The long-lasting damaging effects of the traumatic experience affects Namhila in such a way that she could not eat for days. Her starved body, suffering due to the attack becomes a testimony of trauma.

After the Cassinga attack claims of witchcraft increase tremendously among survivors. Namhila (p. 45) articulates that illness such as malaria and the inability to perform sexually were connected to witchcraft. The claims of witchcraft relate to the *knowing* and *not knowing* that Caruth (p. 4) speaks off and operates in the spiritual sphere of the metaphysical. Witchcraft is associated with both Western and African cultures and proposes that some people would have magical qualities to make things happen, usually with malevolent intend. Namhila voices that the practice of witchcraft in her tribal custom was punished by cutting the person off from society. As she explicitly states that it was after the Cassinga attack, it correlates with the perspective of Hinton and Kirmayer (2013) that the socio-cultural context of people influences how they perceive trauma. Cassinga was a domestic setting, thus people reasoned with cognitive concepts from the domestic domain. At one level this correlates with classical concepts of trauma's refusal to be located, but at another level it reveals the socio-cultural nature of trauma, alienating people from reality. It is hard to accept the reality that they are not able to escape the atrocities of the SADF. Cassinga was home and safe until the attack shatters that sense of safety and causes divide amongst the community. Consensual sex implies a sense of privacy and security, both physical and psychological. The story about the soldier who thought that he was bewitched by a woman who wanted him for herself testifies to the intrusion of a safe space, causing mental distress. The soldier starts his story by sharing an event that he supposedly witnessed of a lady being attacked by a crocodile and that people were not sure if she was eaten up or been taken as a slave by people who live under the river. After this, he continues, telling her the story of the woman who has taken his *thing* - to be revealed to mean that he is not able to achieve a sexual erection. The soldier can only articulate his physical inability of not being able to have sex when relocating it to the sphere of the surreal, the magical where he has no control over and can blame somebody else. Evidently, this space is female and in the mind of the soldier it is

operated as a space of malice and spite. The account of the soldier reveals that his perception of himself is located in his manhood – he is promiscuous, sleeping around with lots of women. The attack thus shatters whom he is. The Cassinga attack emphasises the spatiality of both trauma and apartheid. The accused woman is stigmatised and should the incident be reported it can lead to her marginalisation in the community just like it would be back home.

5.1.4 Collective memory of trauma through autobiographical witness bearing

Namibia came under control of South Africa after Germany was defeated during the First World War. The separatist laws that were endorsed by the Nationalist Party when it came into power in 1948 were therefore also applicable in Namibia. Historical texts resonate that Namibia's resistance against South African oppression started during the late 1950's when other countries on the African continent gained independence from their colonial powers. The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) was established on 19 April 1960. The organisation devoted itself to the struggle for the liberation of Namibia. It started a guerilla war against South Africa. Namibian civilians from the northern part of the country, especially Oshiwambo speaking areas, in their numbers joined the organisation.

This subsection focusses on the forced removals of people from the space known as the Old Location to the Katutura Township. This incident will be read through the concept of cultural trauma and the notion that cultural trauma engenders cohesive effects such as are evident in the influence of slavery on the formation of a collective African American identity as well as Laub's concept of witness bearing to trauma. The concept of *space* functions as a site of trauma and remembrance.

The life narratives of the three authors show that the war for liberation cannot be pinned to the physical space of the battlefield where the physical war between the armed forces of PLAN and the SADF was fought. Apartheid was a social construct and a spatial system, therefore the traumatic effects of apartheid should be investigated in all social and cultural spaces.

Amathila (pp. 20-21) recounts the forced removals of Africans from their living space in a part of Windhoek, now harbouring the site referred to as the Old Location Cemetery because those who died in the uprising are buried there, to Katutura in 1959. Thirteen people were killed and dozens wounded. This traumatic event is inscribed in living memory by the name given to the township to which the people were relocated. Katutura means "where we do not wish to stay" (Amathila p. 20). The forced removals and the ensuing shootings contain the three primary levels that Mohat et al.

regard being representative of historical trauma:

- A trauma or wounding
- The trauma shared by the group of people
- The trauma spanning multiple generations

Physical and socio-cultural spaces were constructed by the apartheid's ideology and were premised on racial hierarchy and white supremacy. In the apartheid's framework, this area where the non-whites were relocated from can be classified as an inferior area that for some reason became desirable to the goals of the apartheid's regime. Physically the area is located between the centre of town and the white suburb of Pionierspark. As such it was placed favourable for contact between races separated by legislation. It had the potential to become a racial heterogeneous space that posed a threat to racial segregation. Amathila extensively enunciates the limitations that black people were confined to. They could not be in the white part of town after 9 pm, and were restricted from entering public shops such as butcheries and had to buy through the window. The forced removals fractured communities and destroyed neighbour relations. The action embodies the British colonial policy of *divide and rule*. The displaced people were located to an area that did not have the daily amenities needed to make a living. Amathila as the Minister of Local Government and Housing is confronted with this horrible conditions thirty years later in an independent Namibia, confirming the position that Davids (2017) adopts that forced removals connect the past with the present. Davids argues that the spatial, temporal and psychological architecture of forced removals conceal intangible memories which has the potential to become tangible, post-abyssal, historical knowledge. In his study: Using memory work as decolonising pedagogy in a study on "District Six's forced removal history: a case for epistemic justice" he proposes that emancipatory memory work can reveal the epistemic marginalisation of historically oppressed communities. The physical conditions in an alien space become a constant reminder of the trauma that people suffered and carried with them. The authors' acts of autobiographical witness bearing represent Laub's three levels of witness bearing to a traumatic event; they are survivors of the trauma of apartheid; they recount the humiliation of the survivors and become a witness in the construction of their autobiographies.

Autobiographical remembering by members of minority groups that suffered historical trauma is confronted with the notion of *truth-telling*. *Truth-telling* manifests itself at various levels of othering- the testimonies of colonised against coloniser; marginalised minorities against hegemonic majorities; autobiography as subjective genre polarised against history as fact and orality against the written

text. Hegemonic epistemologies have emphasised the superiority of empiricism and factuality over memory and introspection. It is particularly with regard to the written text that the privileges of apartheid are at present, functioning as testimony in favour of minorities. Those laws that were still prevailing in Namibia enforced the autobiographical account of the oppression that the authors voice. The autobiographical genre that is regarded as Euro-centric, occidental and male is transformed and becomes an Afro-centric, oriental and female space, altered through female testimony. In the process of forced removals, people lose valuable belongings and any records which they might have kept of abuses. The apartheid's legislation, in a strange, paradoxical way becomes the tool that operates to confirm the memory of survivors. It represents the shifting of power in the favour of the marginalised.

Namhila (p. 148) shares that media reports in the interim period between the adoption of United Nations Resolution 435 and the democratic elections suggested that many whites feared a takeover of their businesses and properties by returnees. Thoughts like these reverberate with accounts of the seizure of white-owned possessions in African countries that gained independence before Namibia, but it was also a reminder and re-confrontation with appropriation and violence of the apartheid's era. The cultural memory of apartheid transcends boundaries and connects past and future in the newly liberated Namibia as it suggests that the whites have insight into the trauma caused to other Namibian races and now fear retaliation.

The trauma of indigenous communities in Namibia and South Africa relocated to provide space for whites or other objectives of the South African regime is a trauma narrative that defines apartheid's rule and creates a collective memory that binds together all those affected by it. Amathila relates the Windhoek Shootings of 10 December 1959 to the removal of people from District Six in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg. Through linking the Namibian forced removals to those in South Africa, Amathila establishes historical links that circumvent notions such as the treacherousness of autobiographical memory. The body of literature on the District Six removals is widely researched and is an archive that enlightens the epistemic injustice afflicted to racial minorities. Forced removals, dispossession and invasion of space occupied by minorities are colonial practices. Apartheid's legislation such as 1913 Land Act, the Urban Areas Act of 1923, the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Natives Resettlement Act of 1954 is empirical memory of how rigorously these oppressive legal frameworks were revised and transformed to maintain the objectives of apartheid. The Shootings of 10 December 1959 becomes a reference of colonial trauma and destruction of minority epistemologies, not only to Namibians, but to all those who suffered these atrocities. The

Old Location Cemetery is currently a commemoration site and the date of 10 December 1959 engraved on every grave, testifying to the trauma.

The three autobiographies informing this study function as intertextual testimony that connects individual experiences. The forced removals in various physical spaces affects different non-white communities, but it create a collective memory; a form of remembrance that is grounded in the identity formation of the post-apartheid sphere. The memory of apartheid, retrospectively constructed through the autobiographical accounts under study, is central in Namibian identity and connects it to people outside the physical space of Namibia. District Six was known as an area with an identity and imagery rooted in a sense of socio-cultural community and communality. This support network is destroyed and people are left deprived and confused.

5.1.5 Conclusion

This section focused on witness bearing to trauma in the three select texts. It presented the incidents that the three authors were witnesses to by discussing their own trauma as well as that of other people. Through the concept of aesthetic wit(h)nessing it was shown that the matrixial sphere enlightens trauma that is not the focus of the traditional concepts of trauma. This concept enabled foregrounding the trauma of women and how women, and by extension of the concept of feminization, those who occupy minority status respond to trauma. It was also established that autobiographical texts are textual spaces that act as collective memory. Through the discussion of events related to witchcraft it was shown that people relocates traumatic experience to existing cognitive structures as a way of interpreting it. The findings proof that trauma inflicted through apartheid cannot be investigated through classical concepts only. A complementary approach, incorporating classical and contemporary concepts lays bare the suffering of people during apartheid.

In the next section the focus is on the cathartic effect as represented in the three texts. Models from the classical Greek theatre will be explored alongside African concepts.

Section 5.2

THE CATHARTIC EFFECT

5.2.1 Introduction

The socio-political context during the apartheid's era was permeated by violence. The foreign occupation and the lethal apartheid's laws can metaphorically be equated to a state of illness. The position into which rulers elevated themselves resembles the Greek rulers who regarded themselves as only accountable to the gods. In this section parallels are established between the socio-political conditions in the Theban state under the rule of Creon and the Namibian state under apartheid. Exile is metaphorically presented as rebellion. Through this rebellion new cultural nomos emerged.

5.2.2 Theban Plague

The concept of catharsis is accredited to Aristotle who defines it in respect to the Greek tragedy. Aristotle holds tragedy to be the greatest form of art.

Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude, in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not narrative, through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of emotions. By "language embellished" I mean, language into which rhythm, "harmony" and song enter. By the several kinds in parts, I mean that some parts are rendered through the medium of the verse alone, others again with the art of song.

(Aris. Poetics 6, 1449b24-31, trans SH. Butcher) as ref by Brumat, (2017).

Catharsis is a literary device that defines the emotions of the audience with regard to tragedy and has been applied in relation to the emotions of pity and fear. The Greek hero was a man of such magnitude that he was only subject to the gods. His fall impacted the audience emotionally as they feared that they could suffer the same fate and therefore felt pity towards him. Catharsis has lately been expanded to include all kinds of art and all emotions. Gardiner (1985) and Brumat (2017) voice that Aristotle viewed art as imitation of reality. The work of art is derived from an idea and therefore related to reality. Art generates knowledge even at unconscious level. Tragedy operates in such a way that pity and fear are purged and the audience is cleansed. Gardiner suggests that this also means that the emotions of pity and fear are cleansed in a certain way and are thus transformed. During the Romantic period the effect of literature on the psychology of the writer was introduced

and therefore new insights into the concept of catharsis emerged. This is also the case with contemporary focus on gender issues and marginalised groups.

In the following section, the study utilises concepts from the Greek tragedy, especially the notion of catharsis to create parallels between the Theban state in the grip of a deadly plague and the Namibian situation under apartheid.

The great city of Thebes was paralysed by fear because of the illness that killed its citizens. Oedipus who has solved the riddle of the sphynx and therefore became ruler launched an investigation into the matter. The investigation was not done in secrecy, but overtly so that every citizen could see it. This action constitutes Oedipus' hamartia. He was so excessively proud (his hubris) that it clouded his judgement, or he was simply in search of more fame. Oedipus is publicly revealed as the cause of the curse because he has blood on his hands. The autobiographical texts under study describes South African occupation and power in terms of the then Administrator General, Louis Pienaar as figurehead of the government (Amathila, p. 123). Apart from Eritrea, Namibia was the only country in Africa without autonomous rule. This foreign occupation is paralleled with illness and South Africa's lack of insight into the matter revealed is its hamartia or fatal flaw. The oppression of the people was played out in broad daylight as South Africa refused to withdraw from the occupied territory, launching armed strikes and thus had the blood of those who fought in the struggle on their hands. In Oedipal likeness, South Africa was banished from the land due to bloodshed. Through the biological view of catharsis as proposed by McCumber banished men are equated to women. Blood carries elements that are good for the body, but the excess of it has to be discharge. This discharge is linked to weakness of the female body to contain that which is good. Therefore women, during their menstrual period were banished from the city. Weakness is equated to be covered with blood or differently stated, to be engulfed in fear. McCumber (p. 62) explains: "They were, in sum, condemned to pay, whether they had actually harmed anybody or not, the penalty for blood-pollution. The psychological catharsis effected by tragedy thus mirrors in the male, the biological process undergone monthly by the female." The biggest fear of men was to be relegated to the position of a woman. It is also explained that catharsis is located in Oedipus himself. The mutilation that Oedipus inflicts on himself is an act of self-castration. Going into exile can be paralleled with the human sacrifice in search for a cure. The theme of banishment is ambivalent in nature in these texts. The forced banishment by the enemy is overthrown and leads to freedom while the self-imposed banishment of the exiles eventually ends in the expulsion of the enemy.

5.2.3 Breaking the silence

The common denominator for the exile of the three authors was the oppressive apartheid's rule by South Africa. Namhila shares how the net was drawn ever closer as the SADF intruded into private family space and incarcerated the community. The soldiers were everywhere; in the schools, humiliating the teachers accused of collaborating with SWAPO; the presider at a community meeting was shot in front of everyone; she was shot riding home with her bicycle and her uncle was taken away and beaten so severely that she did not even recognize him. She was driven into exile by fear and the desire to be free. Namhila (p. 32) articulates her decision:

I wanted to spend my evenings at the fireplace listening to stories instead of being forced to go to bed early due to the curfew. In order to avoid trouble for themselves and their families, people had to cook, eat and go to bed earlier even if they did not want to. This was a cheaper price to pay than being arrested or beaten. These experiences left me with terrible fear for white men and their guns that killed and maimed people. I was afraid of their cars that came to my village to arrest people and return them with bruises all over their bodies. Each time we heard the sound of military vehicles heading towards our omukunda we would start asking ourselves whom they were coming for this time. We often witnessed police driving their army vehicles through people's mahangu fields and destroying everything in their path. No-one dared to protest for fear of their lives. The army and the police did not care for people or their lives; they would just shoot anybody who questioned their action. I lived in constant terror of the white men and their occupation army. I had seen too many things happen to me and people I loved. Whenever I saw a white man in my village I began to see death and destruction. In the end I decided to leave the country so that I could live. I did not see any future under such threatening circumstances.

Namhila as the witness to these atrocities parallels the audience in ancient Greek tragedy. Her text is riddled with words from the semantic domain of fear and related spheres: terror, suffering, pain, blood, death, killed, injured, afraid, anxious... The purgation of fear resulted in her decision of going into exile and joins those in the diaspora. The emotion of fear is also cleansed and transformed in all three women as in the process; they are transformed into strong, resilient individuals.

Apartheid was informed by colonialism and imperialism. Imperialism and colonialism are defined by Said (1994, p. 9) as: "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; "colonialism," which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory".

Said enunciates that colonialism and imperialism are not simply acts of accumulation and acquisition, but it is strengthened by ideologies that certain peoples require domination as well as certain forms of knowledge such as vocabulary reinforces that other peoples are inferior and can be subjugated. Said regards imperialism as:

The derogatory term that was used in the apartheid time for black people is *kaffir*. All concepts and terms associated with this word echo subjugation, dehumanisation and oppression. The psychological violence cuts people off from their cultural systems. Namhila interrogates her elders about the reasons they are hated so much by the white people, but they are silent. African cultures use proverbs to convey information that cannot be shared overtly or through general linguistic concepts, but this system seems to be eroded by fear. Amathila on the other hand shares that the disgusting conditions that she encountered when taking a sick teacher to hospital drove her desire to become a doctor to make decent medical services available to black Namibians. While Amulungu's personal circumstances arose curiosity of people and compel her to write her life story.

5.2.4 The chronotope of the road

In this subsection the chronotope of the road will be discussed, enlightened by the motifs of journey and encounter. Through the special and temporal dimensions of the chronotope the deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation of the subjects in the diaspora will be discussed.

Peeren (2006) explains that the temporal dimension is viewed as the consequence of diaspora and therefore subordinated to displacement in space; while space is the primary dimension where physical removal from the homeland remains the first criterion (p. 67). Peeren enunciates that Fortier (2005) uses the notion of "timespace" to overcome the reduction of this concept into a simple cause-effect relationship, and in doing so emphasise the importance of concrete places and times. Referring to Bakhtin (1996) Peeren illuminates that time is spatial in the manner that passage of time can only be given meaning in space and space is temporal in the way that movement in space is also mentioned in time. All thoughts and ideas actualise in time, meaning itself becomes chronotopic. Peeren proposes that the concept should be expanded from a literary concept to a cultural concept to enable theorisation with regard to diaspora subjects and all social and cultural realities. Through this expansion Peeren suggest there is a multitude of chronotopes each notable by its own way of creating and construing timespace.

The road chronotope can be applied to read Namibia's struggle for independence as it is depicted by

the three writers. The liberation struggle for freedom was fought from outside the country. The guerilla war was launched from neighbouring Angola and peace negotiations from the United Nations headquarters and other international sites. Exiles mostly cross the border on foot. These subjects imprint their desire and dedication for freedom in every footprint. The image of the wandering subject on foot is the characteristic image of the struggle against apartheid. In this sense it links with the ideas of other Africans such as Nelson Mandela who expressed the continuing long walk for freedom. Through crossing spaces on foot, non-whites operate in the social context created for them by the oppressors and they do not awaken suspicion, allowing them to continue and reach their destinations.

Namhila shares that she was already in exile when she realises that leaving Namibia means leaving behind her family, friends, country, food, language, culture and traditions. Exile would introduce the subjects to new, foreign cultures and contact with these cultures would reveal the ontological break and possibilities for new meaning-making. The transition camps were located along the Namibian-Angolan border. These camps become a space where exiles encounter the ideological concepts of revolution as concepts such as liberation struggle, guerilla war; freedom fighters are juxtaposed to foreign occupation, oppression and terrorists. They learned about the Cold War and West Block and East Block countries. Amulungu (p. 121) illuminates that they were slowly and surely gliding from the naïve, narrow minded and traditional human beings to vibrant members of the liberation movement. Every moment that they spent with SWAPO erases the South African propaganda.

The road chronotope lends itself for the chance of meeting. People in the camps were constantly shifted, adding to feelings of confusion and lost. Two people that Namhila meets on during these shifts are Ndaenda and Commander Nauta. Ndaenda became her best friend and Commander Nauta a confidant that trusts her to write letters on his behalf to his superiors. This friendship would illuminate the reasons for the constant shifting of people. Commander Nauta takes Ndaenda with on a mission into the bush. On her return, Ndaenda got sick. It is believed to be because of the chicken she ate, however, Commander Nauta who gave her the chicken and ate it with her was fine. The service of a traditional healer is called in as Ndaenda's illness seems to be mysterious. He alleges that Commander Nauta's head appeared in the glass he was looking in. Ndaenda appears to be recovering, but dies shortly after the visit of Commander Nauta. Commander Nauta was now branded as a witch and Namhila is filled with fear for him. Through assisting him with the letters Namhila is able to infiltrate the gendered hierarch of the military. In each letter she adds her own message of the bewitchment and death of her friend. When she reads Commander Nauta the letters,

she leaves out her own message. The highest commanders of PLAN: Nakada, Hauliyodjamba and Zulu respond to her letters by visiting the camp. It so happens that this encounter is on a day that Nauta was not at the camp and Namhila speaks to them about the death of her friend and her fear for Commander Nauta.

This encounter will be discussed through feminist concepts. As mentioned, the war front is a traditional gendered space representing the superiority of men. Females at the front are the subaltern, occupying traditional female spaces and usually lower in rank than men. Namhila was the camp secretary. Commander Nauta steps out of this gender and hierarchical confinement to foster a close friendship with the girls. He shares niceties that he receives from his comrades with them. Namhila's excessive fear drives her to turn against him. Another gendered space is the domain of traditional healer. The incident results in two influential men placed against each other. The testimony of the traditional healer destroys Commander Nauta as it leads to his banishment from the army ranks to thatching roofs. Commander Nauta is represented to cross male gender boundaries of clear-headedness and logic and shows compassion, embracing the African philosophical concept of *Ubuntu*, and his cultural traditions of caring for another person expressed by Amulungu (p. 102) as *Dhoyendji kadhi ehama okulila* which means that the distress shared by many is bearable. Yet in the face of trauma it paradoxically alienates him and Namhila and she betrays him. She does not engage into dialogue, but takes action. Namhila reaches into this male domain with clear consciousness, seizing the opportunity that presents itself. She defies the male superiority and shows sisterhood to Ndaenda.

5.2.5 Cultural nomos

Masemola (2013) enunciates that autobiographical texts use a particular temporality to inscribe both history and identity. In this way they depict a certain worlding. The concept of nomadism is used as lens through which to view nomadic movement which is defined as a way to distribute the self over space opposed to just being in a space.

Amathila is able to cross the border from Namibia into Botswana in disguise. She cuts off her long hair and dresses as a young girl, hiding the fact that she is indeed a teenager with a substantial degree of education. The road can also be defined as a gendered space as truck drivers and the police at roadblocks are usually men. In the prevailing ontology of apartheid it was unusual for a young girl to travel, let alone unaccompanied. She confirms to the ontology of apartheid by dressing in a servant-like manner and could easily have been regarded as being accompanying the two white

girls with her in the truck and succeeds in defying the authorities. This physical escape manifests itself on psychological level as it is actually a mental plan that succeeds. Amathila conforms to the nomadic subject that camouflages herself, blending in so successfully that she can freely move around in the environment unnoticed. In this way she reflects the spirit of great Africans such as Nelson Mandela and Mamphela Ramphele who was travelling from place to place under the noses of the South African regime disguised as servants representing a nomadic becoming. Masemola uses characters of the Greek tragedy alongside African cultural figures to demonstrate that the courage of the African female depicted in the female autobiography embodies an Antigone becoming. The state under apartheid is likened to the city of Thebes under Creon and by defying this brutal ruler the female autobiographer embodies an Antigone becoming. Antigone resisted Creon by taking her own life rather than be killed by him. The figure of Antigone resonates with the behaviour of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela as discussed by Hassim (2014) and constitutes a refusal to be dominated by oppressors and oppressive systems. Madikizela-Mandela, Amathila, Namhila and Amulungu become living symbols that not only embodies the spirit of Antigone, but can substitute for mythological figures.

When in Poland people's curiosity is aroused by Amathila as a black person in an all-white environment. She overcomes this polarisation by presenting her body as a site for cultural transfer and knowledge creation. The Polish are not viewing her body as a site to degradation and humiliation, but as a way understand her as a future human being. As such she is offering her body as cultural site. Her account of the Polish butcher giving her extra meat evokes the memory of her account of black people's experience in butcheries back home. This time she is treated with respect and equality that enforce the thread that runs through the texts that not all white people are hostile to blacks.

5.2.6 Conclusion

The cathartic effect in the three autobiographical texts were analysed through the concepts of purgating fear by going into exile; and the notion of becoming through a parallel between the classical figure of Antigone and black women who rebelled against oppression. In the next section construction of identity in independent Namibia will be discussed.

Section 5.3

CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN NEWLY LIBERATED NAMIBIA

5.3.1 Introduction

This section focusses on the construction of identity in independent Namibia. The three authors left Namibia as teenagers. Their identity is influenced by lived experience in African countries and abroad. These authors are representative of what Goredema (2009) calls a dual existence of Western and African knowledge. This section will explore the concept of disillusionment, personal identity and public identity.

5.3.2 Changing identities

Identity is one of those concepts that embody ambivalence. Voicu (2014, p. 15) defines identity as: “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others”. Voicu (p. 15) quotes Beller and Leersen (2001) who elucidate that identity is linked to permanence through time - something remaining identical with itself from moment to moment. Voicu explains that this type of identity is referred to as “ipse” identity and entails a first person perception. “Ipse” identity is understood as selfhood, “who” a person is and is linked to individuality and uniqueness while “idem” refers to sameness and is more external, representing a type of third person perspective. Identity can thus be viewed in terms of personal features of an individual or as a social category. Identity is a socio-cultural construct and cultural identity is defined by (Sysoyev, 2001) as referenced by Voicu (p. 16) an individual’s realisation of his or her place in the spectrum of cultures and purposeful behaviour directed on his or her enrolment and acceptance into a particular group, as well as certain characteristic features of a particular group that automatically assign an individual’s group membership” Literature employs features of cultural identity such race, ethnicity, gender, language, ability, socio-economic and geopolitical circumstances. Hall (1996) as referenced by Voicu (p. 17) regards the view of a shared culture as superficial and proposes that the emphasis should be on *production* of identity which is achieved through the “re-telling” of the past that embodies and act of imaginary rediscovery, one which involves “imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas” and leads to the restoration of an “imaginary fullness or plenitude, to set against the broken rubric of our past (p. 17). The second model that he proposes for identity is that it should be perceived as a matter of “becoming” as well as of “being”, belonging to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from

somewhere, have histories, but like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation.

All three authors share their shock when landing on Namibian soil and are confronted with the dry, dusty conditions. The aridness of Namibia contrasts sharply with Europe and the lush green landscape of Angola. The tents constructed to house returnees remind of the tents at the border during the war and their villages too have changed. Amathila looks for the great rock; the one landmark she thinks never could be destroyed but finds that it has broken off. All three authors have lost their mothers while in exile. The foreignness of the motherland can metaphorically be likened to the strange women that Amulungu and Namhila finds in their mothers' homes as their fathers got married while the two women were in exile and the death of both Amathila's mother and grandmother. The breakthrough in negotiations and the implementation of United Nations Resolution 435 took the authors by surprise. Like everyone else, a decision had to be made whether to remain in exile or to return to Namibia, the country for whose freedom they fought. Namhila (pp. 148-149) enunciates that she wanted to see the results of the costly war and wanted to own that feeling of belonging of which she had been deprived off all those years. However, the challenges that returnees would encounter was manifold. The separatist, oppressing apartheid's rule was the reason all three were in exile, fighting for freedom from outside Namibia. As the term literally indicates, the practice of apartheid was constructed on separation between races, but overarching, it embodies separation between whites and blacks or people of European decent and those of Non-European descent. This separation is premised on the idea that whites and all that they stand for is superior to blacks. White identity was the norm and black identity was constructed in relation to that. Fanon (1986) argues that contact with the coloniser has robbed the black man of his dignity and sense of self and resulted in an inferiority complex, causing the black man to view himself as a lesser being to the white man, always imitating the white man. Fanon illuminates the psychological effects of the ideologies of colonialism and apartheid on the psyche of the black man. Namibians, like all other people affected by colonialism would struggle with the psychological effects of it long after the territory was free.

The shock to find Namibian institutions still run by whites drives them to even be more determined to fight the liberation struggle to the end. The struggle of getting jobs and buying houses confirms the situation that Namhila (p. 198) defines as "identity crises". In exile, she did not question her national identity and felt strongly Namibia.

The construction of identity in Namibia is done through cultural transfer. Amulungu assist in establishing the Franco Namibia Cultural Centre (FNCC). The founding of the centre testifies to the transformed cultural environment and the changing linguistic identity of Namibia. The hegemony of Afrikaans is contested by two world languages; English and French- English being the language of business and French the language that connects independent Namibia to French speaking African countries who were allies in the liberation struggle. Afrikaans is linked to the apartheid's oppression so it could not be the official language, losing its position to English.

Amathila as Minister of Local Government and Housing cleans up the inferior market used by vendors in Katutura and constructs a new modern market that would elevate their businesses to competitive level. She designs the plans herself. An unusual silver ring in the shape of a horseshoe that she bought in Denmark serves as inspiration for the design. The shape of the horseshoe gives her a feeling of closeness to the people of Denmark, but it also brings vendors closer together as they can see each other from their businesses and still maintain the African spirit of friendliness and embracing one another. The market comes to represent a link between the peoples of Denmark and Namibia and it is a private memory of Amathila's that becomes public memory.

Namhila finds employment as a librarian and the opportunity of recording black history changing a landscape from which blacks were excluded. The space of remembering changes the Namibian archive becomes inclusive.

5.3.3 Familial gender relations

An intertextual comparison between Namhila's and Amulungu's reaction to the realisation that they were falling in love with white men, reveals a lot of similarities. The most prominent being the psychological impact on the females. Amulungu's relationship started in exile in Zambia. She was in a friendly environment where Wilfried was seen as a comrade, fighting for the same cause. Yet it was the psychological perceptions of race introduced by apartheid that causes Amulungu confusion and frustration. Everybody else saw that Wilfried was in love with her, but she herself could not translate his behaviour as love, because she could not imagine an interracial relationship between black and white.

Namhila and Werner first wanted to get married in Windhoek, but later decide to have the wedding in the North for the sake of Namhila's relatives living in the North. According the customs of Namhila's clan, she had to get married in the house of her uncle because he was the head of the clan.

Her father who was not regarded a blood relative could not interfere. This situation presents opportunity to investigate racial, cultural and gender relations at familial level in the newly liberated Namibia. The marriages of Namhila's and Amulungu's, both to white men belonging to the German culture, are not enthusiastically accepted by all friends and family. Some struggled to comprehend interracial marriages and accepting white people as members of their family. In the reterritorialised setting the whites became the "other" in the Namibian context. At surface level, the response of Namhila's father might be interpreted as enforcing patriarchy, but it requires rethinking of the situation and usual concepts employed to interpret social relations to make meaning of the situation. The customs of the clan predestine the uncle to be hierarchically higher than the father. Interference in the uncle's decision would be interpreted as disrespect for the clan's customs. Both elderly men adopt a strategy not to verbalise or overtly express their thoughts. The concept of silence is redressed, becoming a parameter by which to measure patriarchal power in contrast of the traditional application where it is used in relation to the powerlessness of the marginalised. The plurality of the concept of silence is demonstrated as it is evident that silence on the part of the father is a different kind of silence from that of the uncle's. As time passes the authority and power of the uncle come under threat as he seems incapable of solving the problem. The elephant at his door was charging ever stronger and he seems to be without a solution. He responded by saying his house needs renovation and that lots of red notes are needed. The uncle's silence translates into something negative as he is exposed as exploiting the situation for his own gain. The silence of Namhila's father is an intellectual response, allowing him in the end to support his daughter, but at least not overtly negating his culture. He sends his daughter a note inviting her to have her wedding at his house. The power-struggle between the men results in power for Namhila who is left to make the decision. She decides to have the wedding at her father's home because he was the only one forthcoming. Namhila's father becomes an agent promoting multiculturalism in Namibia, while her sister drives around influencing family members against the wedding. The sister negates the notion of sisterhood as proposed in feminist theory.

Amulungu's autobiography, *Taming my Elephant*, reveals the complexity of interracial familial relations. The car guard's curiosity proves to be representative of the general attitude towards interracial marriages in Namibia. In *The Price of Freedom*, Namhila reveals that her neighbours were not interested in fostering relationships with them, yet one of them comes to her house to ask her domestic worker if Namhila and her white husband really share a bed. Against the background of Namibia's exposure to colonialism and apartheid, gender and racial relations are interpreted in terms of Eurocentrism and related notions such as phallocentrism and patriarchy. However, the marriage

of Amulungu's reveals that that in the private space of the family, women might hold more powerful roles than in the public space as Wilfried's mother is the prominent spoke's person for the family. Although both future parents-in-law are faced with the situation of a black daughter-in-law, it is the prominence of the mother-in-law that Amulungu forefronts. Wilfried's brothers are instrumental in counteracting matriarchal power. The Brock brothers forms an alliance with their brother, supporting him in his efforts to get their parents to accept his relationship with Amulungu and eventually also their marriage. None of them oppose or rejects the marriage. They engage in dialogue on behalf of the couple, continuously persuading their parents to accept Amulungu into the family. Amulungu articulates this process of psychologically breaking down defenses as follows:

It was first a question of explaining to the parents that Wilfried was old enough to be allowed to take decisions over his own life. It was also important to suggest to the parents that if Wilfried reckoned that he would find happiness with a black woman, he should perhaps be allowed to do so. After all, it was further argued, the parents should realise that there was not much to be done as a baby was on the way (p. 257).

The addition of a black person to the family would not only change the Brock family demography, but their relationship with acquaintances and the German community too. Voicu illuminates that the concept of identity delineates itself in terms of sameness vs difference. The addition of a black person would deconstruct the identity of the family on various levels. The sameness that existed within the family, towards the German community and the family acquaintances would be no more. The Brock family space becomes a hybrid space. On surface level it is the coming together of Oshiwambo and German cultures, but closer examination reveals that this family unit represents the third space in which contact between cultures can be examined. Amulungu as diasporic individual has lived in various countries and was exposed to their cultures and languages and therefore carries all these cultural identities with her. She brings this knowledge into the family space as well as into the public space.

The yellow letter that she receives from Wilfried's mother contains the rather hegemonic line that the Brocks as a family speak German and will continue to do so. The German language is presented in a Fanonian (1986) view of language being the key that can open the vault to the future family-in-law; the threshold that needs to be cross to fit in. Amulungu has already crossed this threshold. The sting is averted by the fact that Amulungu is a polyglot, speaking a few languages, including German. She learned the language at school in Namibia prior to independence and in France at university. She is the embodiment of the wandering subject, carrying cultural identity across space and time. The

significance of language in the construction of identity in her new family in law is represented in her father-in-law's speech. The culture exchange between the two families becomes mutual as Wilfried's family stays over at the Amulungu homestead in the North.

The yellow letter presents itself as a carrier of identity. It is at first a vehicle for communication between mother and son, communicating news about the family, representing certain fixedness. The yellow colour renders the letter identifiable between other official correspondences. After breaking the news about Wilfried's black girlfriend the identity of the letter is transformed. It becomes ambiguous as it is expected that the letter is for Wilfried, but it is for Amulungu. It also carries sameness as the recipient now is placed in the position of the previous recipient and a reflection that Mrs. Brock views her to be daughter-in-law in the same position as her son and symbolises Amulungu's inclusion into the family.

Amulungu is troubled because she will not receive the traditional jewelry that daughters receive after a long absence from home. The jewelry that her mother-in-law hangs on her on her wedding day is not merely a substitute, but represents a cultural connection between the German culture and the Oshiwambo culture and carries all the values from one to the other.

The importance of being welcomed and integrate with their families is emphasised in all three texts. In *Making a Difference*, Amathila shares how she receives the official traditional welcome ritual and was welcomed by everybody in her village. A goat was slaughtered to welcome her and she was washed in a specially prepared herbal bath; and some other traditional rituals were performed as well. This reception made her feel that she had arrived home at last. The homecoming of all three is celebrated by slaughtering a goat, revealing cultural bonds amongst their cultures and the notion that it could be synonymous with Namibian homecoming celebrations.

The texts confirms what Kornberg (2018) explains namely that that while marginality is associated with lack of participation, reciprocation and belonging, the texts are proof that limited power does not equate powerlessness. Power is not only located at the centre or in organised groups, but through the action of individuals.

5.3.4 Reconstruction of public identity

During apartheid's era decision-making positions were occupied by whites. In the instances where black people were placed in positions of authority, the laws that governed those positions were constructed by whites and in such a way that it promoted white interest.

Namibia gained independence from South Africa on 21 March 1990, after a brutal war. Freedom from South African rule allowed for equality to all Namibians. However, because socio-political and economic inequalities were enacted through legislation, Namibian lawmakers had the difficult task of reform of the apartheid's laws and through these reforms people's perceptions and attitudes. Brink (1998) articulates that silence cannot be regarded as simplistic, but that difference levels of silence, imposed by certain historical junctions exist reveals the complexity of silence, continuing, saying that certain areas of knowledge were put outside of the reach of language. Amathila (p. 144) recounts her first meeting as Minister of Local Government and Housing as follows: My first visit to meet the Windhoek municipal councilors as Minister of Local Government and Housing was an unforgettable experience.

When I walked into the Council Chamber on sunny morning in 1990, I was met by apprehensive white men, all of them over 50 years old. They were uncertain whether they should stand up to greet me or remain seated. I stood in the doorway to see what they would do. I too, was uncertain. One by one they rose from their seats, and when all of them had stood up, I walked in, greeted them and took my seat. There was not a single woman or any black face in that hall except me – a black woman.

A black multilingual woman is positioned opposite white, Afrikaans speaking males. This group is divided by race, gender and language. Amathila crosses this divide by greeting the men in Afrikaans. She not only reaches out to them for the benefit of easing the tension, but gives them assurance that Afrikaans is not under threat in the newly liberated Namibia. The absence of racial diversity and women from the municipal council was by act of law, enforced with the same rigor as other apartheid's legislation. Women were regarded as minors who could not possess property and could not manage it. In the same vain, exclusion of non-whites from the council was justified. Legislative transformation therefore was premised on inclusion of the previously marginalised to reflect the new socio-political and economic context of equality. Equal rights to land and social space is an intertextual thread, connecting all three texts. Amathila, as the Minister tasked with property matters, articulates extensively on the ingenious strategies that law makers had to embark upon to engender transformation. Amathila selects lawyers from different cultural backgrounds to draft the legislation. Suddenly, men who would be supportive in exile had problems with inclusion of women into government structures. Amathila would exploit their typical male behaviour to slip legislation benevolent to females into the draft laws at Fridays when they would go out to their farms instead of being in parliament. It is once again proof that women had to engender clever strategies to overcome colonial mindset.

In order to include minority tribes, Amathila travels to remote regions, sleeping on the ground and embracing the lifestyle of the various tribes she visits. In practical and symbolic ways she achieves unity in Namibia.

5.3.5 Conclusion

This section presented identity construction in independent Namibia. It discussed the alienation of the physical land during the apartheid's regime and how it was reconstructed after independence. It also discussed familial relations and how new agents of cultural transformation emerged in independent Namibia. The next chapter, Chapter 6 concludes the study and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study was based on the exploration of engendered militancy in female authored autobiographical writing in Namibia. The objectives of the study were:

- to investigate witnessing of trauma during war time
- to analyse the cathartic effect in the select texts
- to explore the construction of identity in the new liberated Namibia

The study used concepts of classical trauma theory complimented by social concepts of trauma theory as theoretical lenses.

6.2 Conclusions

Autobiographical texts are first person narratives with the author both the writer and the protagonist of her story. The autobiographical account is therefore confronted with a complex multitude of limitations. The study revealed that the autobiographies under study operate as intertextual network to expose the impact of trauma. As an intertextual network, it overcomes most of the limitations of autobiographical texts. The credibility of the texts is further enforced by the fact that the authors never shared a physical space while in exile. By narrating their own experiences and those of others, unity among the three texts is established. The three texts: *The Price of Freedom* by Ellen Ndeshi Namhila; *Making a Difference* by Libertina Inaaviposa Amathila and *Taming my Elephant* by Tshiwa Trudie Amulungu serve as cross references to validate events.

The study investigates witness bearing to trauma in the select texts. The authors left Namibia due to physical and psychological violence. People, especially in Northern Namibia, were tortured when suspected of terrorist activities. Namhila testifies extensively about brutal attacks on innocent community members such as her teacher, her uncle and herself. Amathila narrates how people that she knows were racially abused by whites. Namhila is a Cassinga survivor and witness to the attack while Amulungu who also lived at Cassinga prior to the attack narrates the personal accounts of survivors. The apartheid's legislation still in place after independence supports the account of the authors, albeit paradoxically. Witness bearing to trauma during war time was approached through Laub's concept of witness bearing, Ettinger's concept of Aesthetical wit(h)ness bearing and local

African ways of perceptions of trauma through the concept of witchcraft.

Autobiographical texts can operate alongside historical writing especially in the case of minority groups as testimonies to historical trauma. Female autobiographical texts narrate from a sphere that is not the domain of historical texts or male autobiographies. The autobiographies were able to graphitise the horrors of Cassinga especially because it focused on the camp as civilian setting that were turned into a war zone. Violence to ordinary civilians in a domestic setting and humiliation of elders testifies to violation of private spaces. The study found that there is room for exploration of analytical tools that are not frequently used to evaluate Namibian literature and address lack of theoretical concepts. One such concept that the study applies is aesthetic wit(h)ness bearing that is premised on formalists literary representation, creating a graphic image of victims suffering under war, engaging the reader as eye witness. The concept of the matrixial in combination with phallogocentric concepts operate to create coherence. Aesthetic wit(h)ness bearing employs techniques from visual arts and proves that concepts from one art medium can be employed and adapted to enlighten other media. This notion focusses on fellow human experience by expanding the concept of witnessing to a level that places the witness in a position to feel with the victim and therefore underwrites the communal nature that is characteristic of Africans and female solidarity. Bodies are testimonies that testify to the trauma and are regarded as narratives too. Trauma's inarticulatory nature is addressed by including mutilation of the body as testimony. A concept such as witchcraft places African literature in a familiar socio-cultural contexts and it can elucidate hidden cultural codes and norms that classical concepts may not be able to reveal.

The cathartic effect exposed the total state of fear in which Namibians lived. Fear pushes human beings to cross boundaries. People did not only join SWAPO in exile, but were required to embrace the SWAPO ideology that required breaking down existing knowledge and being confronted with the reality that part of the world that they knew was a fabrication. Through fear and the pain of losing a friend Namhila betrays her benefactor, Commissioner Nauta by writing to the top structure of the army, leading to Commander Nauta's demotion to physical labour of thatching roofs. She challenges the gender hierarchy of the army in search of peaceful living conditions. The literature review could not locate research on the application of the concept of catharsis in Namibian literature. The research thus introduces this concept for application in Namibian literature and provides an alternative to existing gaps. Literature crosses borders and links past and present. Classical mythological figures assist in contextualising significant African women such as Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Ramphela Mamphela, Libertina Amathila, Ellen Namhila and Trudie Amulungu who were

not discouraged by physical exclusion, but rather devised clever plans to defy oppression and become role models for Africans. Physical and mental injuries cause transformation. The experience of apartheid transformed these women into liberation struggle activists.

The construction of identity in the newly liberated Namibia was explored through familial relations and public identities. The interracial marriages of Namhila's and Amulungu's showed how challenging it was for Namibians who lived under apartheid to embrace white people. However through assistance of family members, negotiations and cultural exchange people changed and embraced the new Namibia. The diasporic subjects were educated in foreign countries that are more advanced in certain aspects than Namibia. Cultural practices are not merely imposed but transferred in such a way that it establishes geographical, ideological and symbolic ties that transcends socio-cultural and political boundaries.

The significance of language in identity construction was revealed. The Afrikaans language which is intrinsically linked to apartheid and oppressive legislation is transformed into a tool of negotiation and comprehension when Amathila uses it to communicate to municipal councilors. All national languages are also valorised as the authors testify to their intercultural relations. Independence introduced Namibians to European languages other than Afrikaans and German, presenting Namibians to explore other cultures through language exposure. The FNCC of which Amulungu was a founding member is a living example of this.

The texts are created against the background of the struggle for liberation. The authors do not depict their experience only in positive terms but present how their fellow Namibians aggrieve them by upholding apartheid's laws that exclude Namibians from full participation in the fruits of independence.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the researcher recommends that:

- Further research is undertaken in the representations of trauma in the female authored Namibian autobiography to address the existing shortage of material as revealed by the literature review.
- Studies be undertaken to find Namibian concepts and interpretations for existing African concepts. Such concepts are *Dhoyendji kadhi ehama okulila'* explained by Amulungu as sharing in people's distress and *outere*, mentioned by Amathila, which

cautions that one should make all effort to provide for oneself and not subject themselves to the humiliation of begging. Both concepts come from the practice of sharing amongst community members, but have the potential to be exploited.

- The study of classic literature alongside Namibian and African literature to give insight into the universal links between literatures and to address assumptions such as inferiority of the literature of minorities.
- Namibian students are encouraged to become writers themselves to counter-balance life narratives with other genres.

6.4 Conclusion

The exploration of engendered militancy as represented in the female autobiography was undertaken in this study. The study was contextualised in Chapter 1 by proposing the engagement of classical concepts alongside social concepts. In Chapter 2 existing literature was reviewed. It generated the insight that trauma is both event-based as well as located in socio-cultural context and that this insight should enlighten the exploration of trauma in the texts. Chapter 3 engaged the theoretical framework, exploring concepts that would address trauma both as event and process. The findings of the study under the three objectives are presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 concludes the study.

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