Trauma and memorying in King's *Killing Karoline,* Msimang's *Always Another Country* and Smith's *The Camp Whore*

by

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Declaration

I, Tamia Tina Dicks, declare that this dissertation hereby submitted for the qualification of Master's degree in English at the University of the Free State is my own work and that I have not previously submitted the same work at another university.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to God, my parents, Sarah and Lionel, and in loving memory of my grandfather, Moses.

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Abstract

In this study I read Smith's *The Camp Whore* (2017), King's *Killing Karoline* (2017) and Msimang's *Always Another Country* (2017) through theories of life narratives, memory, trauma and feminisms in order to unpack the representation of the authors and fictional character, Susan (Smith), in relation to narration, gender, belonging, memory and identity reformation. The study also considers the autobiographical and fictional characters as gendered subjects, their specific experiences in history and everyday life experiences and the different ways in which the narrators attempt to resist existing oppressions, engage in memory making and healing, and reconstitute themselves. Therefore, this study evaluates the narrators' life experiences through South Africa's history, their individual traumatic and other lived experiences, and how this leads to the reconstruction of their identities. This study also evaluates how the narrators claim their place in historical events such as the Anglo-Boer War, the apartheid and post-apartheid era, and the way their narratives engage with official histories. These objectives assisted in developing an analysis of the ways in which the auto-biographers, King and Msimang, and the fictional character, Susan, resist their oppressions, partake in memory making and healing, and reconstructing their identities. The research also presents the link between the authors and character under study's experiences and the recollection of their countries' history. I therefore underline further the link between their individual traumatic and other lived experiences and their identity reformation. In addition, I consider how the women reflect their agency and subjectivity through finding healing and attaining their subjectivity through writing.

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Chapter 1: Life writings, gender, narration, trauma and subjectivity

1.1 Introduction

The South African literary and cultural productions analysed here focus on themes such as the human experiences across time and spaces, the production of truth, subjectivity, and role in the creation of history. This body of texts constitutes life narratives that represent women's experiences that, from the perspective of feminist theory, "forge alliances among women, and the establishment of common ground on which the concepts of justice and freedom as well as the respect for differences can be negotiated" (Rajan and Park, 2005:56). One of the tasks in South African literary writing is to determine how the depicted women and the writers themselves challenge "global power relations, economic, political, military, and cultural hegemon(y)" (Rajan and Park, 2005:54) through their agency, as argued by Walker (1992:398). It should also be underlined that ground breaking representations of African women need to be produced and reinvented in order for women to be represented in different moments of history, and thus in postcolonial ways (Gqola, 2001:14-15). These include representations of women as empowered at the social, political and economic level, and not being in subordinate positions. Postcolonial writing shares similarities with feminist writing (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:7) as both advocate for the liberation of women who are "othered" and oppressed.

In order to understand the relevance of postcolonial writing in South Africa, one needs to be knowledgeable of Africa's colonial history of exploitation and marginalisation. Africa was Europe's last colonial possession (Olaniyan, 2005:269). The earliest colonisation took place during 1822, when the British colonised the west coast of Africa, a colony that became the independent nation of Liberia during 1847 (Boddy-Evans, 2020). Colonial rule resulted in the structured marginalisation of Africa such that "changes occasioned by political independence such as the deracialisation of politics and civil society, have proved to be of little effect in reversing the marginality" (Olaniyan, 2005:270). European officials recruited chiefs in Africa who then participated in colonial activities that contributed to the marginalisation of their own people (Olaniyan, 2005:272). Europeans exploited Africa's economy and manipulated the minds of Africans such that they ended up marginalised economically and feeling inferior at the social and cultural level. Nevertheless, the late 1950s to 1960s witnessed intense anticolonial movement activities that resulted in the political decolonisation of some African countries (Olaniyan, 2005:275).

The events in South Africa's history are complex. The first contact between the two Afrikaner Republics, namely Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and Europeans took place at the Cape in 1652, with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company, which was followed by a long history of colonial rule under the Dutch, British and Afrikaners over the years until the 1994 introduction of a multi-racial democracy. The Anglo Boer War often referred to as the 'South African War' raged in what is contemporarily known as South Africa, during 11 October 1899 to 31 May 1902. The British Empire and two Afrikaner Republics, namely Transvaal and the Orange Free State caused havoc and trauma on the civilian population in the war zone (Wessels, 2016: 161). The Anglo-Boer War and apartheid are two of the significant periods in South Africa's long history from the Dutch East India Company's arrival at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. The Anglo-Boer War resulted from the struggle between British imperialism and Afrikaner Nationalism (Wessels, 2016: 162). Siwundla (1984:223) describes the Anglo-Boer War as the "white man's war" as neither the British nor the Boers had the intention of weakening white control over non-Europeans. The British burned down the Boers' farmsteads and the houses, towns and villages of black labourers, and created concentration camps for women and children as part of a scorched-earth policy that left more than half the Afrikaner population of the Orange Free State and over a hundred thousand black citizens deprived (Wessels, 2016:163). The Anglo-Boer war ended after a negotiated settlement in which the Boers agreed to become British subjects in order to maintain property and freedom, and Dutch became the medium of instruction in Colony schools in the Transvaal and Orange River. Blacks and Coloureds were not given the rights to vote. The Boers' decision to give up the blacks' right to vote, turned them from oppressed to oppressors (Wessels, 2016:166). Later on, the Boers extended their oppression of blacks, coloureds and Asians in 1948 onwards through apartheid (Wessels, 2016:169).

It should be noted that women experienced oppression during the Anglo Boer war and apartheid. The British government refused, during the Anglo Boer War, to call the women in the concentration camp prisoners, despite their insistence on confining them. The camps were portrayed as refugee camps, when in fact the inhabitants were confined. As a result of the many deaths occurring at the concentration camps, the *Daily News*, an American newspaper, referred to the camps as "death camps" (Krebs, 1992:45). The concentration camps were poorly ventilated, filled with diseases and resulted in the deaths of some of the inhabitants (Krebs, 1992:47). The number of deaths recorded in the concentration camps were 28 000 white civilians, in which 80% of these deaths were those of children, and 23 000 deaths of black

civilians, comprising mostly of youth and children (Wessels, 2016: 163). White women were not set free in order to keep them "safe" from hunger and the assumed threat of sexual abuse from black men, and yet some ended up being subjected to sexual abuse as portrayed in Smith's *The Camp Whore* (2017) analysed in this dissertation. In spite of racist fearmongering regarding the assumed threat of the sexual assault of white women by black men (referred to sometimes as the Black Peril scares), Susan is raped by white men. While white women were kept in the camps for protection; men, women and children of colour were kept in these camps because it was a requirement for the British military to clear Africans from districts (Krebs, 1992:52).

The oppression of women continued in South Africa during the Union colonial era and apartheid. Natal Province implemented the Natal Code of 1981 which stipulated that woman of colour were to be regarded as minors and under the guardianship of their fathers (if unmarried) or husbands. This code prevented women from owning property and other legal rights if not permitted by their guardians. The state's president could only declare a woman emancipated dependent on her level of education and ownership of property (Unterhalter, 1983:888). However, the Natal Code and other Union Acts made it difficult for women to be declared emancipated, as they endured both racial discrimination from the state and other forms of control by their guardians. Unterhalter (1983:888) notes that "Thus a woman cannot enter a customary union without the consent of her father; she can bring no action in the courts in her own name; and can own no property except personal possessions". Women also faced discrimination in the workplace and this becomes more pronounced after the government introduced a policy in the late 1950s which stated that women were not allowed to work as migrant contract workers. This policy increased job scarcity for women (Unterhalter, 1983:888). Nevertheless, the women's organisations, such as the ANC Women's League, engaged in activism against colonial and apartheid oppression. A highlight in their movements was during 1955 when the ANC Women's League joined forces with other women's organisations in drafting the Freedom Charter, which set out the aims of the national liberation movement. They advocated for the equality in education, childcare, housing, land and labour. Another highlight includes the ANC Women's League's demonstration on the 9th of August 1956, when 20 000 women assembled at the Union Buildings in Pretoria for the allowance of passes to women (Unterhalter, 1983:890).

Women's experiences of discrimination and oppression during the Anglo Boer war and apartheid constitute some of the thematic focuses in post-colonialist South African literary and

cultural productions. The nature of South Africa's postcoloniality consists of Dutch and British colonialism, and later Boer-Afrikaner race-based domination under the apartheid ideology. Critics view apartheid as a global typecast of racism and crime against humanity (Jolly, 1995:18-19). Apartheid is condemned through this portrayal; however, it also places South Africa as the other (Jolly, 1995:19), as the focus is shifted from the coloniser, onto the colony, South Africa (Jolly, 1995:19). Colonialist discourse focuses on the permanency of otherness, and this can be achieved through depicting apartheid as the stereotype of racism (Jolly, 1995:18). One should conceptualise the manners in which colonial discourse creates subjectivity (Jolly, 1995:18). The British had institutionalised structures of power in place to dispossess and exploit the "other" (Chanda, 2005:503). The British's dispossession and exploitation of the other created ways for the "other" to engage in various forms of agency. In most cases, the 'other' regain their power and fight back through the search for the truth, as "the production of truth is a function of power" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:165). In the case of the Anglo-Boer War and apartheid, the process often involved the Boers and people of colour questioning the British and identifying the British's aim at dividing and isolating South African whites and non-whites (Chanda, 2005:503). Postcolonial writers focusing on the Anglo-Boer War and apartheid often write against the oppressive institutionalised structures of power evident in both. Their writing serves as a production of truth and can be written in both life and fictional narratives. Language becomes a medium through which narrators, and by extension authors, share their truth and experiences and allow for a "post-colonial voice" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:7) and an expression of senses of otherness (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:11).

In addition, life narratives written by women, which are the partial focus of this study, play a significant role in depicting the experiences and aspirations of women. Some life narratives then serve as texts "where women write as a biologically oppressed group, and [endorse] feminism as part of a political project, to raise and transform consciousness" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:174). As a result, women who experience oppression not only share their truth, but also raise awareness about existing oppressive conditions. Some discourses on African feminism (Norwood, 2013; Msimang, 2002; and Bozzoli, 1983) state that some African women deal with patriarchal power (Bozzoli, 1983:171), colonialism, slavery (Norwood, 2013:225), oppression and exploitation (Msimang, 2002:7), which they resist by expressing their subversion through writing (Bozzoli, 1983:171). Further female expression is evidenced in participation in African feminist movements such as Women in Feminism (WIN),

Nigerian Feminist Forum (NFF) and the African Feminist Forum (AFF), amongst others, which focus on the lived experiences and shared oppression of African diasporic women. Some South African writers focus on the interconnectedness of gender, marginalisation, race, and socio-economic status, whilst being postcolonial, through setting their own schema according to African feminisms, and resisting other feminisms such as Western feminisms (Chiweshe, 2018:79). These writers depict their experiences and those of others through an African feminist perspective that speaks to South African experiences, identities and cultures.

Nonetheless, the process of reinventing representations of African women starts with valuing their everyday experiences (Gqola, 2001:17). Writing is one of the ways in which women can expose their marginalisation under patriarchy (Anderson, 2006:119). The writing of life narratives allows for the author's self-awareness, the identity reformation of the author, and transformation of the narrator's perspective, to which I add the protagonist's, in the case of narratives based on a female character's life. Walker (1992:400) states that women need to "understand power structures with the intention of challenging them" and this can be achieved through writing their own narratives. Concerning this study, the narrators' depictions of their own experiences challenge the curator to represent his or her past (Kruger, 2000:637) and provide the narrator with a sense of agency. The process of remembering and narrating experiences contributes towards a search for, and constitution of self-awareness. Thus, Msimang's *Always Another Country* (2017), King's *Killing Karoline* (2017) and Smith's *The Camp Whore* (2017) are analysed to determine their role in highlighting the depicted women's specific experiences in South Africa at particular moments in history. The study examines the nature and significance of the representations of women living their daily lives, fighting against oppression and reinventing themselves. The study unpacks further how these female characters' experiences link with the search for, and attainment of healing from their traumatic experiences, and ultimately lead to the reconstruction of their identities. To this end, the study draws on various critical feminist critics' research, such as that of Bartels, Eckstein, Waller and Wiemann (2019); Ahmed (2017); Schuster (2017); Butler (1988); and Spivak (1988); who theorise on notions such as women's experiences under different oppressive conditions, and the search for different forms of agency as presented in the literature review below. One of the forms of agency is constituted in women's narratives and memorying, an area that is tackled in existing life narrative studies such as Aurell and Davis (2019), Jensen (2019), Borg (2018), Wiegandt (2017), and McAdams and McLean (2013) as discussed below.

1.2 Life narratives

The texts under study are life narratives that depict the characters' personal memories, historical moments, and provide photographs in their texts as evidence of their experiences (Smith and Watson, 2001:6). The writers' "[…] 'experience' and that of their characters are already an interpretation of the past and of [their] place in a culturally and historically specific present" (Smith and Watson, 2001:24). Accordingly, the writers' depictions of the self and their characters' experiences in their country's history serve as documentation and insight into historical figures and moments. However, their depictions offer their perspectives on events and not necessarily the "true" occurrence of historical events (Smith and Watson, 2001:10). The narrators share their own and their characters' personal experiences during historical events, and describe how these events contribute to the constitution of trauma and/or agency. The narrators also expose their perpetrators, share their trauma and flawed characteristics and behaviour, whilst upholding their roles as agents and their overall reputations. Therefore, the balance between narrating history and personal experience shows the complexity of life narratives and authors' various interpretations of personal memories and historical events.

In the case of a biographer, as Smith is in *The Camp Whore* (2017), the aim is to be familiar with "the other's story, and to recognise the narratability of others, whether we know their actual life stories or not" (Leskelä-Kärki, 2008:330). The biographer writes in a way that expresses the feeling of writing about oneself, as one can identify more about oneself through others' life stories (Leskelä-Kärki, 2008:330). King and Msimang are authors of their own narratives and thus are familiar with their own experiences. Smith indeed describes his fictional character Susan's experiences with empathy, and positions Susan at the centre of the events and constitution of subject formation. There is not a straightforward tie between narrators' lived experience and the written account thereof. However, there is a complex web between the two built from the link between "self, time and history" (Leskelä-Kärki, 2008:330). As a result, a person's life story produces sporadic recollections with intended goals and creates an account of the narrator's identity in time. In this study, I analyse Msimang and King's autobiographies and Smith's biography of his fictional characters' experiences and how their specific experiences link with the reconstruction of their identities.

Critics such as Gusdorf (1956) and Sprinker (1980) write about the interpreters of the "truth" in authors' narratives and the creation of life narratives. The authors of life narratives have

control over the amount of personal experiences they share. The women in the texts under study share their life experiences but may have held back some information because of decorum or fear of judgement. For instance, Susan's narration of her rape experience in *The Camp Whore* (2017) is a brave and empowering act as some women feel uncomfortable talking about their rape experiences. In addition, Susan's experience of rape during the Anglo-Boer War, is a complex one, considering the fact that she is a white woman raped by her white counterparts (British men in military) but ends with a description of her killing the perpetrator in order to take back control of her life by reversing the status of subordination resulting from being a victim of rape. Some authors are more vulnerable and truthful than others who only describe their lives for their generation and future generations. However, being more vulnerable and truthful may result in less praise for one's honesty (Sprinker, 1980:336). The only distance an auto-biographer is expected to take in order to preserve the "truth" in the text, is distancing him or herself in order to reconstruct his or her identity across time (Gusdorf, 1956:35). The narration of the author's life narrative is more truthful than the experience itself, as the narrator depicts events in a way that is reflective of himself or herself (Smith and Watson, 2001:125). According to Gusdorf (1956:38), when an event takes place one is unable to view the experience in its entirety, thus the autobiographical reading of an experience is more truthful than the event itself, as one is conscious of what has taken place during that time and space. The auto-biographer is thus significant here because he or she is able to narrate the events from his or her perspective, and reflect on his or her experiences and behaviour.

The texts under study deal with female narratives, fictional depictions of female experiences of trauma, and truth telling. I am interested in the way the narrators' and protagonists' recollection of memories, with forgetting being part of memorying, and the narration thereof, contribute towards a search for, and constitution of, self-awareness. The recollection of these experiences of oppression, racism and marginalisation may cause feelings of guilt or shame, and result in the performance of memory/ing through the writing of life narratives marked by confessions and feelings of shame. Life narratives are performances of feeling in the sense that the narrator writes about his or her past experiences, such as those of trauma, with a new sense of agency and hope for healing. However, there is no guarantee that the narrator would have completely overcome his or her sense of shame or traumatic experiences. Narrators are able to express to themselves and to others who they are presently, what their backgrounds are, and where they envision themselves heading in the future (McAdams and McLean, 2013:233). This link between self, time and history allows for what McAdams and McLean's term, "narrative

identity", which is "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (2013:233). According to Butler (1988:521) narrating becomes performativity in the sense that it "[…] constitutes meaning and […] meaning is performed or enacted" through these narratives. Therefore, writing is a performance as narrators create self-awareness. In addition, the production of life narratives allows for the author's self-awareness, identity reformation, and transformation of their perspective, to which I add the protagonist's in the case of a biographical narrative, which results in new ways of questioning social reality (Anderson, 2006:130).

The texts under study are examined to determine how they capture both the narrators' and female protagonist's resistance to oppression, create agency and reflect women's refusal to be victimised. The character, Susan, in Smith's *The Camp Whore*, vividly recalls her experiences of rape during the Anglo-Boer War and the feelings of shame, pain and violation she felt. Her perpetrators are portrayed as malicious sexual predators. Susan, the protagonist, feels victimised, bitter and vulnerable. However, she finds hope when she meets Mamello and Tiisetso, who rescue and take care of her in a cave until she recovers. Mamello and Tiisetso serve as symbols of the restoration of humanity as they remove Susan from her space of violence and set her on a journey of hope and healing. Smith, whose novel is originally written in Afrikaans but translated into English and joins a body of texts such as *Triomf* (1994) by Marlene Van Niekerk that have been studied in English studies, and makes efforts to represent the female character's experiences as she deals with trauma, and seeks to survive in an ethical and gender sensitive way. Smith is male but positions the female character at the centre of the events and constitution of agency and subject formation. In addition, Smith's positionality is advantageous, as his identity as an Afrikaner, male and South African grants him insider knowledge and experience (Kusek and Smiley, 2014:153), such as his relation to South Africa's history and his empathy towards Susan, to write a significant narrative of Susan's experiences, which further transforms Susan's silence into language and action (Lorde, 2007).

Some women's writing are categorised as texts of disempowered individuals expressing their voice and regaining agency and control. Women of colour in particular, write their selves out of marginality while white women mostly write from a privileged position because of their race. Nevertheless, female authors write themselves into history and simultaneously question the structures and notions that previously defined them (Mukhuba, 2017:8600). Sara-Jayne King in *Killing Karoline* narrates her adoption story and shares details of her biological parents, Kris (white female) and father, Jackson Tau (black male). Sara-Jayne's biological parents is in

an affair and interracial relationship. Karoline battles with an identity crisis, several addictions and disorders, and deals with feelings of resentment, anger and abandonment because of her adoption. At the age of 21, Karoline arrives in South Africa, her land of birth, for rehabilitation and this marks the beginning of her journey to recovery and belonging. Sisonke Msimang's memoir, *Always Another Country* (2017) recounts Sisonke's life in exile and home in South Africa. She shares her longing for her country South Africa, and her pride in her country's liberation from apartheid. She reflects on post-apartheid's violence and the hypocrisy of the African National Congress (ANC) which no longer prioritises the equality of the people. Thus, both authors write about their experiences, consider the injustices encountered and express rage against the patriarchal and dominant political forces, apartheid and the ANC.

The above texts, which I study here, invoke various concerns related to different women's experiences and marginalisation, and how these shape views of themselves throughout history. As a result, the depiction of women's life experiences and the use of the life narrative mode serve as forms of agency as the protagonists and narrators are their own representatives and own the story of their experiences in history, whilst allowing for the representation of personal and social history and memory (Aurell and Davis, 2019:508). The writing of one's own narrative, and by extension the focalising of a female protagonist's experiences, allows for the restoration of subjectivity of both and their refusal to continue suffering from the effects of their trauma (Borg, 2018:448). In addition, Jensen (2019:602) notes that subjectivity encompasses the urge to tell of the self and the process of self-construction. It should be noted that studying female traumatic experiences outside trauma theory and the patriarchal cultures that enable such trauma to happen will be superficial. The memoir/autobiographical fiction in Africa is not a study of a singular subject/person, but a connection of the individual with their society and culture. As such, it will benefit me to read trauma as both collective and personal, and different at the same time. For instance, women are exposed to private and public patriarchy, with the private patriarchy affecting the social and domestic marginalisation of women, while the public patriarchy relates to the subordination of women in employment and by the state. However, the state still has an influence on individuals, and thus "public" patriarchy influences "private" patriarchy. There is a greater transference from private to public patriarchy in the twentieth century (Kandiyoti, 1991:430) as nationalist movements invite the participation of women through their roles as parents, teachers, employees and reformers, while dictating their conduct and requesting women to tailor their interests according to nationalist discourse. Accordingly, feminism is influenced by the state which produces it (Kandiyoti,

1991:432-433). Capitalist patriarchy and global market forces also contribute to the construction of women as models to serve the nation, whilst complying with "feminist demands as lifestyle choices through the global media" (Chanda, 2005:489). Adichie (2014:30) refers to people's misconception of liberation being a choice, in her text, *We Should All Be Feminists*: "It is easy to say, 'But women can just say no to all this.' But the reality is more difficult, more complex. We are all social beings. We internalise ideas from our socialisation". Patriarchal formation is maintained through media propaganda and socialisation that suggest that liberation, progress and modernity is a choice. Thus, popularising and watering down feminist aims of fighting inequality and prejudice (Chanda, 2005:489). In this study, memory permeates the personal and collective, and cuts across gender and racial experiences. Hence, this study examines how the women in the texts under study address past (and present) injustices such as gender-based violence, racism, sexism, addiction, institutional racism and abandonment during the Anglo-Boer War, and the apartheid and post-apartheid era.

1.3 South African life narratives and the nation's history

The narrators under study are female and they intimately narrate their traumatic and other lived experiences at different moments in their country's history as well as their attempts at seeking belonging with family and one's country. Notions from feminism become imperative in the analysis of the narrators' agency against oppression and their quest for belonging in South Africa. The study of life narratives allows the reader to note the narrators' lived experiences, personal and nation's history, aspirations, and search for a sense of belonging. Autobiographies expose authors not as who they were and are, but as they believe and desire themselves to be and to have been (Gusdorf, 1956:45). Therefore, the narrators' recounts of their experiences lead to self-awareness and the reconstruction of their identities.

The auto-biographers and biographer of the aforementioned texts present versions of history that serve as frameworks through which the narrators prove and construct themselves "as historical subject(s), as subject(s) in history" (Nuttall, 2006:189). These productions of their life narratives contribute to national history and historical figures (Gusdorf, 1956:45). The above mentioned texts add to the body of productions that treat citizens' experiences in the history of South African politics and culture, and explore issues related to a redefinition of South African national identity. Nuttall (2006:190) notes that "The relation between texts and the wider cultural context in which they were written is a complex one". However, it is compelling to discern the manner in which Smith, King and Msimang, engage with the country's history through the narrators' experiences, hence this study.

1.4 Memorying

Ricoeur (1996) and Clark (2010) theorise on memory, identity and justice in the narration of history. According to Ricoeur (1996:15), memory is the link between one's consciousness and the past. The process of narrating a memory attempts at resurrecting and reliving the moment of the experience (Ricoeur, 1996:20). Individuals have their own perspective of their past and memories. As a result, Smith's fictional character Susan, King and Msimang, create a glimpse into the different elements of South Africa's long history from colonialism to the present post-apartheid era, and narrate against official history. Ricoeur (1996:15) states that individual memories can lead to collective memories and speak to history. However, each narrator is impacted differently at different historical times, and this may affect the accuracy of South Africa's official history. The texts under study are mere samples of depictions of experiences in South Africa's history, and are not characteristic of the whole cultures nor South African histories (Rajan and Park, 2005:56), yet these texts are part of these histories. All three narrators have individual descriptions and multiple memories linked to trauma. This can be problematic as memory is selective, as we choose what we want to remember.

In addition, both memory and history share narrative as their linguistic medium. History can either emphasise, determine its accuracy or oppose individual or collective memory (Ricoeur, 1996:16). The speaker or hearer of a narrative needs to have "narrative hospitality". This is the process whereby the speaker or hearer imagines and has compassion for the narrator's (other's) life story. It requires kindness and renunciation in order to empathise with the "other" (Clark, 2010:4). Individuals whose narratives serve as resistance against the "official" versions of historical continuity are lost amongst these "official" versions of history. These narratives of resistance describe the painful truths of subjugations and mistreatments, and emphasise consciousness (Clark, 2010:4). Hence, much is in jeopardy as the manner in which history is narrated may implicate certain parties and a politics of truth narrated by those with counter-memories (Clark, 2010:6).

Memory and trauma are both significant issues in South Africa's colonial and apartheid pasts, and are treated as some of the major themes in the nation's literary and cultural productions. The life narrative mode is one of the platforms in which memory and trauma are recalled. An apt example is the establishment of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which hoped to create national reconciliation and justice for victims of apartheid

brutalities after the perpetrators had pleaded guilty and confessed to their crimes. Nonetheless, the TRC focused its investigation on the causes and extent of human rights violations committed between 1960 and 1994 and did not focus on the policies of apartheid, and the horrific abuse caused by the denial of freedom and discrimination of people of colour (Durbach, 2016:175). The TRC attempted to give a voice to the public through perpetrators and victims' public narratives of apartheid. Existing scholarship notes that perpetrators repressed their guilt and avoided legal punishment (Wiegandt, 2017:1-2). The feelings of shame should be experienced by perpetrators because of their crimes and not by the victims (Wiegandt, 2017:2). More importantly, perpetrators' guilt or remorse does not restore the victims' dignity nor does it result in an immediate healing from trauma (Wiegandt, 2017:3). The main protagonists under study hereafter, are all victims of the colonial (Anglo-Boer War) and apartheid injustices. They do not rely on perpetrators' sense of guilt or remorse to find healing. They instead deal with, and narrate their traumatic experiences, as well as seek reconciliation and justice on their own terms.

1.5 Trauma theory

Trauma theory covers large-scale studies on trauma, such as the Holocaust and Vietnam War, and contemporary global waves of war, revolution, and social upheaval (Khadem, 2014:144). Contemporary literary theory asserts that trauma causes shock that divides or destructs identity (Balaev, 2008:149). In addition, Sullivan (2017:156) notes that trauma occurs when "the fabric of everyday habitus and selfhood … [is] violently altered by an external event". On the contrary, Radstone (2007:17) argues that it is not the event that is most traumatic but "the meanings conferred on it 'afterwards' that may render a particular memory traumatic".

The texts that treat the theme of trauma do so in various way. In most cases, the texts demonstrate how a traumatic experience disrupts attachments between self and others by challenging important assumptions about moral laws and social relationships that are related to particular environments (Balaev, 2008:149-150). These texts represent this disruption between the self and others by "describing the place of trauma because the physical environment offers the opportunity to examine both the personal and cultural histories embedded in landscapes that define the character's identity and the meaning of the traumatic experience" (Balaev, 2008:150). The individual's personal experiences of trauma take place in a specific landscape or historical period, and the setting or historical period may influence the individual's traumatic experience, as the individual recollects his or her traumatic experiences and links it to that time or place, and may also see it as the cause of the traumatic experience.

The place anchors the individual experience within a larger cultural context and arranges the individual's memory and meaning of the individual's trauma (Balaev, 2008:150). For instance, the texts under study are set during the Anglo-Boer War, apartheid and post-apartheid perods, and both authors and the character's traumatic experiences are linked to their country and or the historical period.

Balaev (2008:152) notes that "historical traumatic experience is the source that marks and defines contemporary individual identity, as well as racial or cultural identity". The racial climate, for instance, of a particular historical period may affect the treatment of individuals based on their race, sex or nationality. This affects an individual's identity in the sense that the individual is discriminated against or upheld based on the individual's categories of identity. For instance, persons of colour were subjugated during apartheid, whilst white people were in dominant positions during apartheid. King in *Killing Karoline* experiences an internal battle in terms of her identity (parentage and race), faces discrimination in the United Kingdom (UK), and experiences perplexity around her ethnicity in South Africa. Susan in *The Camp Whore* experiences a traumatic rape while at a concentration camp and her narration of personal experiences contradicts narratives of the Anglo Boer War and lead to the reconstruction of her identity. Msimang's in *Always Another Country* experiences, through her country's history, individual traumatic and other lived experiences, a pursuit of home and belonging that contributes to the reconstruction of her identity.

Balaev (2008:159) argues that various meanings are produced from the individual's traumatic experience and the narration thereof. Balaev (2008:159) further notes that the various new meanings that stem from the traumatic experience cause "a reformulation of perception of self and world", and each author offers a different view on the "meaning of traumatic experience that emphasizes the reformulation of identity, not simply the destruction of the self". This indicates that the narrators under study make sense of their traumatic experiences and produce their interpretation of their traumatic events in their writing. The narrators share their perceptions of the self and the world, and write from a position of healing and agency, and not only focus on the harm the traumatic events cause them.

Trauma narratives can recreate the harrowing event for the reader who was not present – this allows the reader to "experience the historical experience first hand". Therefore, "[…] the trauma novel leads to a position that reconsiders the claim that trauma is unspeakable" (Balaev, 2008:162). It opposes claims such as Smith and Watson's (2001:22) that "narrators struggle to

find ways of telling about suffering […] to reassemble memories so dreadful they must be repressed for human beings to survive and function in life". The traumatic event (as it takes place) and the recollection thereof may be 'unspeakable', but once the individual narrates the experience it would no longer be unspeakable, as the narrator would have found words to share the details of the traumatic event. The study explores how the authors, Msimang and King, and the character, Susan, narrate their "unspeakable" trauma and how they construct meaning and value after their traumatic events.

1.6 Feminist theory

The feminist movement may be misinterpreted as international because of its overall aim of emancipation of all women from oppression (in terms of race, gender, class and sexuality) and forging an alliance between all nationalities (Chanda, 2005:495). However, the history of feminism, and in particular that related to the Western and International feminism, outlines attempts made at dislodging the marginalisation and subordination of some women. International feminism only focuses on the experiences of women in dominant social groups and not those in subordinate social groups. Thus, women's personal experiences are not relevant to international feminism, but rather political in the sense that they share experiences such as relationships or motherhood because of patriarchy, and not because their personal circumstances are the same (Schuster, 2017:648). International feminism focused on white, middle and upper class women in the eastern part of the United States and not women of colour, immigrant women nor descendants of female ex-slaves. History shows that white women were for instance concerned with fighting for the rights to own property, while women of colour were fighting for basic human rights (Ducille, 2006:29-30). Therefore, there is a need for women of different races, classes, nationalities and cultures to forge an alliance in order to prevent the exploitation and violation of women of colour, and to fight for the advancement of the rights of all women (Rajan and Park, 2005:59).

Feminism ignites consciousness of different forms of oppression experienced by women and empowers women to fight them all (Chanda, 2005:495). There is a need for double consciousness (two ideals of being) of both racial and gender identities that strives at simultaneously uplifting people of colour and "improving the social, cultural, moral and material conditions of women" (Ducille, 2006:36). Du Bois refers to double consciousness as the internal conflict between two consciousnesses of one individual, such as an African American's internal conflict of what makes him or her African or American (Dickson, 1992:301 & 304). Du Bois suggests a resolution to double consciousness in merging both

consciousnesses and creating a single consciousness that is better than the separated two (Dickson, 1992:306). The suggestion considers and meets an individual's needs of both conciousnesses. Ducille (2006:40) notes that "[…] black women could not depend on [white women] to represent their truths and experiences. Rather, they had to look to themselves and to each other for definition, and they had to create their own vehicles for cultural and intellectual expression". As a result, the subordinate women, marginalised because of their race and gender, are doubly in the shadow (Spivak, 1988:84), and need to fight for the acknowledgement of their personal narratives that are true to their experiences. The auto-biographers, Msimang and King, and Smith's fictional character, Susan, are analysed in terms of their double consciousness, King and Msimang as South African women of colour, and Smith's character, Susan, as a white and South African woman. All three women fight to improve their social, cultural, moral and material conditions they are deprived of because of their race and sex.

The notion of the need for marginalised women to craft narratives that are true to their experiences brings in another aspect, which is the articulation of the truth, significant in this study. Mason (1980:207-208) argues that female biographers write life narratives because they are women and find it necessary to defend their excursions into life narratives. In the process they disclose information and tell their version of their historical truth. Jolly (1995:26) states that whatever "truth" is narrated about South Africa (in the case of this study, the Anglo-Boer War and the apartheid and early post-apartheid history of South Africa), the marginalised and abused have a sense of "falsehood" during the production and reproduction of events. As a result, it is necessary for narrators to tell their own "truth" and narrate experiences from their perspective. The intention then in this study is to unpack how the authors of some of the texts under study wrote their life narratives as a way of sharing their experiences, expressing their true lived experiences, building their identity, and an attempt at healing from their trauma.

Most women's life narratives focus on the stereotypical categorisation of women as the inferior other. The female authors are aware of their experiences and how these lead to their constitution as the "other" and instead write about their otherness as a form of agency. Mason (1980:210) notes that female authors acknowledge "the real presence and recognition of another consciousness, and the disclosure of the female self is linked to the identification of some 'other'". As a result, their recognition of this otherness allows them to write openly about their experiences (Mason, 1980:210). This underlines women's agency that answers Spivak's (1988) discussion on the ownership of those rendered subaltern, as the women writers speak for

themselves. Women's writing of their life narratives contributes to the exploration of their identities and indicates their determination to try and control their destiny (Mason, 1980:223).

The texts under study consider the reflection of one's identity in terms of how some categories of one's identity, such as race or gender, either contribute to one's experiences of marginalisation or privilege. It is clear that, while women educate themselves about their country's history, they also need to be cognisant of their marginalisation and how this shapes the views of themselves. The end of apartheid led to the liberation of Africans and yet, other categories of identities such as race (white) and gender (male) are still privileged and dominate over others. Therefore, although Africans fight and succeed in being recognised in society, women may continue to be marginalised based on their gender (Kandiyoti, 1991:434-435). The fight to enhance women's conditions becomes a continuous one and writing about their experiences is one way of healing and educating others. Hence, the depiction of women's life experiences and the use of the life narrative mode serves as a form of agency as the protagonists and narrators are their own representatives, and own the story of their experiences whilst allowing for the representation of personal and social history and memory (Aurell and Davis, 2019:508). In addition, life narratives create a space "[…] where oppressed subjects speak, act and know *for themselves* […]" (Spivak, 1988:71, emphasis in original). Cixous (1975:319-323) states that women should partake in writing to regain ownership of their narrative and bodies, and place themselves within their narratives, the universe and history in order to gain their voice. The writing of one's own narrative, and by extension, the focalising of a female protagonist's experiences, allows for the restoration of subjectivity of both, and their refusal to continue suffering from the effects of their trauma (Borg, 2018:448). In addition, Jensen (2019:602) notes that subjectivity encompasses the urge to tell of the self and the process of self-construction. The task at hand is to examine how the selected texts map the process of women's writing and experiences and how these act as a means to render women visible and highlight both their historical value and that of their narratives.

The link between feminism and the female writer's process of making sense of one's experiences and confronting one's trauma is also significant here. Life narratives expose the nature of the aforementioned narrators' personalities and experiences with feminism assisting in mapping their subject formation. Sara Ahmed's text, *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), assists me in framing the issues of trauma and memory in the abovementioned texts. Ahmed's work allows for critical thinking, building supportive relationships with others and fighting against

solid histories (Ahmed, 2017:1) about feminist living, and thinking through different kinds of feminist activities within the broader South African context. Feminism equips women with hope and energy to refuse and rebel against marginalisation. Living a feminist life is about questioning our unjust and unequal world. The key concepts relevant in Ahmed's work are: feminism as sensational, wilfulness and feminist subjectivity, the feminist killjoy and feminist snap. Interestingly, Ahmed (2017) refers to feminists' labelling as overreacting when addressing issues such as inequality, sexism, and racism, and having to deal with these labels and negative comments when addressing these issues. Ahmed has an interesting take on feminism and the sensational, which states that feminism is ignited with a sense of issues, hence it is sensational. Issues such as inequality and prejudice cause great public interest and ignite feminists to respond, hence this public interest in combatting inequality is sensational. As a result, feminism is a functional reaction to the inequalities in the world, as we need to make sense of what does not make sense (Ahmed, 2017:21). I analyse how the selected narratives depict the women protagonists' attempt at making sense of their lives and injustices at different moments in the history of South Africa.

Ironically, feminists receive backlashes despite their attempts at fighting against injustices. They are perceived as wilful because they "irrationally" stress their own will against influence, order or command. Being wilful is seen as a way for feminists to "get their way", and not being acknowledged for the impact they can make by addressing injustices (Ahmed, 2017:71). Patriarchy always tries to control this "will" or put it in order. This means that, being wilful to stand in the way of existing injustices leads to feminists being perceived as killjoys, as they are "obstacles" to others' happiness and getting in the way of others' investments (Ahmed, 2017:65-66). Being wilful can also be read as "[…] not being willing to be owned" (Ahmed, 2017:74). There are individuals and institutions that assume they own other individuals, refuse to work, nor provide service, for another individual or institution, and hence viewed as rebellious. Feminists need to be wilful in speaking out against injustices and resisting being silenced (Wall, 2018:575). Consequently, not being available for others' use, suggests that one is for oneself – following one's own will. This decision to defy oppression and ensuring the happiness and interests of oneself and others affected, causes unhappiness for the oppressors – the strategy of the killjoy (Ahmed, 2017:74-75). The process of exposing issues is seen as posing a problem and taking the focus away from the actual problem while focusing on the feminist "killjoy" who complicates things for him or herself and others (Ahmed, 2017:141-

142). Therefore, the aim is to defy these judgements and to continue questioning and rebelling against injustices – becoming more of a feminist killjoy.

It is necessary for feminists to snap, and to speak angrily and harshly, when they have had enough, if the strategy gives them the opportunity to be heard (Ahmed, 2017:190). Wall (2018:575) states that all feminists have a breaking or snapping point where they refuse to reproduce an unjust world and to consider what that snap was or will be for individuals. This snap refers to refusing to laugh at a sexist joke, or quitting a job that requires you to do social work for the upliftment of women but finding out that there is no community work being done. This snap results in a "killjoy" moment for the feminist, as the feminist is "killing" the joy of the oppressor. Accordingly, feminists are required to step up and embody the "killjoy" in order to fight for equality in an unjust and sexist society (Wall, 2018:575). The auto-biographers, King and Msimang, and the fictional character, Susan, in the texts under study, each experience snapping points in their narratives. Msimang fights against institutional racism, King contacts her biological mother and confronts her feelings of rejection and abandonment, and Susan snaps and kills one of her perpetrators.

A feminist should be willing to cause unhappiness for perpetrators of injustice (Ahmed, 2017:258). The reality is that being silent about injustice does not protect feminists and those they are fighting for; rather, it protects the perpetrators of injustice. Injustice is reproduced by silence, especially the silence of those who witness injustice but choose to remain silent. These witnesses of injustice usually remain silent because of the consequences of identifying and speaking up against it that include losing networks, relationships, employment and even being labelled as a killjoy (Ahmed, 2017:260). Therefore, speaking out bears the cost of being ridiculed for being a "killjoy" and risks the relationships and ties that one has with others, especially if the people one is in relations with are silent about injustice or if they are oppressors themselves. The intention, therefore, is to analyse whether the narrators in the texts under study here all speak up against the injustice they and others in their country experience, and evaluate if they are also perceived as killjoys by their relatives, friends, colleagues and strangers for questioning and rebelling against gender-based violence, prejudice and inequality during historical moments such as the Anglo Boer War and apartheid. A further objective here is to examine the applicability of what Ahmed (2017:262-263) refers to as "killjoys" in the analysis of the authors' focus on their countries' history, as well as whether their recollections are wilful and they are accused of standing in the way of peace and reconciliation. Nonetheless, it is

important to note that these texts willingly speak up and address histories of, and continuing injustices, in the search for a resolution to the authors' and characters' trauma and oppression.

1.7 Women's writing as an act of subjectivity

Various studies (Chiweshe, 2018; Norwood, 2013; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002; Msimang, 2002; and Bozzoli, 1983) outline the way in which men and other repressive institutions from various regions of the world, in particular the West, seek to dominate over women. Bartels, et al., (2019:158) refer to the west's aim to preserve itself as the sovereign subject through the marginalisation of people of colour, as it allows for the production of white subjectivity. Here, the oppressed do not represent themselves but are represented by their oppressors. De Beauvoir (1949:258) refers to Poulain de la Barre's statement: "All that has been written about women by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuit". Men are oppressors in general and in particular, the narrators and oppressors of women's history they narrate (Spivak, 1988:71). As a result, Smith's interpretation of Susan's experiences in his text, *The Camp Whore*, may be treated with suspicion by some readers as it is a male's account of a female's experience. However, the text is written from an ethical/philosophical standpoint, representing the female character's experiences as she deals with trauma and seeks to survive, hence he is male but positions the female character at the centre of the events and constitution of agency and subject formation. Spivak (1988:66) stresses the importance of the other's discourse through transformation into 'object being[s]', that are allowed to speak and thus becoming the subject. Spivak (in Bartels et al, 2019:159) refers to the subaltern as women who are victims to western discourses in the sense that they have a voice but do not have a subject position outside imperial discourse (and in the case of this study, outside apartheid) to construct themselves as subjects. Furthermore, Spivak (in Bartels et al, 2019:159) suggests that women claim agency by being empowered to "fight for specific interests in temporary alliances and marks their entry into discourse as speaking subjects". In this way, women will resist marginalisation and ensure their subjectivity (Bartels et al, 2019:159).

However, there are established conditions under which the other is permitted to speak (Spivak, 1988:69). Earlier feminists such as Woolf (1938:223) and recent ones such as Derbel (2019) note the limitations suffered by women writers in that they are permitted to write but are censored by men and the media. The reality here is that women are given freedom but with

conditions. If one can relate the reproduction of labour power in relation to the position of women, one observes that the oppressor (or patriarchy) requires the reproduction of women's submission to patriarchy and their experiences of manipulation, abuse and oppression with the aim of increasing patriarchal domination (Spivak, 1988:68). Censorship serves as a mode of silencing, oppressing and prohibiting women from circulating their views that may challenge patriarchal, social, religious and political systems (Derbel, 2019:56). Women can fight against patriarchy by rejecting patriarchal notions, reason and theories, and questioning patriarchal systems of thought, assumptions, values and definitions (Gangoli, 2017:133). The texts under study speak out against structures and notions that previously defined women, institutional racism, sexual violation and marginalisation, and underscore women's agency.

According to Smith and Watson (2001:114), women were suppressed by men to public silence and took to writing as a means of exercising their right to freedom of speech, and to proclaim and explore their identity publicly. The women's act of writing about their experiences serves as a testimony of human agency. The process of writing about these experiences contributes to their healing from trauma. The task is to unpack how the narrators of the aforementioned texts recall their trauma and express their feelings of abandonment, prejudice and oppression as a means of survival and agency. Smith and Watson (2001:22) note further that the process of writing enables the writer to find "words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable". Writing provides the author psychological relief through the expression of their emotions (Smith and Watson, 2001:22). People writing about their suffering make narrative sense of the trauma they would have experienced or are currently experiencing in their lives. They gain healing from writing about their experiences as they reflect on their trauma and commit to personal growth, and hopefully experiencing happiness thereafter (McAdams and McLean, 2013:243). I analyse the ways in which the auto-biographers and the fictional character in the texts under study speak out against the structures and notions that define(d) them, and the ways in which they deal with their trauma and reclaim their agency.

1.8 Research methodology and problem

This study, which is mainly a desktop one, uses a qualitative critical textual analytical research method. I reviewed the available studies in journals, books and other relevant texts to substantiate my exploration of South African women's literary and cultural narratives on experiences in history, and about trauma and agency. In addition, the approach allows for a close textual analysis of King's *Killing Karoline*, Msimang's *Always Another Country* and

Smith's *The Camp Whore* based on studies of life narratives, feminist theory, and concepts on trauma.

The study's research problem relates to agency, noted by Moore (2016:1&7) as the willingness and ability to fight against oppression and one's actions that give rise to feelings of consciousness and freedom, which in the texts under study is depicted through recollecting and narrating memories. Therefore, the research, which draws mostly on life narratives and the feminist concepts, focuses on the representation of the gendered subject, their specific experiences in history and everyday life, and the different ways in which the narrators attempt to resist existing oppressions, engage in memory making and healing, and reconstitute themselves.

1.9 Research Objectives

The study considers various objectives that are linked to the above outlined research problem. These are:

To describe the depicted women's specific personal experiences and unpack how this links with the constitution of self-awareness and belonging in their society.

To evaluate the narrators' life experiences through their country's history, their individual traumatic, and other lived experiences, and how this leads to the reconstruction of their identities.

To evaluate how the narrators claim their place in historical events and the way their narratives engage with official histories.

These objectives will assist in developing an analysis of the ways in which the auto-biographers, King and Msimang, and Smith's fictional character, Susan, resist their oppressions, engage in memory making and healing, and reconstitute themselves.

1.10 Chapter Outline

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 defines the research problem and engages in a review of related literature. The chapter also outlines the theoretical framework used in the analysis of the selected South African life narratives.

Chapter 2 focuses on the feminist reading of Smith's *The Camp Whore.* It analyses the fictional character Susan's experiences of oppression and displacement owing to the rape at a

concentration camp, and considers Susan's actions as she strives to change and transform her life.

Chapter 3 examines King's *Killing Karoline*. It explores Kings upbringing as an adopted child in the UK as she is born from a multi-racial relationship deemed illegal under apartheid. The analysis considers the politics of belonging and citizenship, and reflects on the public reshaping of King's South African identity.

Chapter 4 analyses Sisonke Msimang' *Always Another Country* and focuses on her upbringing in exile and life at home in South Africa. It focuses on Msimang's longing, and pride, for her country, and unpacks her reflections on personal experiences of injustice and rage against the ANC in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter five concludes the study.

Chapter 2 – Susan's sense of agency: rape victim to victor in *Smith's The Camp Whore*

2.1 Introduction

Francois Smith's *The Camp Whore* draws on Nico Moolman's novel *The Boer Whore* (2012), which narrates the "real life" experiences of Susan Nell, including her rape by two British officers and a joiner on 01 January 1902 during the Anglo-Boer War at the Winburg concentration camp. Moolman's text, although considered a novel, includes the factual events of Susan Nell's experiences. It is supported by photographs of graves, amongst other photographs by Susan Nell's friend, Perry, who travelled with Susan by train to Cape Town when she left the cave, and years later, during the 1950's, accompanied her to visit Winburg (Human-Nel, 2016:177).

The novel forms part of the creation of an archive about the effects of the war on Afrikaner women and the writing of history itself. Smith based his novel on the factual events of Susan Nell, as documented in Moolman's novel, and takes it a step further. Smith places himself in the shoes of Susan Nell and writes about her thoughts, emotions, and how she deals with her trauma. He imagines what would have happened if Susan Nell had met her rapists years after her rape, and questions whether Susan Nell would have used the opportunity to take revenge (Human-Nel, 2016:178). Smith writes: "While in Europe, Susan came across both her rapists, the first during The First World War in a military hospital in Devon, and the second during the Kwai River Tribunals held after the Second World War" (Smith, 2017). Thus, Smith's philosophical standpoint is one of representing the female character's experiences as she deals with trauma and seek to survive. The author is male but positions the female character at the centre of the events and constitution of agency, and subject formation. Smith depicts his character's lived experiences in an empathetic way and thus invokes sympathy toward his character, Susan. The novelist works with possibilities of the protagonist's survival and thus writes from a position of awareness of the feminist perspective. Ignoring Smith's empathy towards Susan would be damaging to the significance that Susan's narrative offers. Lange (2008:2) notes that female criticism emphasises the notion that men are unable to imagine women's experiences and to be empathetic. However, discrediting men from writing about

women's experiences deprives the narrators of the opportunity to share others' experiences and to transform silence into action, hence the inclusion of this text in this study.

Smith's *The Camp Whore* is set within the historical, social and political context noted above. The text is fragmented, each chapter either narrates Susan's experiences in the concentration camp or in the cave at Winburg in South Africa, or during her travels to Cape Town and Bloemfontein, at her residence in the Netherlands, at Devon in England or during her visit back to Winburg, South Africa. It also contains flashbacks of Susan's traumatic rape by British officials and a "joiner" while incarcerated in the Winburg concentration camp, and those on her journey of recovery in the cave and her experiences in the Netherlands and England. The novel highlights the presence of Boer women in the historical narrative about subordination and violence suffered by Afrikaners during the Second Boer War of 1899-1902 as symbolised by the rape of Susan. It should also be noted that Boer women were not equal to their male counterparts in terms of economic and social upward mobility, and yet Susan challenges this narrative through obtaining her education and working as a psychiatric nurse. Boje (2016:19) notes the following on the real-life rape incident of Susan Nell: "[s]ymbolically the rape of Susan Nell represents the rape of the nation, an outrage that can only be assuaged by an apology from the British head of state". Thus, bearing in mind that the British colonised the Boers during the Anglo-Boer War, the statement suggests that Susan represents the Afrikaner nation, with her rape by British soldiers symbolising the British's invasion of South African land. This act of invasion could only be assuaged through the British and the Boers' peace negotiations to end the Anglo-Boer War. Nonetheless, the real-life events of Susan Nell do not directly translate to the novel, for the fictional character Susan's perpetrator, Hamilton-Peake, continues working for the military after raping Susan, with no reports or consequences of his actions mentioned. Therefore, the lack of perpetrator accountability and the way society demeans survivors of rape stand out in this fictional text as some of the major challenges faced by rape survivors that undermine efforts to speak out about their experiences.

Nevertheless, Smith's *The Camp Whore* is a biographical text that vividly describes the fictional character, Susan's experiences related to her rape during the Anglo-Boer War. Susan's narration is centred on the events surrounding the Anglo-Boer War and its aftermath whose major events include Susan's father leaving their place of residence with the Kroonstad commando, and the forced relocation with her mother and her brother to the Winburg concentration camp. On 1 January 1902, one of Susan's rapists pulls Susan by her leg into a

tent in the concentration camp (Smith, 2017:63), where she is raped by two British officials and a “joiner”. Susan is declared dead by the British and disposed of with other deceased inhabitants of the Winburg concentration camp. The novel portrays her trauma, feelings of shame, and pain after the sexual violation she experiences at the hands of the two British officials and a Boer soldier. Mamello and Tiisetso rescue and take care of her until she recovers. Susan then undergoes shifting qualities and senses of the self throughout the fictional biography, from being victimised, bitter and vulnerable and hopeful after Mamello and Tiisetso send her on a journey to Bloemfontein, and then Cape Town to start a new life removed from violence, and marked by hope and healing. Later, Susan travels to the Netherlands and studies to become a psychiatric nurse. After her education, Susan Nell is employed at Seale-Hayne Hospital, a British military hospital in Devon, England, during the First World War, where she encounters one of her rapists, Hamilton-Peake. Therefore, this chapter analyses the representation of Susan’s experience of rape, and the forms of oppression and domination that her experience of rape suggest, and determines the significance of the experiences in shaping Susan’s decisions, especially the conscious action to transform her life. The novel may be read as a historical novel based on events during the Second Boer War, focusing on the experiences of Afrikaner women. It may also be read as a fictional narrative drawing on the "real" experiences of Susan Nell, who the novel is based on. My focus in this study is on Susan's experiences of oppression, trauma, and her recollection thereof, which are considered from a feminist perspective.

I draw on both the feminist and life narratives theories in my analysis of the traumatic experiences that Susan endures in the concentration camp during the Anglo-Boer War. The key concepts considered here are gender and identity reformation, experiences of oppression, trauma, and domination brought about by rape, and the agency derived from these experiences. Susan creates a new identity for herself by transitioning from her marginal position as an inhabitant of the Winburg concentration camp and rape victim, to taking charge of her life, educating herself, and taking up a profession as a psychiatric nurse. Susan’s actions expose the evilness of rape and her bold attempts to prevent rape from crippling her; instead, she takes ownership of her life and deals with her trauma. In addition, Susan’s narrative takes a stand against British colonisers and the forms of patriarchy and masculinity (rape and sexism) she experiences. Feminist theory enables me to examine the experiences associated with Susan's realisation of her marginal experiences and her determination to gain healing and liberation. I

argue that although Susan encounters feelings of shame, pain, and violation during her experiences, she transitions from feelings of marginalisation to empowerment, by taking back control over her life from her perpetrators. Susan gains empowerment through her education, profession as a psychiatric nurse, and avenging her perpetrator. This chapter examines Susan's experiences of oppression and trauma during the AngloBoer War, and her recollection thereof, which are considered from a feminist perspective. Radstone and Hodgkin (2017) argue that speech/language may lead to healing after traumatic experiences. The chapter also examines the way Susan struggles towards healing and liberation from past trauma through narration. Radstone and Hodgkin (2017:2) note that memory can obscure or strengthen our comprehension "of subjectivity, of history or of the mind". Thus, the feminist theory and notions on narration and memory assist in unpacking Susan's traumatic rape experience in the concentration camp and how her experiences contribute to, and contradict narratives of the Anglo-Boer War, and lead to the reconstruction of her identity. Language fails as a medium for remembrance because of its obscurity, lack of transparency and absoluteness (Radstone and Hodgkin, 2017:6). Hence Susan's inability to convey her rape through language. Furthermore, "memory has been conceived as a storage space and as an internal writing" (Radstone and Hodgkin, 2017:6). Susan possesses vivid memories of her rape in the camp and is the bearer of her narrative. Memory is considered the "other" of history and as arbitrate, evasive and almost inaccessible writing (Radstone and Hodgkin, 2017:9). Thus, Smith's text is only made possible through Susan's sharing of her narrative. Susan breaks through the challenge of an internalised trauma through her speaking about it, which is later transformed into a written narrative that conveys her experiences and becomes an act of healing.

2.2 The Anglo-Boer War: the history, nature and women's experiences

The Anglo-Boer War is a significant event in South Africa's history, and Smith's novel, *The Camp Whore* is set in the Anglo-Boer War. During the Anglo-Boer War, the British burned down the homesteads of the *Boers* and their labourers and left them displaced (Wessels, 2016:163). As 'compensation' for their deeds, the British set up concentration camps in South Africa during 1899, housing destitute *Boers*, mostly women and children, and their workers (Krebs, 1992:39). In the novel, the focal event that takes place in the concentration camp is Susan's rape. This is intentional, considering the title of the novel. The "whore" in the title refers to Susan, and the "camp" refers to the Winburg concentration camp. The camp

symbolises the setting of Susan's rape and referring to Susan as "*the* [emphasis added] camp whore", singles out and objectifies Susan. Thus, the title foreshadows Susan's rape in the camp. Smith does not sufficiently expose the historical harm done by the term 'whore' in his novel. Smith however, notes (Van Merwe, C. N., Gobodo-Madikizela, P. and Smith, F, 2015: https://www.litnet.co.za/remembering-and-forgetting-reflections-on-francois-smiths-novel-kamphoer/) that the title of the novel is *The Camp Whore* because the concept 'whore' haunts Susan, she questions whether she is a whore because that is what her perpetrators call her. As noted in chapter 1, the British colonies competed for South African land during the Anglo-Boer War and won against Afrikaner states. The British ruled from 1900-1948 and were substituted during 1948 by Afrikaner Nationalists who then introduced apartheid (Wessels, 2016:162). According to South African History Online (2011), the British were outnumbered by Black South Africans and this deterred the British from destroying the Boers. Upon this realisation, the Boers allied with the British to ensure racial domination. As a result, the British and the Boers agreed to generous terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging and relations between South Africa and Britain were strengthened through the National convention of 1908. The National convention of 1908 was put in place to "foster closer relation between the four colonies with regard to policies concerning labour, the relationship between Britain and South Africa, education, fostering equality between Afrikaans/Dutch and English and the question of extending franchise to Black South Africans" (South African History Online, 2011). This convention created the underpinnings of the Union of South Africa and its laws. On 31 May 1910, the British and Afrikaners united to form the Union of South Africa, which was a direct outcome of the Treaty of Vereeniging. Thus, the post-war negotiations between the British and *Boers* created 'peace' and enabled both to gain property and maintain their rule over non-Europeans (Wessels, 2016:166). Finally, the end of the Anglo-Boer War gave way to a post-Anglo-Boer war race-based colonial territorial divisions and development, which marked the earliest stage of the apartheid ideology that was introduced by the Afrikaner Nationalists in 1948. Apartheid comprised of separate developments namely, the Cape Province, Natal, Orange Free State, and the Transvaal, each was separated by race (United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, 1978:11). The black majority were denied their political rights and were economically exploited. Black women in particular, experienced oppression based on race, class and gender (Unterhalter, 1983:887). The majority of the laws that warranted white rule, such as The Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, applied to both men and women. These and other acts ensured a racially segregated government, divisions in education according to race, as well

as the pass system which controlled the mobility, housing and employment opportunities of people of colour (Unterhalter, 1983:887).

The position of women and children is significant in the history, politics, and imaginings of the Anglo-Boer War. In the year 1906, former Free State President, M.T. Steyn introduced the idea of erecting a national memorial commemorating the *Boer* women and children victimised by the war (Cloete, 1992:47). Ironically, Steyn was also one of the forces behind the subordination and support of women in building the *volk* (Afrikaner nationalism) (Cloete, 1992:48). Nonetheless, the National Women's Monument was erected in Bloemfontein, Free State, in honour of the 26 000 *Boer* women and children who died in the concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer War. It should be noted that only the *Boer* women and children who died in concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer War, and not the women and children of colour who also died, were commemorated (Cloete, 1992:47-48). Approximately 6 000 *Boer* men died on the battlefields, as inmates of war and due to illnesses or accidents (Cloete, 1992:47). More women and children died in the camps than men on the battlefields. However, the severity of the deaths of women and children was not as attended to in a manner that was expected. Furthermore, the erection of the monument only serves as a memorial of the deceased but does not contribute to gender equity which seeks to give the women and children who survived the Anglo-Boer War the dignity and social capital they deserve. *Boer* women were seen as heroic as the men but in a different way. This is because *Boer* women were not freed from the adversities of the frontline. They suffered attacks from their nation's adversaries, organised the *laager,* took care of their households, tended the injured, were involved in casting bullets and handled firearms. Despite all these efforts and endurances, the women were only viewed as patriots and not as equals to the men (Kuitenbrouwer, 2012:78). Thus, the *Boer* women in the concentration camps were commemorated as heroines but heroines of distress and maladies, who served as inspiration to their husbands in the plain and the battlegrounds (Cloete, 1992:49).

Women experienced a trajectory of suffering from the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Patriarchy dominates Afrikaner and African women's lives socially and politically. The black majority were denied their political rights and were economically exploited. Black women, in particular, experienced oppression in terms of race, class, and gender (Unterhalter, 1983:887). The concern for black women was not prioritised as they were placed in the same category as their male counterparts - subordinate. Cloete (1992:45) notes that patriarchy cuts across race, class, and caste lines. Despite the Afrikaners' dominance during apartheid, the Afrikaner

women suffered under patriarchy. This is ironic as the women had played a role in the formation of Afrikaner nationalism's *volks*-ideal. The women took care of their families, supported their husbands on the battlefield, and lived in poor conditions, and yet, they were not equal to their male counterparts economically, socially, and politically during, before, and after the Anglo-Boer War. Earlier in the year 1843, a designation of *Boer* women "confronted the British High Commissioner in Natal and demanded a say in the affairs of state in the colony" (Cloete, 1992:48). The women requested that their participation in battles fought with their husbands, be restored with their right to vote in all government matters, as promised by the British High Commissioner (Cloete, 1992:48). Later on, as stated in chapter 1, the *Boers* agreed to become British subjects to maintain property and freedom, at the end of the Anglo-Boer War. However, the *Boer* women, perhaps drawing from the 1843 spirit, refused to be British subjects. Their refusal can be seen, from a feminist perspective, as an act of resistance against subordination by the British and their *Boer* male counterparts.

2.3 Trauma and memorying

Susan's narrative serves as a fictional and national narrative of resistance and indictment of the English. Her painful truths of subjugation through sexual violation and sexism, and her mistreatment by the British officials in the Winburg camp during the Anglo-Boer War, emphasise consciousness (Clark, 2010:4). Her narrative emphasises the consciousness of the oppressed women who experienced oppression based on their sex and social class, as well as the conditions women endured during the Anglo-Boer War. Susan is conscious of her sexual violation and the trauma it caused but lacks the language to name what happened to her - rape. Throughout the novel, Susan does not refer to her experience as "rape" but rather vaguely refers to it or compares it to that of the slaughtering of animals, and aptly so considering the violation in both scenarios. Later in Chapter 5 of the novel, we meet Susan working as a psychiatric nurse at Seale-Hayne Hospital in Devon, England, treating soldiers affected by shellshock, whilst being confronted by her trauma. Susan is faced with an internal conflict, as she defines herself by her sexual violation, whilst trying to confront and make sense of her trauma and carve new meanings of her identity as a nurse.

Smith's depictions of Susan's narration of experiences during the Anglo-Boer War document and provide an insight (although fictional) into the period's historical figures and moments. Susan offers her perspective on events and not necessarily the "true" occurrence of historical

events (Smith and Watson, 2001:10). She shares her personal experiences during the Anglo-Boer War and describes how her experience of rape and other experiences contribute to the constitution of trauma and agency. Many deaths occurred at the concentration camps and as a result, the public referred to the camps as "death camps" (Krebs, 1992:45). The British opposed this and referred to the camps as internment camps, as it was ostensibly not the British intention for the camps' inhabitants to die (Wessels, 2016:163). Susan's narrative opposes this notion, as she was raped in the camp, declared dead and disposed of thereafter. Her narrative thus brings light to the inaccuracy of the British notion, as she was "killed" by her perpetrators just as the others such as her mother, brother, and her friend, Alice Draper, who died in the concentration camp. This is indicative of women's narratives in history that prove and construct themselves "as historical subject(s), as subject(s) in history" (Nuttall, 2006:189) and contribute to national history (Gusdorf, 1956:45). Therefore, Susan's narrative is one of resistance, as it narrates the painful truths of subjugations and mistreatments, and emphasises consciousness (Clark, 2010:4). In addition, Susan's experience of sexual violation in the concentration camp challenges the idea that the camp provided safety, a home and warmth for its occupants as it is depicted as a camp of sexual violation and death.

In the novel, Susan's father leaves their place of residence with the Kroonstad commando from Uncle Thys's farm (their place of residence), which is a move that forces Susan, her mother, and her brother to seek shelter at the Winburg concentration camp. On 1 January 1902, Susan is raped by two British officials and a "joiner". The concentration camps are described as "*Balla Bosiu*, the place where they weep at night, that is what they call it" (Smith, 2017:28) - perhaps referring to the suffering endured by the inhabitants of the Winburg concentration camp. Susan situates her brutal rape in the camp within this idiom of trauma and suffering. In the first instance of Susan's recollection of her rape experience, she compares it to that of the slaughtering of a sheep. She describes it thus, "[t]he man who caught me like a sheep between the tents and pulled me by my leg to the place of slaughter while I kicked and kicked and kicked" (Smith, 2017:63). The comparison with a sheep captured for slaughter portrays Susan as meek and innocent on one level, while her kicking reflects her resistance to the sexual violation. However, the violation instils shame in her. According to Gqola (2015:40) "[…] shame is produced through slavery, colonialism and the conquest that comes from these". Susan's shame is linked to her status as a camp inhabitant in the Winburg concentration camp under the British colonial military and mainly as a victim of rape. In addition, Susan thinks to herself during recollections thus: "Whore is my name!" (Smith, 2017:63). She takes on what

her perpetrator called her, "whore", as her name and internalises it as part of her identity. She further recalls: "He said it! He said it to me. That is what I am" (Smith, 2017:63). Taking the identity given by her perpetrator shows that she is defining herself by her violation. However, at the end of the narrative, she no longer recollects her experience and defies the categorisation as a 'whore', thus showing her transformed self, born of own action.

Susan's emotional response to her experience of rape shows how it affects her greatly. She is aware of what exactly happened but does not blatantly refer to it as rape. She vaguely refers to her experience of rape: "I was crying, and I know it is because something very bad happened to me. And I also know what happened, but I'm getting better now and that's what is most important, that I become completely healthy again" (Smith, 2017:114). She refers to it as "something bad" (Smith, 2017:114) that happened to her. Susan's vague description of her rape indicates the failure of language to convey her pain. Thomas' (2007:119) review of van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela's book, *Narrating our healing-perspectives on working through trauma* (2007) notes that: "trauma defies language; it resists being communicated". The statement explains Susan's inability to talk about her rape. Gqola argues that (2015:145) "[...] feelings of shame, guilt, and self-blame are very common. Those who seem to continue as though unaffected are in denial, in a state of shock or trying to block out the rape". Susan is traumatised by her rape and ends up unintentionally repressing her memories. According to Liem (2007:159), "the absence of dialogue is not an indication of the loss of memory". As a result, Susan can recall the memory of her rape, but language fails to verbally describe what exactly took place.

Furthermore, Susan's internalisation and the shame she feels about her rape are typical of the way society blames and shames survivors of rape and other violations of women. Shame teaches and cultivates silence and the subordination of women. This resonates with Liem's (2007:153) statement that: "Silence about historical trauma is common among survivors, often creating impediments to healing and recovery". In addition, feeling shame "is 'easier' than remembering the complex myriad of collective traumas which precede the present" (Gqola, 2010:22). As a result, it is "easier" for Susan to take the shame upon herself than to confront the trauma she has experienced and calling it by its name, "rape", nor to realise the physical, psychological and emotional damage it has caused her. However, the shame leads to Susan's subordination and stunts her healing process. It is clear in the novel that Susan is subjected, through the rape, to a patriarchal act of violation of a woman's body, and worse still, patriarchy

is strengthened through Susan's silence and sense of shame. Susan's perpetrator violates her through rape, degrades her by naming her a "whore" and she internalises this degradation and humiliation by calling herself a whore. Her perpetrator's violation functions to break her and name-shame her, shifting her focus from being aware that she has been violated to shaming herself for it. This invokes Gqola's (2015:43) argument that rape traumatises the women affected and reminds them of their subordination to men. Gqola (2015:37-38) notes further that survivors end up being the ones who carry the shame of being raped instead of the perpetrators being ashamed of their sexual violence. Susan is indeed placed in a position of subordination by her perpetrator through her violation and the shame she endures.

After some time in the camp, Susan's mother, brother, and friend, Alice Draper, die. A brutally sexually violated Susan is also declared dead by a doctor and British military officials in the camp. Susan, along with other bodies is carted off in a wagon to the morgue. Fortunately, Mamello and Tiisetso come across Susan and take her to their cave. Mamello and Tiisetso are two black characters who reside in a cave near the Winburg concentration camp. The role of black people in the novel is limited to these two characters. This is an ironic silencing of the suffering of people of colour during the Anglo-Boer War and their marginalisation. As noted in Chapter 1, historical records show that the British burned down the villages of black labourers during the Anglo Boer War and left over a hundred thousand black citizens in destitution (Wessels, 2016:163). Further historical evidence shows that women and children of colour were kept in these camps because it was a requirement for the British military to clear Africans from districts (Krebs, 1992:52). Nonetheless, Smith portrays Mamello and Tiisetso as Susan's saviours, healers, and protectors, which is significant to the text, as they help Susan on her journey of recovery. However, limiting the roles of black people in the novel to these two characters and focusing only on Afrikaner history, silences the oppression black people experienced during the Anglo Boer War.

Mamello and Tiisetso play a significant role in Susan's healing, but Smith shows that it was never an easy healing process. Susan's trauma recurs and this is depicted in an event where she again associates her rape with that of an animal being slaughtered during an evening in which she, Mamello, and Tiisetso dance around the fire while slaughtering a guinea fowl:

> […] I am being dragged by the leg between the tents and shoved into the camp supervisor's brightly lit tent, and at the table are two Khakis, I know them, I see them every day, and Krisjan Schutte the joiner shouts here she is, the camp whore, here she

> is and he throws me down on the floor, and one of the Khaki's grab me by the hair and pulls me up, and I grab at his jacket and a button, a gold button comes off and rolls onto the tarpaulin and Schutte falls to his knees to pick it up, and the three of them, Schutte and the two Khakis, pin me to the bed and they pull my dress up and over my head so that I cannot see anything and now I know what they are going to do, […] and I feel it before it actually happens and I pull my head out from under my dress and what they are doing I have not learnt the words for yet, I cannot say it, […] (Smith, 2017:143-144).

The visible scars and reminders of rape cannot be erased but might heal and perhaps be commemorated positively. The emotional and psychological scars can only be dealt with solely by the victim (Gqola, 2015:15). McAdams and McLean (2013:233) note the significance of performances of feeling in life narratives (in this case, a fictional narrative) where the character shares her or his experience of trauma with a new sense of agency and hope for healing. However, there is no guarantee that the narrator would have completely overcome his or her sense of shame or traumatic experiences. Susan's rape may be too traumatic for her to comprehend. Thus, commissions such as the TRC were established to represent victims and contribute to the process of reconciliation by ensuring that silenced victims can share their past experiences (Liem, 2007:153). Radstone and Hodgkin **(**2017:2) note that unlike in the early modern period where memory-making was left to and private realm, "[i]n contemporary memory studies, the focus falls not only on individual, private memory, but on historical, social, cultural and popular memory, too". Commissions such as the TRC recognise the contribution of individual experiences to historical narratives. The tension during the early modern period on the relation between private memories and the public sphere is the challenge of interpreting individual memories in the public sphere (Radstone and Hodgkin, 2017:8). The TRC is put in place to interpret individual memories to the public. Smith's novel accounts for the public memory of the Anglo-Boer War. However, there is a weakness in Smith's narrative. As aforementioned, Boje (2016:19) argues that Susan's rape represents the rape of the nation and that this act of invasion could only be assuaged through the British and the Boers' peace negotiations to end the Anglo-Boer War. This notion exposes the hypocrisy of the TRC in its relationship with women. The exploitation of female bodies is only used to talk about masculine violence on the nation while making an avowal of advocacy to gender-based violence and the suffering of Afrikaner women. The weakness in Smith's novel is in an approach that also uses Susan's female body to write the history of South Africa's Anglo-Boer

War. He particularly uses Susan's rape as a symbol of the British's invasion of the South African land.

What is significant about the slaughtering of the guinea fowl is that although it triggered Susan's memory of her rape, the guinea fowl is slaughtered in celebration of Susan's recovery. This slaughtering which is a recollection of Susan's rape experience symbolises a new beginning for Susan as she is to start a new life in Bloemfontein. Mamello and Tiisetso arrange a coach for Susan to travel from Winburg to Bloemfontein. Therefore, focalising Susan's experiences as a female protagonist allows the restoration of subjectivity and her refusal to continue suffering from the effects of her trauma (Borg, 2018:448). Susan indeed transitions from being a victim of rape and an inhabitant of the Winburg concentration camp to a recovered being and victor, and thus restoring her subjectivity, which the text develops through her confronting of trauma and social upward mobility beginning the moment she leaves the Winburg caves for Bloemfontein.

A significant change in Susan's identity takes place when she embarks on her journey to Bloemfontein. She takes on a new surname, "Draper". She notes: "[…] three months ago, I was still someone else. Then something happened and now I am Susan Draper. No longer Nell. Susan Nell died in the camp" (Smith, 2017:171). The "something" may refer to her rape, as she repeatedly refers to it as "something" throughout the novel. Susan takes the surname of her friend, Alice Draper, who died in the concentration camp as a means to navigate herself easily amongst the English than will be the case with her surname, "Nell". Susan's act of changing both her surname and identity compares with what McAdams and McLean's term, "narrative identity", which is "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (2013:233). Susan integrates her past life (the use of Alice's surname) to construct her imagined future. Her awareness that she will be able to navigate life easier with Alice's surname amongst the English, is a purposeful act, which ensures that she succeeds in her life after the concentration camp.

Susan leaves Bloemfontein for Cape Town shortly after the Anglo-Boer war. She befriends a fellow traveller and photographer, Jack Perry. Perry takes pity on Susan and arranges that a local philanthropist, Marie Koopmans-De Wet, take Susan under her wing. Susan shares her experiences in the concentration camp with Marie. It should be noted that even when she shares her rape experience with Marie, she cannot call it by its name, "rape":

> I tell Aunt Marie that something bad happened to me. I tell her it was a joiner who also came from Heilbron and two English officers. I knew them. And I knew their names. But I didn't have a name for what they did to me. That I still cannot say (Smith, 2017:232).

Susan's inability to share details about her rape, or inability to comprehend it may perhaps be because she has not completely overcome her sense of shame and traumatic experiences of rape endured in the Winburg concentration camp. Liem (2007:159) notes that "some psychological research suggests that external cues that instruct the individual to avoid focusing on a past experience may actually enhance rather than lessen memory rehearsal". Susan's decision not to say what happened to her is what Liem (2007:159) refers to as "institutional forgetting" and this "collective silence as a whole end up by reinforcing the strength of both individual and collective […] memories". The Afrikaner nation's narrative is hidden in Susan's narrative. Thus, silencing Susan and her experience of rape silences the Afrikaner nation's history of their subjugation by the British. The silencing of Susan and the broader Afrikaner nation is the act of institutional forgetting. However, the narratives of Susan as an individual and the memories of the Afrikaner nation is strengthened and shared through Susan's narrative. The act of Susan breaking her silence to Aunt Marie is a way of reclaiming her voice and her identity, and simultaneously reclaiming the voice of the Afrikaner nation. Later, Marie assists Susan in moving to the Netherlands, where she qualifies as a psychiatric nurse.

2.4 Class and gender dynamics

There are gender and class dynamics that are at play in Smith's *The Camp Whore*. Susan is largely depicted as a victim of the war and one of the marginalised women of the Anglo-Boer War and its scorched earth policy. However, Susan moves from being a 'prisoner' at the concentration camp and victim of rape, to a character that takes charge of her life and improves herself through education. Susan changes the status quo by taking up her profession as a psychiatric nurse, against all odds. After Susan's residence in the Netherlands, she moves to England, where she starts work as a psychiatric nurse at Seale-Hayne Hospital in Devon, England, during the First World War. She is aware of the disbelief she may cause because of both what she endured in the concentration camp and the gender inequality evident in her profession. Upon her arrival at the psychiatric hospital, The Seale-Hayne Hospital in Devon,

she meets the hospital chief, Major Hurst, who is surprised by the fact that the headquarters had sent a woman to the hospital and says: “You are indeed a woman. […] I almost fell on my back when Rivers said he was sending…” (Smith, 2017:33-34). It is clear that Susan is affected by the demarcation of private and public patriarchy - patriarchal control extends to both spheres (work and home). Here, the public patriarchy, which relates to the subordination of women in employment and state institutions, is depicted in Susan’s experiences as a subordinated subject under the British in the South African concentration camp and the space of the workplace in the United Kingdom. Major Hurst’s exclamation on first seeing Susan is instructive here and resonates with Kandiyoti’s (1991:430) observation that the state’s influence on individuals, extends their “public” patriarchy to their “private” patriarchy and leads to the social and domestic marginalisation of women. Nonetheless, Susan makes a significant response to the Major: “Would you have preferred a man?” (Smith, 2017:34). Susan “snaps” back at Hurst’s sexism. A “snap” is what Ahmed (2017:190) notes as speaking angrily and harshly for the affected individual to get an opportunity to be heard. A snap frames feminists’ refusal to be marginalised by society. Ahmed (2017:190) further notes that "[a] snap might seem sudden but the suddenness is only apparent; a snap is one moment of a longer history of being affected by what you come up against". Susan is a rape survivor from the colonial concentration camp, who endures a long period of sexism, thus her snap at Hurst is a build-up of anger towards the colonial and traditional patriarchy. Wall (2018:575) states that all feminists have a breaking or snapping point where they refuse to reproduce an unjust world and the task then is to consider the cause, intention and effect of that snap. For Susan, her “snap” is symbolises by her addressing Hurst’s sexist remark. It should be noted that Susan is "killing" the joy of her sexist oppressor (Hurst). Susan enters the workspace as a marginalised woman, who is a victim of the Winburg concentration camp but makes efforts to be useful and enter the public space as a psychiatric nurse. Therefore, her “snap” is a feminist act as she is stepping up and embodying the "killjoy" to fight for equality in an unjust and sexist work environment (Wall, 2018:575).

Nationality also comes in to complicating the gender and class dynamic influencing Susan's experience at the Seale-Hayne Hospital. Upon her arrival, Hurst is under the assumption that Susan is Dutch. Susan is South African but leaves Hurst under the impression that she is Dutch to refrain from further defending herself. She says to Hurst: “In the Netherlands, […] psychiatric nursing care is primarily the domain of women” (Smith, 2017:41), which is true, but it must also be noted that these women “must be middle class, seeing that this class of woman is considered the standard-bearer of the founding values of a healthy society” (Smith,

2017:41). This notion brings about two factors, namely, racial and class privilege, as well as the strengthening of masculinity. Firstly, Susan is accepted in this position under certain conditions, namely class and nationality. Hurst is under the impression that she belongs to the middle class and is a Dutch citizen. Susan is an educated professional psychiatric nurse, which in itself is a confirmation of her progression and empowerment since she left Winburg. Nonetheless, the class and gender-based prejudice inherent here should be noted and criticised.

Susan gets the nursing post under the assumption that she is of the middle class, and that middle-class women are carriers of the establishment of values of a healthy society and thus fit to act for the benefit of masculinity as nurses to injured soldiers. It should also be noted that the idea of a healthy society constructed through events taking place at the psychiatric hospital is a masculinist one. Male soldiers are at the centre of the restoration project during this war period. Some of the patients admitted to Seale-Hayne Hospital are suffering from shellshock from the battlefield. Shellshock is a traumatic and nervous shock that affects the brain and heart and is linked to psychic trauma (Karageorgos, 2018:12-13). The soldiers admitted to the Seale-Hayne Hospital are "shot of all sense, rendered mute, robbed of memory, of muscular control; bodies beset by spasms of an otherworldly horror, soldiers who desired nothing more than death" (Smith, 2017:40). It is thus clear that the hospital's focus on soldiers suffering from physical and psychological trauma reflects an image of masculinity that is threatened (Karageorgos, 2018:22). Most men associate their masculinity with their physical strength, thus the bodily vulnerability of soldiers threatens their masculinity, as these individuals can no longer define themselves through their physical strength and positions as soldiers unless they are fully recovered. It is, however, ironic that The Seale-Hayne Hospital in Devon was previously the Women's Land Army before it was later turned into a psychiatric hospital. Hurst informs Susan that the "[…] headquarters decided it was more important to get shellshocked soldiers back to the front than to train women to take their place in the farmlands of the kingdom" (Smith, 2017:35). Although Susan experienced class and gender prejudice in the concentration camp and later in the workplace, she "snaps" and stands up for herself. Susan embodies the "killjoy" to fight for equality in an unjust and sexist work environment and obtains social upward mobility.

2.6 Victim to victor

Susan's individual experience in the concentration camps creates a glimpse into the Anglo-Boer War and the trauma involved as already discussed. Susan treats shellshocked soldiers admitted in the Seale-Hayne Hospital in Devon during the First World War. World War One took place a decade after the Anglo-Boer War which forced two nations into submission. The Anglo-Boer War had a great influence on the British's strategy leading up to the First World War. These strategies included the usage of modern rifles and artillery, more open formations and the importance of cover for the opponents.

In the novel, Susan comes across one of her rapists, Hamilton-Peake, who is admitted to Seale Hayne Hospital for trauma. Susan is faced with a worst-case scenario whereby she has to nurse a traumatised soldier who happens to be the cause of her trauma. The author, Smith, describes that the word "shellshock" brings shivers down one's spine (Smith, 2017:39). Susan experiences a similar shivering effect when she hears her perpetrator's name. Her colleague, Major Hurst, mentions the name of her perpetrator "[a]nd that mere mention of that name, she feels herself seized, shaken, as if caught in a whirlwind – and hurled down at a litter of tents on the godforsaken Free State veld" (Smith, 2017:9). The personal and the historical moments of trauma are thus linked and, as discussed below, this links with memory-making.

Susan's perpetrator suffers from shellshock, a condition that brings shivers down one's spine. "His treatment report indicates that he suffers from insomnia, hysterical episodes and is constantly threatening suicide" (Smith, 2017:136). The perpetrator's condition would have caused feelings of pity within the reader because of the suffering he is enduring. However, those feelings are removed when one considers the fact that Susan suffers from trauma herself, caused by her perpetrator. The mere mention of Hamilton-Peake's name takes Susan back to the memory of her rape experience at a Free State concentration camp. Hamilton-Peake's name forces Susan to recollect her experience and causes her to relive the moment. Susan's encounter with Hamilton-Peake and the memory-making it instigates lead to what Ricoeur (1996:15) terms personal and collective memories (although fictional) and speaks to South African victims' experience of trauma during the Anglo-Boer War.

Susan's trauma and healing from her rape and incarceration during the Anglo-Boer war empower her to initiate and support the journey of healing of her patients. She chose to pursue this profession because her wounds led her to assist others in their journey toward healing.

McAdams and McLean (2013:233) note that life narratives are performances of healing in the sense that the narrator writes about his or her past experiences of trauma with a new sense of agency and hope for healing. Thus, Susan's physical journey and narration of trauma lead to her desire to assist her patients on their journey towards healing.

Susan's experiences as an inhabitant of the Winburg concentration camp also contributes to her desire to assist her patients as she is familiar with the contexts of war. She is empathetic and acquainted with her patients' trauma and need for healing. However, she was not prepared to have one of her perpetrators in need of healing. Upon seeing Hamilton-Peake, Susan:

> […] stood in front of that reflecting surface, the tiny varnish cracks like the retina of an eye, the smell of polished wood in her nostrils, her breath against that unforgiving surface, with eyes that she tried to tear away from the white label in the metal holder – the name that she cannot utter" (Smith, 2017:8).

Susan is unforgiving of the sexual violation she endured and wishes to violently tear away her eyes. The tearing away of her eyes, although not literal, is a violent reaction and a trope that inscribes the traumatic violence that she suffered in the past. In addition, Susan cannot utter his name because of shock, the recollection of her trauma, and an extension of the silencing effect he has on her. Upon seeing her perpetrator, she recalls her time spent in the cave: "Sixteen years ago she had lain like this in a twilight cave, […] lying and waiting […] for something inside her to calm down" (Smith, 2017:9). She compares her memory of lying in the cave to her perpetrator lying there in the hospital. She is waiting for something in her to calm down, perhaps feelings of fear or trauma. The roles are reversed at that moment as her perpetrator is lying in the hospital after being traumatised by the war. However, although she is out of the cave, she may have reawakened that feeling of fear inside her, as she is confronted by her traumatic past. Ricoeur (1996:15) refers to memory as the link between one's consciousness and the past. Susan's process of recounting the memory of herself in the cave is an attempt at resurrecting and reliving the moment of the experience (Ricoeur, 1996:20). Accordingly, Susan's encounter with her perpetrator rekindles the memory of rape and other associated traumas. Radstone and Hodgkin (2017:11) argue that "the unspeakable or the unwitnessable makes its incognisable mark on the mind as traumatic memory, or in the body, as embodied memory". These unspeakable memories survive through "silent bodily gestures and movements" (Radstone and Hodgkin, 2017:12). Susan's encounter with Hamilton-Peake renders her mute to any verbal or physical reaction. She embodies her trauma, she was silenced

through rape and is now silenced by the encounter with her rapist and recollection of that experience.

Susan's recollection of her memories of violation and trauma, and her encounters with her perpetrator serve as a trigger for her final journey of healing. Susan identifies Colonel Henry Hamilton-Peake, by the mark on his ear: "[…] this ear has a mark, the lobe is gone, and it is her mark" (Smith, 2017:124). She recalls the day she bit his ear when he raped her: "I was never granted that sensation. I never tasted that satisfaction. He did scream, that I do remember. Oh yes, he yelped like a goddamned dog" (Smith, 2017:125). Her first encounter with Hamilton-Peake narratively links with that at the Winburg concentration camp: "This is where she is, with Dr. Arthur Hurst at the Seale-Hayne Hospital in Devon. Not in Winburg's concentration camp. And yet nothing has changed. Nothing is over. Nothing is ever completely over" (Smith, 2017:126). Here, the author links, through Susan's feelings of trauma and fear, the presence of past memories and trauma in the present. Hamilton-Peake is no longer in a position to harm her physically, yet he still inflicts pain and reminds her of her violation through his presence. Her reference to nothing being over can also refer to their journey not being over, in the sense that Susan has an opportunity to heal from her trauma by confronting it. There is a complex web between Susan's lived experience and her account thereof. The two are built from the link between "self, time and history" (Leskelä-Kärki, 2008:330). Therefore, Susan's experiences of trauma produce sporadic recollections and create an account of her identity in time. Her identity then was linked to her sexual violation and being colonised, but is now linked with being a survivor of rape and war, and investing in healing and confronting her trauma.

Susan recounts to Hurst, the hospital chief of Seale-Hayne Hospital, how she was declared dead and disposed of during the Anglo-Boer War:

> On the first of January 1902, when I was 18 years old, the doctor in that camp signed my death certificate. Unofficially, I'd been murdered by two British officers and what we called a 'joiner', a Boer who fought on your side. But I wasn't yet dead and I fell off the wagon that carted bodies to the morgue. Some black people picked me up and saved my life (Smith, 2017:216-217).

In Susan's first narration of her rape, she recalls how one of her rapists pulls her by her leg into a tent (Smith, 2017:63). Thereafter, the two British officers and a "joiner" rape her. Narrators can express to themselves and others who they are presently, and what their backgrounds are (McAdams and McLean, 2013:233). In this way, Susan can narrate her rape experience whilst

committing to healing. People sharing their experiences of suffering make narrative sense of the trauma they experienced. They gain healing from sharing their experiences as they reflect on their trauma and commit to personal growth (McAdams and McLean, 2013:243). Walker (1992:400) states that women need to "understand power structures with the intention of challenging them" and this can be achieved through the writing of their narratives. As a result, Susan's recollection and depiction of her own experiences open up the chance to represent her past (Kruger, 2000:637) and provide herself with a sense of agency. The British's account is final and accepted because of their position of power. However, Susan is in a position to destabilise these power structures by challenging their account of the war narrative and that of her "death" with the truth.

Furthermore, Susan's rape in the concentration camp provides insight into the conditions in concentration camps, amongst other brutal violations and deprivations of women suffered during the Anglo-Boer War. Gqola (2015:21) notes that rape "[…] communicates clearly who matters and who is disposable". Susan is disposed of in the figurative sense by being raped, and this shows that she is also disposable in the literal sense when she is dumped by the officials, as if dead, and silenced by declaring her dead. Krebs (1992:45) notes that the British instilled fear in the women at the concentration camps and confined them as well as deprived them of their basic human rights. In addition, Susan and other women and children are confined to the Winburg concentration camp and made to suffer from deprivation and disease. Susan's experiences then expose the reality of who the true perpetrators are here. The inhabitants of concentration camps, such as Susan, experience poverty, sexual violation, and are instilled with fear by their perpetrators. A further irony is that the black people whom the white society was "protected from" by the British is the same race that saved Susan from the hands of her white perpetrators. According to Gusdorf (1956:38), when an event takes place, one is unable to view the experience in its entirety thus the autobiographical reading of an experience is more truthful than the event itself, as one is conscious of what has taken place during that time and space. As a result, Susan's account (although fictional) critiques the British narrative of white women's need to be protected from black men and corrects the existing historical fallacy by underscoring her perpetrators and by extension of the Afrikaner nation, were actually the British. In addition, Susan is conscious of these false narratives of black men as perpetrators and is in pursuit of her truth (Gusdorf, 1956:44).

Susan discusses the healing and harmful power of stories with Hurst. These stories provide both insight into her time spent in the cave and her intentions with Hamilton-Peake. The

purpose of the stories from the cave and Susan's life story is to keep these stories alive "in the 'public memory' a knowledge of what happened in the war" (Liem, 2007:158). It is an act of breaking Susan's silence through language. Smith and Watson (2001:10) argue that historical narrations enable writers to perform "several rhetorical acts" such as "justifying their own perceptions, […], disputing the accounts of others, [and] settling scores". Susan makes use of the stories told by Tiisetso and repurposes them by "settling scores" with Hamilton-Peake. She refers to a story about murder, hinting at her intention to murder Hamilton-Peake. Susan and Hurst conduct a music programme in the hospital, where the patients play instruments and sing. The aim is to engage the patients in activities and possibly bring healing. Susan takes on the task to nurse and teach Hamilton-Peake music. Hurst tasks her to "[…] find a story that matters, one that [they] both believe, that has meaning for both of [them] […]" (Smith, 2017:129) and to incorporate this story into their music. Susan has ulterior motives and tries to conceal them, as she discusses the healing and harmful power of stories with Hurst. The story she shares with Hurst that has meaning for both, her and her perpetrator is an indication of her intentions. She shares the story told by Tiisetso, of two brothers, one that kills the other for his inheritance, with the one who is killed changing into a singing bird that circles the head of his murderer. Hurst asks, "A murder story?" (Smith, 2017:128). Susan defends the story by replying: "That, as with songs, one can arrive at the source of one's healing through stories. And that healing and harm can often not be distinguished from one another" (Smith, 2017:129). This invokes the critical notion by McAdams and McLean (2013:233) as noted in the literature review in Chapter 1, which underscores that life narratives are performances of healing in the sense that the narrator writes about his or her past experiences of trauma with a new sense of agency and hope for healing. However, there is no guarantee that the narrator would have completely overcome his or her sense of shame or traumatic experiences. In the case of Susan, her narrative is a performance of healing as she shares her experiences of trauma with a new sense of agency and hope for healing; whilst being reminded of her trauma and seeking revenge on Hamilton-Peake. In addition, Susan states that "one can arrive at the source of one's healing through stories" (Smith, 2017:129) and yet healing and harm can become indistinguishable, for while she associates this story with healing as Tiisetso narrates it to her in the cave, during her journey of healing, the same story hints at her intention to murder Hamilton-Peake.

It should be noted that Susan takes Hamilton-Peake as her patient under the pretence of helping him heal, whilst intending to harm him. Smith (2017:130) describes this thus, "The healing power of stories is the last thing that she has in mind". Susan always knew that she would be

confronted with her past and would have to deal with it, as depicted by Smith, and thus, her decision to confront her perpetrator and trauma head-on is a sign of agency and subjectivity. The plot shows that Susan is no longer helpless, as she takes control of her life and refuses to be marginalised. In addition, Susan's act focalises her experiences as a female protagonist and allows for the restoration of subjectivity and her refusal to continue suffering from the effects of her trauma (Borg, 2018:448). Susan refers to the Anglo-Boer War as "her" war: "That war was mine" (Smith, 2017:12). The war is "hers" in the sense that she is a citizen affected by the war, but more importantly, because she fought a personal war against Hamilton-Peake and her other two perpetrators within the Anglo-Boer War. Boje (2016:6) notes that rape is used "as a 'weapon of war' the violent means of maintaining patriarchy and the subjugation of women". Hamilton-Peake uses rape as a weapon of war within a war to subjugate Susan. Susan's reencounter with her perpetrator allows her the opportunity to break the hold he has on her. Mukhuba (2017:8600) notes that narratives about women are mostly seen as texts of disempowered individuals expressing their voice and regaining agency and control. However, Susan's narrative is one of agency as she takes back control of her life from her perpetrators and speaks out against the oppression and violation under British rule.

Susan shows agency and control by creating her own story and removing the psychological grip Hamilton-Peake has on her life through reversing power dynamics. Susan takes colonel Hamilton-Peake for a ride on her colleague, Jacob's, motorbike. The next day, Hurst takes her to Hamilton-Peake's room, room 114. She sees him lying on the bed, dead, covered in a sheet. The exact cause and time of Hamilton-Peake's death are not mentioned in the novel and both Susan and Hurst try to find the cause of this death and this creates tension between both characters. Susan says to Hurst in anger and defence: "You blame me, don't you? […] You think I killed him" (Smith, 2017:205). Hurst responds: "It was life or death, […] It could have gone either way. You were aware of this, weren't you?" (Smith, 2017: 205). She responds: "I'm sorry, [...] I should have known" (Smith, 2017:206). Hurst's statement that Susan was aware of Hamilton's state of health, that "it was life or death", makes one question whether she had purposefully done this or whether it was her intention for Hamilton-Peake to die. Van der Merwe (2014) notes that there is a deep desire in Susan to destroy, as she was almost destroyed. For her to survive, Hamilton-Peake must die. In addition, Susan's conversations with Hurst about Hamilton-Peake heighten this suspicion. Firstly, before leaving Seale-Hayne Hospital, Susan "decided, there, in Hurst's sunlit office, and before he had a chance to pass judgment or to give his approval, right there, she took a grip on her life and said: 'I killed him'" (Smith,

2017:225). Susan takes responsibility for Hamilton-Peake's death. The use of the word "grip" suggests control over both her life and her perpetrator as she "took control" of his life by killing him. Secondly, Susan avenges her perpetrator, Hamilton-Peake, with the process associated with the imagery of possession as shown in the way Smith describes that "Hamilton-Peake is hers and hers alone" (Smith, 2017:215). Susan, in this process acquires a retributive tone and healing because this also means taking possession of her experience of rape and its consequences. There is also a reverse of power dynamics, Hamilton-Peake exerted power by raping Susan, and she is now exerting power over him by killing him. Susan also crafts a "story" in which she asserts that she is the one who killed Hamilton-Peake, yet she knows it's not true (van der Merwe, 2014). This is despite the fact that Hamilton-Peake constantly threatened suicide (Smith, 2017:136). Therefore, Susan shows agency and control by creating her own story, removing the psychological grip he has on her life, and rendering him invisible and dead in her story. Narratives of suffering allow narrators to make sense of their trauma. They gain healing from writing about their experiences as they reflect on their trauma and commit to personal growth, thereafter, committing to a positive purpose of the event and hopefully experiencing happiness (McAdams and McLean, 2013:243). In addition, Susan's writing of her own story contributes to the exploration of her identity and indicates her determination to try and control her destiny (Mason, 1980:223).

After Hamilton-Peake's death, Susan moves back to the Netherlands and works as a full partner at Reymaker Psychiatrie. Later on, Susan returns to South Africa at the age of seventy. Smith notes (2017:244), "she'd arrived fifty-two years previously, taking a passenger ship to Cape Town and then a train to Bloemfontein. The only difference was that they travelled to Winburg by car". Susan returns to Winburg, accompanied by two men, her old friend, Perry, and an Afrikaner man who transports them to Winburg. She returns to Winburg where she was raped, but she does not find the exact location of the camp, nor the grave in which the British soldiers intended on burying her. She does however find Alice Draper's grave, which is situated close to hers. Upon discovering Alice's grave she wants to get away from the scene. The novel ends with Susan's urgency to leave Winburg, as she says to the driver: "Please, in heaven's name, just drive" (Smith, 2017:265). Susan's return to the place of her traumatic past contributes to her confrontation and processing of her trauma (van der Merwe, 2014). It also symbolises Susan's recovery, as she returns to a place where she was violated in the concentration camp and started her journey of healing after being rescued by Mamello and Tiisetso.

2.7 Conclusion

Ultimately, Smith's *The Camp Whore* captures Susan's transition from multiple victimisations, such as rape under British oppression during the Anglo-Boer War, to her journey of healing and agency, and social-upward mobility as a qualified psychiatric nurse who also becomes a victor over her perpetrator. Susan's act of killing her perpetrator is not a justified act of violence, but it is a necessary act for Susan to take back control over her life and exert agency. Her act is necessary for the restoration of her subjectivity and her refusal to suffer from trauma (Borg, 2018:448) and oppression. Susan's return to South Africa marks the confrontation of her traumatic past and her recovery. The fictional character, Susan, engages in what Gqola (2010:50) terms exerting "'the right to narrate', to speak (not just talk) and be narrated, to draft a history, something to be interpreted". Most women's life narratives focus on the stereotypical categorisation of women as the inferior other, thus their experiences may lead to their constitution as the "other". However, Susan's narrative of "otherness" serves as a narrative of agency (Mason, 1980:210). The author of the novel is male but positions the female character at the centre of the events and constitution of agency and subject formation. Smith depicts his character's lived experiences in an empathetic way and thus invokes sympathy toward his character, Susan, and her female conditions. The author works with possibilities of the protagonist's survival and thus writes from a position of awareness of the feminist perspective. Ignoring Smith's empathy towards Susan would be damaging to the significance that Susan's narrative offers. Smith takes the "initiative to record [Susan's] story, thereby deeming it worthy of capture" (Gqola, 2010:72). Susan's experiences are also narrated in a way that recollects her country's history and thus underlines the link between her individual traumatic and other lived experiences, her identity reformation and that which the Afrikaner nation sought after the Anglo-Boer War.

Chapter 3 – King's pursuit of truth, healing and belonging in *Killing Karoline*

3.1 Introduction

King's *Killing Karoline,* a memoir written while the author was undergoing rehabilitation for alcoholism and drug addiction, vividly describes the author's experiences related to her birth story and adoption during apartheid, life as an adoptee in England and adult life in the Middle East and after her return to South Africa during the early post-apartheid years. Apartheid was introduced as an official state policy in 1948 and this resulted in a range of laws that were put in place which politically, economically and socially discriminated against South Africans of colour. These included 'grand apartheid' laws which denied people of colour their voting rights, regulated their freedom of movement in areas assigned to whites, and created unequal educational spaces as well as a colour-bar in employment. They also included 'petty apartheid' laws that reserved public spaces and facilities for 'whites only' (Teeger, 2015:1179). An example of a colonial and apartheid law that bears on the memoir's major plot events is the Immorality Act of 1927, which policed the sexuality and intimacies of South Africans. The Act was amended several times during the years 1950-1988 to strengthen boundaries on, and penalties for interracial and same-sex relations (Martens, 2007:223). Another apartheid law, the Bantu Education Act, deprived many black South Africans of a quality education, which lead to unemployment and the production of an unskilled labour force during apartheid with the effects still felt in the post-apartheid era. Gallo (2020:16) observes that, "The education curriculum under Bantu Education was created to teach and train black South African students for job opportunities related to unskilled labor". Thus, the Bantu Education Act was intentionally established to ensure the subordination of people of colour under whites, with the aim of securing employment preference for whites (Gallo, 2020:11), and to fulfil the capitalist needs of apartheid South Africa's economy (Gallo, 2020:20). Some teachers disagreed with the curriculum being taught to learners and students of colour, but did not resist it because of the fear of losing their jobs (Gallo, 2020:17). In addition, the movement of and opportunities for people of colour became more restricted, while whites were given greater control in the "agriculture, education, employment, housing and healthcare" sectors (Amoateng and Heaton, 2007:2-3). The low employment rates of people of colour resulted in fathers and husbands leaving their families behind to work far from home, "out-of-wedlock births, and unstable household composition, especially among Africans in the rural areas" (Amoateng and Heaton,

2007:4). Ultimately, the apartheid government excluded and oppressed people of colour and made them feel as if they were not citizens of their own country.

Sara-Jayne King, born Karoline, was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in the year 1980. Her biological parents Kris King, (white female) and father, Jackson (black male), had a 'prohibited/illegal' affair during apartheid and conceived Karoline. The background information on how her parents met is such that, King's "biological mother is a British woman who met her white South African boyfriend at university in England. After completing their studies, they moved to South Africa in 1979 where they worked at the Balalaika Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg" (Gous, 2017). King's biological mother had a 'prohibited/illegal' affair with Jackson who was the head chef at the hotel, and is Sara-Jayne's biological father. King's autobiography reveals that upon her birth, she was classified as 'white' by the apartheid regime's Population Registration Act. However, three weeks after her birth, Karoline's parentage was exposed, and Kris decided to give Karoline up for adoption in England. Kris and her husband, Ken, told their friends and family in South Africa that they were taking Karoline to England to treat a rare kidney disease, symptomised by jaundice. They executed this plan to conceal Karoline's paternity. They returned to South Africa, without Karoline, and told their friends and family that Karoline fell ill and died and held a fake funeral for baby Karoline. Karoline was adopted by a white middle-class British couple, Angela and Malcolm, who renamed her "Sarah Jane". Years later, King changed her name to Sara-Jayne, to regain her sense of identity. She did this after finding her truth and not relying on Kris to provide her with the truth around her birth and adoption. Thus, the change of her name from Sarah Jane to Sara-Jayne signifies her pursuit of truth and healing within herself.

Sara-Jayne's childhood and adulthood was marked by various traumatic experiences. She was often reminded of how "different" she was to her peers and family members. She found solace in toxic relationships, alcohol abuse, eating disorders, obsessive exercising, and self-harm. Sara-Jayne returned to Johannesburg, South Africa, and was admitted to rehabilitation centres for substance abuse. Bowler (2018), in a *Mail & Guardian* article on *Killing Karoline* states that King's narrative is "rooted in King's reclamation of her identity. It unfolds a personal history that cuts the reader to the core. It's a narrative that is both shocking and subtly unsurprising, given the race politics in our country". Sara-Jayne's return to South Africa allows for the examination of her country and finding her truth through confronting her past, rekindling and bidding farewell to the life of Karoline, and seeing the realities of the racial and

economic inequalities of South Africa. The return also starts a process of establishing relationships, healing and identity reconstruction.

I draw on both memory and life narratives theories in my analysis of King's experiences of "abandonment" and "rejection" by Kris and South Africa's apartheid state, and her experiences of insecurity and alienation as an adoptee. The key concepts considered here are race, identity reformation, experiences of abandonment and insecurity brought about by adoption, and the agency thereof. King takes agency by seeking her truth and finding healing, home and belonging in South Africa. Theories on memory and life narratives reviewed in Chapter 1, and in particular the concepts of narration, identity, memory and healing as postulated by McAdams and McLean (2013), Clark (2010), Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002), Smith and Watson (2001), and Nuttall (1994) enable the researcher to examine the experiences associated with Sara-Jayne's abandonment and rejection, and her determination to gain healing and acceptance. I draw on ideas on life narratives by McAdams and McLean (2013) in my analysis of the aforementioned concepts. I argue that although Sara-Jayne encounters feelings of abandonment, insecurity, and rejection, she transitions from the aforementioned feelings to acceptance and healing, and reconstructs her identity. I also argue that the novel captures King's life experiences through her country's history, her individual traumatic, and other lived experiences, her pursuit of her truth, and how this leads to the reconstruction of her identity.

3.2 Apartheid and the Immorality Act

King's *Killing Karoline* is set in apartheid South Africa, thus it is necessary to discuss the nature of the apartheid regime and its impact on ordinary lives. As noted in Chapter 1, apartheid was a white minority-based system that oppressed the black majority. The black majority were denied their political rights and exploited economically (Unterhalter, 1983:887). South Africa was divided into four provinces during apartheid, namely, the Cape Province, Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal. These four were separated by race and thus, social rights, privileges, and facilities were distributed according to racial categories, hence the name "apartheid", meaning separate development (United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, 1978:11). A variety of discriminatory laws were put in place to stunt the progress of South Africans of colour and to strengthen discrimination and inequality (Wizarat, 1980:84-85). These include the Land Act of 1913; the Immorality Act of 1927; Population Registration Act

of 1950; the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Terrorism Act of 1967 amongst others. According to Henrard (2002:19), these acts enabled the segregation of South Africans according to race and ethnicity, disempowered non-whites and placed whites in power. The divisions based on racial grouping were also used in an attempt to prevent a unified resistance against apartheid.

The apartheid system impacted South Africa in various ways which include divisions between races, and violations of human rights through acts such as forced removals (Henrard, 2002:22). Legislation such as the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and Bantu/Native Building Workers Act of 1951 produced inferior education and under-qualification among the Black, Coloured and Indian population groups (Henrard, 2002:27). Apartheid also resulted in an overall race-based economic, political and social inequality in the region. Apartheid is thus considered a crime under the system of international criminal law in accordance with the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid of 1973. The South African apartheid government ruled against most of its citizens, and thus, the Convention stood until 1994 when apartheid was abolished. Despite the abolishment of apartheid in 1994, the effects of its history are still prevalent. Reconciliation in the post-apartheid started with the work of the TRC. However, transformation in post-apartheid South Africa requires more than truth about apartheid and forgiveness; it requires restitution and restoration of respect for human rights and liberation (Henrard, 2002:37).

The black majority were denied their political rights and economically exploited during British and Afrikaner colonialism. Black women, in particular, experienced oppression based on race, class and gender (Unterhalter, 1983:887). Most of the South African laws under apartheid that warranted white rule, such as the Population Registration Act of 1950 and the Bantu Education Act of 1953, ensured a racially segregated government, divisions in education according to race, as well as the use of a pass system that controlled the mobility, housing and employment opportunities of people of colour (Unterhalter, 1983:887). Trotter (2013:50-51) notes that the 1948 National Party's rise to power and its passing of the Population Registration Act (1950) showed the National Party's desire to legally separate the different racial groups. South Africans were restricted by their "social and sexual interactions, political and communicative opportunities, and professional and material aspirations" (Trotter, 2013:50-51). Coloureds, in particular, were allocated to the Western Cape as their labour preference area. The Population Registration Act relocated coloureds who lived in urban areas to townships such as the Cape Flats where other coloureds resided and in that way creating a racially homogenous township

(Trotter, 2013:51-55). Some coloureds were opposed to their removal from their communities, despite the economic privileges they were offered. Trotter refers to a removee, Mrs Brown who lived in District Six, who reported the following to the *Cape Argus:* "We were like one family with no divisions between whites, Coloured people, Indians or African. But then the Group divided us all" (2013:53-54). Mrs Brown's statement shows the value of community, and how it is more meaningful to some than economic upliftment. Many of the removees were dislocated from their communities and "deprived of their patrimony, sundered from their social networks, and forced to accommodate themselves to a new existence with strangers from other communities. […], they had to recreate their sense of self and their social lives as their old networks were torn apart" (Trotter, 2013:55). Some removees formed relationships with their new community based on their feelings of dispossession and longing for their old communities (Trotter, 2013:56). The shared emotions between these community members contributed to "coloured memories [being] spread, creating a reflexive loop of narrative circulation" (Trotter, 2013:56) of traumatic loss and commemoration of "their former communities with highly selective stories which honour their former homes, communities and identities" (Trotter, 2013:56).

Racism as the cornerstone of apartheid did not only produce a hierarchy of races. It was also a project aimed at the policing of sexuality and intimacies as King's autobiography proffers. The memoir, *Killing Karoline,* is set in apartheid South Africa. The Immorality Act of apartheid, established in 1927 by Tielman Roos, the former minister of justice of South Africa (Martens, 2007:223) policed the sexuality and intimacies of South Africans. This Act was amended numerous times during the years 1950-1988 to strengthen boundaries on, and penalties for interracial and same-sex relations. The Immorality Act served as a judicial tool to bring about heteronormative whiteness and revealed the interconnectedness between racial supremacy and sexual morality as the ideological groundwork of the apartheid government (Carolin, 2017:112). The Act "[…] produced and policed - legally, symbolically and reproductively" (Carolin, 2017:112) to maintain whiteness. As a result, the Act provided for the prevention of interbreeding of people of different racial types.

Part of apartheid's moralist controls sought to "protect" white women from black men and framed white women as pure, desirable and virtuous (Carolin, 2017:113). In King's *Killing Karoline*, Sara-Jayne's mother, Kris, enters into an extra-marital affair with Jackson, a black

male. Their affair is of a consensual and romantic nature, but its ending is not premised on personal morals (extra-marital affairs being considered morally wrong) but on the prohibition by law. It mirrors "the characteristic deployment of the vulnerable white woman as the basis for the state's legislative social controls" (Carolin, 2017:113) in order to prohibit relations between white people and people of colour. Kris' decision to end her affair with Jackson maintains her whiteness, and "makes up" for her miscegenation. Whilst, "[t]he desire of the white [mother] is unquestioned and unchallenged" (Sanders, 2008:16), the affair with Jackson, does not result in Kris' punishment or downfall. Her transgression remains a secret from the government and "the structures of whiteness remain unchanged" (Carolin, 2017:125). Kris' act of giving up Sara-Jayne for adoption maintains her secret (affair), and simultaneously maintains her whiteness.

3.3 The economies of shame in *Killing Karoline*

As noted in the introduction of this chapter, Sara-Jayne is born Karoline and named after her biological mother, Kris. When she is adopted by a white middle-class British couple, Angela and Malcolm, they rename her "Sarah Jane". Years later, King changes her name to Sara-Jayne, to regain her sense of identity. Therefore, throughout this chapter, I alternate between "Karoline", "Sarah Jane" and "Sara-Jayne" when referring to the author.

Sara-Jayne's birth is marked by immorality and illegality as she is born to a black father and white mother. As noted earlier, such a relationship between a black man and a white woman was considered illegal under the apartheid Immorality Act. Trevor Noah, a South African comedian, television host, and political commentator, wrote an autobiography about growing up in apartheid South Africa. Trevor Noah was born to a Black South African mother and a White Swiss father, during apartheid. His parents' relationship was also considered illegal under apartheid South Africa's Immorality Act. Hence, the inspiration behind the title of his autobiography, *Born A Crime* (2019). In his autobiography, he describes himself growing up as a 'physical crime', as he was not allowed to go outside. His parents feared that the police in Soweto, South Africa, could see him and figure out that he was biracial and possibly send him to an orphanage. Both King and Trevor Noah are born to interracial parents during apartheid. Thus, their descriptions of their births as being 'crimes'. King notes that apartheid had "[…] been established in law for just over three decades by the time my biological parents committed

their illegal, 'immoral' sin and I, as the result of their misdeed, had been born a crime of the very worst kind" (King, 2017:18). Sara-Jayne views her birth in the context of apartheid ideology and its laws, and thus describes it as immoral, a sin and criminal. The tone invoked in King's statement is that of sarcasm and contempt. Although her birth is illegal under the Immorality Act, her contempt toward Kris and the apartheid law is understandable as she is innocent but tainted by her parents' "crime". Despite her parents' affair being passionate and consensual, it is prohibited under the Act. Sara-Jayne's experience is "[…] an interpretation of the past and of [her] place in a culturally and historically specific present" (Smith and Watson, 2001:24). The conditions surrounding her birth, such as her parents' extra-marital affair, the Immorality Act and Kris' decision to declare Karoline dead and give her up for adoption, offer an insight into the discriminatory and inhumane conditions of apartheid, and locates Karoline's past and present in apartheid and post-apartheid history. Sara-Jayne's description of her birth gives insight into the racial climate of apartheid, and reflects the trope of the self and personal experience in history. As a result, King's narrative presents versions of apartheid history that serve as a framework through which King proves and constructs herself "as historical subject(s), as subject(s) in history" (Nuttall, 2006:189). King shares her experience of being 'illegally' born in apartheid South Africa and positions herself as an historical subject, sharing her experience of oppression in apartheid South Africa, and describes how these events contribute to the constitution of trauma and/or agency. Smith and Watson (2001:125) note that the narration in an author's memoir is more truthful than the experience itself, as the narrator depicts events in a way that is reflective of himself or herself. The production of life narratives, to which I add King's, in the case of her memoir, allows authors' to become self-aware, reconstruct their identities, transform their perspectives, and create new ways of questioning social reality (Anderson, 2006:130), in this case South Africa's apartheid history.

Karoline's race serves as a marker of shame, illegality, and a determining factor for her future in terms of her parentage and residence. Kris waits, after Karoline's birth, to see if she can determine paternity because "for the duration of her pregnancy she hid her terrible secret, confiding only in her doctor, who of course was unable to prove my paternity until I was born" (King, 2017:24). Karoline turns pale brown three weeks after birth and Kris knew that she is Jackson's daughter and thus affirms, her "future rested entirely on [her] race" (King, 2017:24). Karoline's future rests on her race in the sense that, perhaps if she were Ken's (Kris' husband) daughter and thus white, Kris would keep her. However, because she is Jackson's child, her birth is a "crime" and Kris refuses to risk punishment by keeping her. Kris' secrecy around

Karoline's paternity and existence exposes the shame Kris carries around the birth of Karoline, for, as noted by Marais (2005:27), interracial sex carries lust, shame and infidelity for some individuals.

Furthermore, Sanders (2008:16) notes that "[t]he burden of shame falls on the ones who bear traces of their Indigenous ancestry". The shame in the context of King's memoir, is manufactured by South Africa's apartheid legislation and by individuals who discriminate against persons of colour. This shame is transferred onto Sara-Jayne, who bears traces (her skin colour) of her paternity. As a result, her parents decide to avoid living a future life of shame themselves. Upon discovering Karoline's paternity, they give Karoline up for adoption in England. Ken assists Kris in hiding her infidelity by concocting a story about Karoline, stating that she suffers from a rare kidney disease and died as a result – when in fact, they place her up for adoption. King notes "[i]n ensuring my departure from South Africa went unquestioned" (King, 2017:27), Kris, Ken and a paediatrician at a Sandton Clinic "concocted a story that I was suffering a rare kidney disease, symptomised by jaundice, that required a level of med expertise and treatment only available at London's Great Ormond Street children's hospital" (King, 2017:27). Kris and Ken concoct the story so as to prevent their relatives and friends from finding out about Karoline's paternity. Both also ensure that this remains a secret as noted in their undertaking upon return to South Africa that "They would 'kill Karoline'. They would say I had died" (King, 2017:29). One can argue that love (between Kris and Jackson) and birthing is not a crime, and that although Ken also kept Kris' infidelity a secret – he is still a victim because Kris cheated on him. However, Kris and Ken's decision to declare Karoline dead is Kris' way of removing Karoline from her life and existence, which is an act that also results in the erasure of Sara-Jayne's identity as Karoline. The feelings of shame should be experienced by perpetrators because of their crimes and not by the victims (Wiegandt, 2017:2). As a result, Kris and not Karoline, should bear the shame of rejecting Karoline and concealing her identity. The recollection of King's experiences of rejection may cause feelings of shame. These recollections may also result in the performance of memory/ing through the writing of life narratives, which are marked by confessions and overcoming feelings of shame. Life narratives are performances of healing in the sense that the narrator writes about his or her past experiences of trauma with a new sense of agency and hope for healing. However, there is no guarantee that the narrator would have completely overcome his or her sense of shame or traumatic experiences.

Karoline's narrative then undermines her allocated position as an "'invisible' black wom[a]n and [….] 'rewrites' the apartheid narrative by producing [her] own text" (Nuttall, 1994:89). Kris and the apartheid government render Karoline invisible because of her racial ethnicity while Kris extends Karoline's invisibility by declaring her dead. Kris' decision to give Karoline up for adoption shows her helplessness in her situation, as keeping Karoline would have other repercussions such as being prosecuted for breaking the law (Immorality Act). As a result, Kris' decision to give Karoline up for adoption might be considered as a survivalist act and collusion with apartheid. However, Kris' decision to give Karoline up for adoption has traumatic and dislocating effects on Karoline later in life. Nonetheless, Sara-Jayne "rewrites the apartheid narrative" (Nuttall, 1994:89) through her autobiography and "[…] construct[s] a sense of self through writing" (Nuttall, 1994:89). The writing of her text constructs a self, a new self, as Sara-Jayne, and the death of Karoline. Being in opposition with the systematic forces of apartheid is a postcolonial act in itself (Jolly, 1995:23). For instance, writers such as King show how they oppose apartheid by writing against their oppressive institutionalised structures of power. Their writing serve as production of truth and can be written in both life and fictional narratives. Language becomes the medium through which King shares her truth and experiences, allows for a "post-colonial voice" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:7) and expresses her sense of otherness (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:11).

3.4 Adoption: Sara-Jayne's sense of abandonment, insecurity and experience of racism

Sarah Jane as an adoptee is constantly faced with feelings of insecurity, shame and abandonment. Her adoptive parents, Angela and Malcolm, cannot conceive children of their own and thus, Sarah Jane always wonders whether they really want her and her adoptive brother, Adam. She also wonders whether they would have adopted them if they could have their own children:

> I felt so desperately misunderstood and unable to speak about the feelings of sadness, insecurity, abandonment and otherness that haunted me every day. It is a familiar feeling among adoptees. That we must be silent and, above all, constantly grateful (King, 2017:38).

Sarah Jane is under the impression that she cannot express her opinions and feelings, as it may come across as a sign of ungratefulness for being adopted and cared for. The narrator describes her sad feelings about her past and being adopted in this way:

> […] the deep and profound sadness I feel will be compounded by a sense of shame. Shame, that to the rest of the world I am showing myself to be 'ungrateful' for the good fortune that had been bestowed upon me by being so selflessly 'taken in' by my adoptive parents (King, 2017:47).

It is clear from the above that along with the feeling of insecurity were those sad experiences and constitution of a sense of shame. This is ironic as the feelings of shame should be experienced by perpetrators because of their crimes, and not by the victims (Wiegandt, 2017:2). Therefore, Kris is liable for the shame that Karoline carries because of her 'abandonment' of Karoline. Karoline's sense of shame is also rooted in society's perception that if she is unhappy, she is ungrateful for being "taken in", thus invalidating her feelings of sadness and insecurity.

Karoline also endures a sense of abandonment that stems from the trauma related to actions carried out by Kris. Kris' decision to give Sarah Jane up for adoption and rejecting her later in life results in Sarah Jane's feelings of abandonment and self-destructive behaviours. Sarah Jane notes:

> According to my mother [Angela], I showed absolutely no sign of distress at being parted from Kris. [...] years later the distress would rise to the surface in the form of an uncontrollable fear of abandonment, crippling self-doubt, relationship problems and pityingly low self-worth. And these feelings would, in turn, come to manifest in a number of self-destructive behaviours (King, 2017:42).

King recalls her trauma and expresses her feelings of abandonment as a means of survival and agency. Smith and Watson (2001:22) note that the process of writing enables the writer to find "words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable". Writing provides the author psychological relief through the expression of their emotions (Smith and Watson, 2001:22). As a result, King's act of writing about her suffering is an act of making narrative sense of the trauma she experienced and the identity issues she faces.

King's sense of abandonment leads to destructive behaviour. She attempts to find solace in toxic relationships, alcohol abuse, eating disorders, obsessive exercising, and self-harm. For instance, King shares her experience of self-harm thus:

> By the time I enter teenage years I've started self-harming. [...] Slicing into myself watching my filthy blood run into rivers of unspoken hurt delivers a feeling of such overwhelming relief that I am unable to stop. [...] Cutting becomes my way of healing (King, 2017:90).

Sarah Jane fails to speak about her pain and engages in self-harm. Smith and Watson (2001:22) note that "narrators struggle to find ways of telling about suffering […] to reassemble memories so dreadful they must be repressed for human beings to survive and function in life". Nevertheless, we note that Sarah Jane represses her hurt through self-harming, convincing herself that she would find healing, which she later finds when admitted to, and treated at Ubuntu Addiction Treatment Centre in Cape Town. She also finds out that self-harming was not effective, and that she has to confront her emotions head-on to find healing. Sarah Jane comes to this realisation through her reflection exercises at the treatment centre and later through the writing of her memoir. Through King's self-narrative, she "[…] construct a sense of self through writing" (Nuttall, 1994:98) and "unfolding of the dialectic of the self" which has "the power to say, the power to do, and the power to recognize oneself as a character in a narrative" (Clark, 2010:8). Therefore, King can reflect on her trauma, self-destructive behaviour and find healing through confronting these painful truths.

The toxic effects of Sarah Jane's status as an insecure and displaced adoptee are also evident in her early adulthood. Sarah Jane, at the age of 18, moves in with her boyfriend Paul, who is thirty years of age, divorced and a father of 3. He is extremely jealous, possessive and bans Sarah Jane from seeing her friends and family. King shares her views on her relationship with Paul: "I become convinced that this is what love looks like [...] I am lucky, I think. He has rescued me, and I should be grateful. The unlovable are rarely so lucky" (King, 2017:94). Her doubt is expressed when she says, "I am lucky, *I think*" [emphasis added] (King, 2017:94). Her uncertainty shows her consciousness – she knows that she is in a toxic relationship but convinces herself otherwise. The trauma of adoption, particularly Sarah Jane's thought that she is unlovable owing to her rejection by Kris, compels her to feel obligated and grateful toward Paul, just as she feels she has to convey gratitude toward her adoptive parents. Smith and Watson (2001:125) note that the narration of the author's life experiences is more truthful than

the experience itself, as the narrator depicts events in a way that is reflective of himself or herself. Accordingly, Sara-Jayne's narration of her experience of distress is more truthful than the experience itself. This is noted in the way Angela tells her that she showed no signs of distress when she parted with Kris, and yet, the narrator reflects on her feelings and self-destructive behaviours such as “destructive eating patterns, self-harm, isolation and fucked-up relationships" (King, 2017:119) in her adult life, and traces it back to the undetected distress she may have felt when she departed from Kris as a baby. In addition, Gusdorf (1956:38) notes that one is unable to view an experience that would have taken place in its entirety and as a result, the autobiographical reading of an experience is more truthful than the event itself, as one is conscious of what has taken place during that time and space. Therefore, Sarah Jane's reflective narration is significant here because she can narrate the events from her perspective and reflect on her experiences and behaviour.

Sara Jane experienced racism in school and resorted to silence as a means of survival. Sarah Jane and her brother Adam grew up on a farm in Surrey, England, in a middle-class and largely white area, where they were the only black children. They were two of the few children of colour at their school. According to Morey, Wilbraham and Frith (2003:13), the skin of people of colour is the most visible stigmata of blackness. Their second most visible stigmata are their hair. During apartheid, the infamous pen and pencil test was used to determine the racial heritage of people, by examining their hair colour, texture and length, and by extension, deteriorating black identities. The act of using black hair as a signifier of one’s heritage through means such as the pen and pencil test is degrading. King recalls a memory where one of her schoolmates slid a pencil through her hair and the pencil stayed there:

> One of the boys had slid a pencil into my afro and it had stayed there. I am a child of South Africa, but I am not a South African child and the irony of this incident is lost on me (2017:72).

This incident is significant when considering apartheid’s infamous pen and pencil test. However, King does not detect the significance of this incident as a child. The incident explores the commonality and resonance between both events, without stating as much directly, and hence a juxtaposition (Glatch, 2020). King is not aware of the infamous pencil tests that took place in apartheid South Africa, yet she experiences a pencil test without realising the significance of this event. Sarah Jane may not have known, because, although she is born in South Africa, she is not familiar with the country’s history and racist laws and acts. However,

as an adult, King refers to the pencil test thus: “The now notorious ‘pencil test’ decreed that if an individual could hold a pencil in their hair when they shook their head, they could not be classified as white” (2017:8). As an adult, Sarah Jane is aware of the significance behind the incident that in South Africa, it served as racial classification.

King experiences more direct racism in the school environment. King recalls an incident where she, her brother, Adam, and another learner of colour, John Mbugua, were teased and called "dirty brown poos" (King, 2027:65). King chooses to remain silent as an act of “survival”. The dislocating effects are nonetheless profound as King (2017:66) notes: "I feel helpless and hate myself for staying silent through the torment, but for my own survival I just try to keep my head down and blend in as much as possible". Ahmed (2017:260) argues that those who remain silent about injustices, choose to because of the consequences of identifying and speaking up against it that include losing networks, relationships, employment and even being labelled as a killjoy. Hence, King’s decision to remain silent is linked to her desire not to be alienated by her peers. However, the danger in remaining silent is that injustice is reproduced by silence, especially the silence of those who witness injustice but choose to remain silent (Ahmed, 2017:260). In this way, King witnesses the injustice suffered by Adam and John Mbugua as victims of racism, and yet opts for silence toward the racism, with the silence reproducing further racism and a traumatic silence.

King’s experiences of racism and her awareness that she is “different” from her peers and adoptive and biological family confuses her as a child. King (2017:44) notes: "We say 'brown' because that's what colour our skin is. We say 'half-caste' because that is what other people say. We also say 'gollywog' because Robertson's says it on their jam jars and we don't know any better". King does not define herself according to a racial category, but according to her skin colour - brown. This shows King's innocence as a child. However, this innocence is tainted by society's emphasis on difference as noted in the way society labels Sarah Jane as half-caste. It is important to note that Sarah Jane calls herself half-caste without being fully aware of what this may mean. This is made evident when she compares the labelling of her identity to that of Robertson's "gollywog" product – they say half-caste and gollywog but "we don't know any better” (King, 2017:44). King is of mixed parentage; her biological mother is white while her biological father is black, and yet Sarah Jane refers to herself as half-caste because others call her half-caste and not because of her parentage. King states in a *Sunday Times* (Gous, 2017) article that: “Then you begin to realise, ‘I am black. Black is not as good as white’”. King further reveals that, whilst growing up, she was not “naturally curious about where I came

from" (Gous, 2017). The lack of curiosity about her origin explains her lack of awareness of her racial identity – she is however aware that she is different from white people and that people of colour were placed in a subordinate position to white people. Therefore, Sara-Jayne's awareness later, and as depicted in the autobiography, shows her growth towards identity awareness and interest in understanding the racial climate in South Africa.

3.5 Sara-Jayne reaches out to Kris

A teenage Sara-Jayne discovers a letter from Kris to baby Karoline, which brings both hope and confusion to Sara-Jayne about her mother's rejection and the conditions of their relationship. The letter from Kris, which was discovered while at the age of fourteen, was hidden in Angela's (adoptive mother) chest of drawers. King notes that the "letter is dated 25 July 1981. Almost a year after I was born" (King, 2017:85). In the letter, Kris shares the details about Sara-Jayne's birth story, as aforementioned. It should be noted that in the letter, she refers to King as Sarah Jane (the name her adoptive parents gave her). Kris ends off her letter with the following: "[You] will always be so close to my heart, no matter whatever you decide on reading this letter. Take care. All my love to you. Kris (your natural mother)" (King, 2017:89). Kris is honest and expresses her love to Sara-Jayne in her letter, and thus, Sara-Jayne feels comfortable and welcome enough to reach out to Kris and request more details about her parentage and identity. Kris moved from South Africa to Germany and then the United States, however, she continued sending the adoption agency her updated address (Gous, 2017). As a result, King decides to go to the adoptive agency to seek help on how to contact Kris.

Sara-Jayne contacts Kris to find out the truth about her birth story, make sense of her past and rid her feelings of rejection and shame. At the age of 21, on 21 July 2001, King travels to The Independent Adoption Society in Camberwell. A few days later, she writes a letter to her maternal grandparents stating that she has questions to ask Kris and needs their assistance in getting into contact with Kris, and apologises for bringing up the past (King, 2017:111-112). A few weeks later the adoption agency contacts Sara-Jayne to inform her that Kris has sent her a letter. Kris writes that Sara-Jayne's curiosity is understandable, however, her resurgence from the past is causing her and her family distress. She tells Sara-Jayne that she prefers keeping that part of her life in the past and that she should forget about it too. She also requests that Sara-Jayne stops contacting her family, but also finds out in Kris' letter that she has a brother (King, 2017:114-115). The rejection in Kris' letter leaves Sara-Jayne devastated. For five

months since Kris' letter, Sara-Jayne gyms obsessively, has unhealthy eating habits and immerses and excels at her studies for an LLB law degree (King, 2017:123).

Despite Sarah-Jane's maternal grandparents' and Kris' rejection, Sara-Jayne remains persistent in her mission to find the truth and contacts Kris again. This time, Sara-Jayne realises that she does not need Kris' truth, and that she can regain power through searching her own truth. Sara-Jayne decides to write Kris another letter, requesting the truth around Kris' shame toward her. Sara-Jayne states:

> I'm not asking for her approval, or her acceptance. I don't need an apology or for her to like me. I need the truth. And I need to ask her why she is ashamed of me. Why she is ashamed of me, of Karoline (King, 2017:126).

According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, one can regain agency through the search for the truth, as "the production of truth is a function of power" (2002:165). Thus, Sara-Jayne pursues the truth to make sense of her past and get rid of her feelings of rejection and shame. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002:7) further note that language becomes a medium through which narrators, and by extension authors, share their truth and experiences. Kris refuses to form a relationship with Sara-Jayne but allows communication through letters. Therefore, language through their letters serves as a medium through which Kris can share her truth with Sara-Jayne and allows Sara- Jayne to share her truth through her memoir. Sara-Jayne also makes it a point to find the truth within herself by reflecting on the cause behind the negative thoughts and feelings she has. Sara-Jayne notes: "[...] I realised that every bad thought, every unspeakable feeling I had ever had about myself had come from knowing that the only person on earth who was supposed to have loved me didn't, or couldn't or wouldn't" (King, 2017:173). Sara-Jayne is left to reflect on the feelings within herself to make sense of her estrangement from Kris, as Kris cannot offer her the truth on the shame she feels toward her nor help Sara-Jayne make sense of her feelings of rejection and abandonment. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002:165), the "other" regain their power and fight back through the search for the truth. Sara-Jayne, however, cannot find the truth about her feelings of rejection and abandonment from Kris. She also realises that she can find her own truth without relying on Kris' version of the truth. Thus, Sara Jane regains power through searching her own truth.

3.6 South Africa: home, healing and belonging

Sara-Jayne's identity crises and addictions spiral in Dubai, leaving South Africa as her only hope as a place of belonging and restoration. Sara-Jayne gets a job opportunity in Dubai in 2006, and moves with her boyfriend referred to as Computer Guy to Dubai. Despite the two having a loveless relationship, Sara-Jayne is co-dependent on him that she takes him along to Dubai. Sara-Jayne views her move to Dubai as an opportunity "to run, to disappear" (King, 2017:134). However, Sara-Jayne's alcohol addiction worsens and her relationship with the Computer Guy becomes more distant. Although Sara-Jayne tries to run from her experiences of rejection in England, she is indirectly confronted by her past and sense of displacement. Later, Sara-Jayne meets Jacques, a white South African, whom she describes as "every other expat in the desert, has fucked out and come to Dubai to be someone else" (King, 2017:138). Sara-Jayne shares with Jacques that she was born in South Africa but has not gone back to South Africa since her birth, and upon hearing this, Jacques remarks: "Oh, so you're not really South African!" (King, 2017:139) and laughs. Jacques' comment triggers Sara-Jayne's sense of not belonging and reminds her of her identity crises as noted in her statement that she is "[n]ot really African, not really British, not really black, not really white, not really their daughter, not really, not really anything" (King, 2017:139). Hence, Sara-Jayne feels alienated and reminded of the uncertainty about her race, citizenship and familial belonging, despite her escape and disappearance into a new country.

Sara-Jayne's alcohol addiction, her relationship with the Computer Guy and identity issues continue to spiral and this results in an emotional breakdown. Sara-Jayne has an emotional breakdown "screaming and crying, breaths coming in great deep gulps and gasps" (King, 2017:145) while driving to the mall. She even becomes suicidal as she considers driving into the car in front of her and "putting an end to everything" (King, 2017:145). Later on, Sara-Jayne is furious about her failed suicide attempt and the idea that she must deal with the consequences of her behaviour. Angela, her adoptive mother and the Computer Guy agree that Sara-Jayne needs professional help, and so she travels to, and is admitted to a rehabilitation centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, where she starts a process of internal reflection, healing and identity reconstruction.

South Africa is marked as a place of pain and restoration for Sara-Jayne. She is born and sent away from South Africa, which results in trauma. Later, and in her adult life, she is in South

Africa because of her addictions and seeking restoration. Sara-Jayne gives an account of the atmosphere of post-apartheid South Africa in her description that:

> Apartheid, I'm told, is over, and perhaps for those who lived through it, those who survived through it, and those who benefited from it, some things have changed. But to me, arriving with a blank slate, as an outsider, it's like watching a movie from the olden days. I'm met by a land still undeniably divided along colour lines, nowhere close to rebalancing its glaring inequalities. It is a country of haves and have-nots, rich, poor and poorest, and, mostly still black and white (King, 2017:164).

It is clear from the above that post-apartheid South Africa is still experiencing racial and economic inequality. Sara-Jayne also notes that South Africa's focus is still mostly on its black and white citizens. It reminds one of some coloureds' notion that "first we were not white enough and now we are not black enough" (Adhikari, 2013:xvii). This notion illustrates coloureds' continuous struggle to find their place in post-apartheid South Africa. It also shows the TRC's superficial reconciliation, which denies the implications of the racist apartheid system, the structures of inequality that are still in place and unaddressed, and the TRC's subdued conversations on the persistence of racism in post-apartheid South Africa (Valji, 2004:5).

Sara-Jayne experiences an internal battle in terms of her identity (parentage and race), faces discrimination in the United Kingdom and is perplexed about her ethnicity in South Africa. King shares her thoughts on South Africans' perplexity around her ethnicity: "[...] most of the people I will come across in South Africa, are baffled by me. They don't know what I am or where they must put me. This 'coloured'-looking, white-sounding, black-father-having, Sandton-born alien" (2017:165). Although Sara-Jayne makes this statement based on the people she comes across, her choice of words show her alienation. She is of black paternity but sounds white because she is raised by white parents, feels alienated because she is born in Sandton, but still needs to find her sense of belonging in South Africa. The first time Sara-Jayne hears someone use the term 'coloured', she nearly choked on the food she was eating (King, 2017:164). Her shock stems from the knowledge of the term "coloured", which is considered as offensive in the United Kingdom. According to Butterly (2015), the term coloured is considered a highly offensive racial slur in the United Kingdom and other countries such as the United States. The usage of the term "coloured" was seen as acceptable in the United Kingdom until the 1960s and 1970s. The term "coloured" was used to describe people

of colour, “which may imply that to be white is 'normal' or default” (Butterly, 2015). In contemporary United Kingdom and the United States of America the term ‘coloured’ is offensive. The “Coloured” category is associated with segregation, especially in the United States, where people of colour were segregated from white people in public areas and used separate public facilities. In South Africa, ‘Coloured’ is an official racial category, and is not regarded as offensive. What South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States have in common historically, is their racial segregation and the offence in the term coloured (some coloureds during apartheid South Africa refused to identify with the term ‘coloured’, as aforementioned).

Sara-Jayne’s significant discovery, when back in South Africa, is that of acceptance and healing within herself. Firstly, Sara-Jayne acknowledges the impact Kris’ absence has on her. King notes:

> I will never forget the day - or, more precisely the moment - I had to face head on the impact being given up by my biological mother had had on my entire life and on the person I had become (2017:168).

Secondly, Sara-Jayne's journey of acceptance and healing includes her bond with her therapist, Cindy, from a treatment facility in Cape Town. She opens up to Cindy about her self-hatred, insecurities, and the perception of herself as an unlovable mistake (King, 2017:172). Sara-Jayne provides insight into the nature of their relationship: "I started to see her as a mother figure, one who, unlike either Kris or my mum, could and would hold my pain and comfort the terrified little girl who screamed silently in the darkness inside her" (King, 2017:172). This statement reveals Sara-Jayne’s desire to be understood, comforted and assured. She identifies the nurturing characteristics of a mother in Cindy, which she does not find in Kris and Angela. Sara-Jayne's relationship with Cindy is not only important in her healing process but is in itself a feminist act, as Ahmed (2017:1) notes that fostering supportive relationships with others is part of living a feminist life.

Some of the ways in which Sara-Jayne find acceptance and healing within herself is through identifying the characteristics that withhold her from accepting her feelings of rejection, abandonment and gaining healing. King (2017:148) notes:

> I realise I have inherited the worst parts of her. I disappear when things get tough. I am a pretender, a fraud, a keeper of secrets, a liar. Like her, I do not want to take

> responsibility and I will do anything, it seems, to avoid the consequences of my own decisions. I have tried to run from something that will always follow me.

What is interesting to note is that Sara-Jayne only mentions the negative character traits that are similar to Kris'. Sara-Jayne only has the story around her adoption, Kris' letters and her second rejection of her, to use as the basis of Kris' character.

Sara-Jayne shares her experiences of trauma and in the process expresses her true lived experiences, builds her identity and relationships, and attempts at healing from her trauma. During Sara-Jayne's admission at the Ubuntu Addiction Treatment Centre in Cape Town, she and other patients are asked to write a letter to their addict selves, but Karoline decides to write to Kris, who she notes is "the one who had given me life but sentenced me to death" (King, 2017:173). Sara-Jayne writes about how she is unforgiving of Kris, wishes her pain, darkness, abandonment, fear, death and "tears for my tears, scars for my scars, and I want a loss for my loss, because I do not forgive you" (King, 2017:174). When Sara-Jayne reads the letter to the group, she realises that she has been running from the reality that her mother, who was supposed to have wanted her, did not want her. She blames herself for this and believes that there is something about her that made it impossible to love, "so much so that my own mother couldn't stand the thought of claiming me as her child. That was my rock bottom" (King, 2017:174). According to Clark (2010:4), narratives of resistance describe the painful truths of subjugations and mistreatments and emphasise consciousness. Therefore, Sara-Jayne's narrative captures her realisation of the truth, as she narrates the painful truth of Kris' rejection and her awareness of the effect Kris' rejection has on her.

Sara-Jayne's ethnicity and birth story continue to serve as barriers in her relationships with her biological family. She learns from one of Kris' letters that she has a half-brother called Alex and request her adoption agency to contact Ken, to inquire whether she can contact her brother, Alex. Ken did not respond; however, he may have informed Alex about Sara-Jayne because she received a call from Wendy at the agency informing her that Alex wants to meet her in London. Unfortunately, it was not possible for them to meet because she resided in Dubai at the time, so they maintained communication through email. Sara-Jayne eventually meets her brother Alex while in rehabilitation in South Africa. She feels fortunate to know her half-brother and forms close relationships with some of his paternal family members. Two factors that may have contributed to the lack of closeness in their relationship are Alex's racism and possible resentment toward Kris. Firstly, Sara-Jayne shares how she thought that her race

would not be an issue for Alex but is mistaken. She recalls an occasion where Alex introduces her to a friend and says: "'Have you met Sara before?' [...] You probably thought she was the maid!'" (King, 2017:186). Alex and his friend may have found this statement humorous and yet it is offensive, as he makes a racist stereotype in the presence of women of colour insinuates that the role of women of colour in a white household is only that of a domestic worker, thus subordinating Sara-Jayne because of her gender and race. Secondly, Sara-Jayne attributes Alex's resentment toward Kris to her affair with a black man. King (2017:186-187) notes:

> For the first time, the thought strikes me that perhaps at the root of his discomfort, his inability to fully accept me, his refusal to discuss the past, is the idea of Kris, his mother, having lain with my father? Is he secretly disgusted by the thought she could have done such a thing? Allowed herself to be taken by 'one of them'?

King's assumptions are valid when considering Alex's racism toward her. However, despite Alex's resentment toward his mother and his efforts in forming a relationship with Sara-Jayne, his loyalty remains with Kris. His loyalty is shown when he does not invite Sara-Jayne to his wedding because Kris is attending. Sara-Jayne reflects on Alex not inviting her to the wedding:

> I think about Kris and whether she will be able to put aside her own feelings [...] or whether her inability to make peace with the past will hold us all hostage. Most of all, I worry that I will be forced to become a secret again (King, 2017:185).

In this statement, Sara-Jayne also attributes Alex's reason for withholding from their bond to Kris' refusal to acknowledge Sara-Jayne. Sara-Jayne does not mention any desire to meet Kris or form a relationship with her, but only expects Kris to acknowledge her existence and not to allow their "past" to jeopardise her relationship with her brother. Kris' success in excluding Sara-Jayne from the family on this occasion triggers Sara-Jayne's fear of becoming their secret again. In a *Sunday Times* interview, King reveals how she feels about her birth story and Kris' decision to give her up for adoption after the publication of her autobiography: "It's such a negating, othering experience. It makes you the dirty secret. The thing that cannot be spoken" (Gous, 2017). Accordingly, King remains with the fear of being kept a secret, the shame around this secrecy and experiences a sense of otherness because of Kris' attitude toward her.

Nonetheless, King's writing of her memoir is indicative of her boldness and subjectivity. Mason (1980:210) notes that female authors acknowledge that "the disclosure of the female self is linked to the identification of some 'other'". The authors' recognition of this otherness allows them to write openly about their experiences (Mason, 1980:210). Thus, King's

identification of her otherness in Kris' life, allows her to write openly about her birth story and the effects Kris' rejection has on her. Nonetheless, King draws on her experiences to treat the consideration of the constitution as the "other" and instead writes about her otherness as a form of agency. Sara-Jayne's relationships with her parents, Alex, and her romantic relationships have taught her a valuable lesson that:

> Where once there was the overwhelming sense of having something to lose simply by being myself, I have come to the point of knowing that the only way I can save myself is to be authentic. I admit, it scares me (King, 2017:188).

Sara-Jayne learns that she does not have to change who she is to be loved, she should not strive for the approval of others and needs to love her authenticity to gain healing. Therefore, Sara-Jayne's identification of her otherness in Kris' life, the writing of her memoir and her decision to remain authentic and not live for the approval of others contributes to her healing and agency.

South Africa, the same country which under the apartheid regime's laws rejected baby Karoline, is now welcoming of Sara-Jayne during the post-apartheid dispensation. In December 2013, Sara-Jayne moves back to South Africa permanently. She feels a sense of belonging in South Africa. She notes: "[...] I will finally be returning home for good. [...] where I feel my most authentic self" (King, 2017:189). She returns on the day that Former President Mandela died and thus returns to a "South Africa in mourning, but also in celebration" (King, 2017:190). South Africa mourns the death of Mandela but also celebrates his legacy and contribution to the democracy of South Africa. The theme of mourning and celebration extends to Sara-Jayne's life story, how she left South Africa and 'died' in the United Kingdom and was mourned by Kris' friends and family in South Africa, and as an adult returns 'alive' and in a celebratory mood because she is home, where she feels her 'authentic' self.

A week after Sara-Jayne's return to South Africa she goes to Green Point Stadium where a memorial concert is being held in honour of former president Mandela. Sara-Jayne feels an atmosphere of unity whilst the crowd sings struggle songs. Although Sara-Jayne does not know the words of the songs, she sings along confidently: "I know the meaning. I am the meaning" (King, 2017:190). At this moment she feels "truly South African" (King, 2017:191). She finally feels as though she belongs and feels truly South African after feeling a childhood and early adult life while alienated from her place of birth and being exposed to discrimination and prejudice. Therefore, being South African is more than one's identity and duration of one's citizenship, it is a feeling of belonging in one's country.

Sara-Jayne left South Africa as baby Karoline and as such has no identity document (ID). Sara-Jayne then applies for an ID, and upon collection, she sees the names, Karoline Mary King. For a while, that is who she is. Sara-Jayne mentions the various milestones she achieves as Karoline, from opening her first South African bank account to casting her first vote as a South African. King (2017:194) notes:

> Each new event feels like a victory in what has always felt like a battle against my rightful and longed-for status as a South African. For a while, I feel like I need to take a back seat and allow Karoline to be who, in another life and another time, she may have been meant to be.

Karoline regains experience and freedom that was removed from her by Kris and the apartheid regime.

Sara-Jayne reflects on the significance of names and their contribution to identity formation. King associates the name “Karoline” with South Africa, her past, Kris’ abandonment and rejection, and associates the name “Sara-Jayne” with England, her new identity, her life with her adoptive family and her future. King notes that, "We cannot trade one for another with no regard for what once existed, and pretend that replacing the new with the old creates something original, pure, untainted" (2017:194). Sara-Jayne refers to herself and her adoptive parents’ notion of associating a new name with a new identity and a clean slate. She finds herself questioning Kris for naming her Karoline, and not leaving her nameless instead, as she notes, they "killed me off so early in the tragedy that they would have been forgiven for simply calling me 'baby'" (King, 2017:15). Throughout Sara-Jayne’s life, when she felt like life is overwhelming, she would switch her name to Karoline, realising her naivety to believe that a switch between her names Sara-Jayne and Karoline "would eradicate the feelings of insecurity, discontent and apartheid that plagued me so often" (King, 2017:15). These names do not only carry her identification, but a past, and feelings of discontent and insecurity. The name Karoline is a reminder of apartheid, the state and Kris’ rejection of her, and the name Sara-Jayne marks her adoption and the feelings of insecurity that comes with being an adoptee, whilst her name Sarah Jane is created to gain a new identity, and underline discontentment with her previous names. The switching between names contributes to Sara-Jayne’s narrative identity. According to McAdams and McLean (2013:233), a narrative identity is “a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose”. Therefore, Sara-Jayne switches between names, each

serving its purpose; Karoline associated with her past and her pursuit of truth, and Sara-Jayne as part of her identity reconstruction and future. However, Sara-Jayne believes otherwise. She believes that: "they had wanted to disregard what had come before, whitewash the dirt of the past and start anew. To imprint their particular mark of ownership on us for their own peace of mind. A tangible stamp that we were really theirs" (King, 2017:195). Just as Kris wanted to forget about her past with Karoline, Angela and Malcolm wanted to erase the idea.

South Africa marks the place of Sara-Jayne's journey to finding her truth through confronting her past, rekindling and bidding farewell to the life of Karoline, and finding healing and belonging. After living her life as Karoline for a while in South Africa, Sara-Jayne goes to the Department of Home Affairs and changes her name to Sara-Jayne; just "A few clicks on the keyboard and Karoline is gone" (2017:195). What is significant about this is that after 30 years of Sara-Jayne alternating between the two names, her name is removed within seconds. It is almost as if Karoline has died her second death. King is aware that she will be reminded of her identity as Karoline and has come to accept it to avoid feeling troubled about the past. Sara-Jayne's state of duplicity between Karoline and Sara-Jayne has prevented her from reconciling the truth. However, now that Karoline is gone, she feels as though she has been able to save Sara-Jayne (King, 2017:198). Sara-Jayne has also made peace with the idea that Kris is not able to give her the "truth", and that Kris' truth is not the only way to find healing, but she can find healing within herself. King (2017:198) notes "it is my own truth that will lead me to where I am supposed to be". Hence, the narrative's significance lies in the author's consciousness in pursuit of her own truth (Gusdorf, 1956:44). Sara-Jayne indeed seeks her truth through her feelings, life choices and experiences.

In the prologue to King's memoir, Sara-Jayne mentions that upon her meeting with her father, he tells her: "'Just don't write a book about it'" (King, 2017:9). Fortunately, King did not follow his request and wrote the book. King's publication of her memoir is a form of agency, she narrates her truth and presents her own narrative. King also mentions in her memoir how her father would react to her decision to write a memoir: "He would be disappointed. I had been silent, hidden away for so long, but now I had come out of hiding. I had risen from the grave and I had a voice" (King, 2017:9-10). Smith and Watson (2001:22) note that the process of writing enables the writer to find "words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable". Writing provides the author psychological relief through the expression of their emotions (Smith and Watson, 2001:22). Therefore, Sara-Jayne breaks her silence by writing about her experiences and regains her voice.

3.7 Conclusion

Ultimately, *Killing Karoline* captures King's narrative of the rejection of baby Karoline by Kris and South Africa's apartheid regime. The autobiography also describes the author's experiences as an adoptee and the identity crises, feelings of abandonment and insecurity it comes with, as well as her journey towards accepting her past and search for healing. King (2017:197) notes that she cannot continue to harbour her anger towards Kris whilst writing her memoir, and that although she still has questions, she found most of the answers within herself. The narrative's significance lies in the author's consciousness in pursuit of her own truth (Gusdorf, 1956:44) and King's performances of healing in the sense that she writes about her past experiences of trauma with a new sense of agency and hope for healing. King's return to South Africa for rehabilitation, and later her permanent residence, marks her recovery from her addictions, acceptance of her past, restoration and belonging in South Africa. Finally, King's experiences are narrated in a way that recollects South Africa's apartheid history and in that way underlines the link between her individual traumatic history as an adoptee and other lived experiences, and her identity reformation and restoration in South Africa.

Chapter 4 – Life of exile and navigating a sense of belonging in South Africa in *Always Another Country*

4.1 Introduction

Sisonke Msimang's *Always Another Country* (2017) is a memoir of exile and home. The memoir describes how the narrator's freedom fighter parents met, her family's life in exile as well as her feelings of euphoria after returning to her homeland, South Africa, and how these shift as she settles, works, marries and experiences first-hand the post-apartheid conditions and their effects on the former excluded South Africans. Msimang's father (referred to as Baba), joins an illegal army in 1962 and flees the country for Russia the following year. For years, he travels and works alongside other comrades to establish a military base. Years later, he meets his wife (referred to as Mummy) and both continue to travel around due to their anti-apartheid activities. Msimang and her sisters are born in the 1970s in Zambia, where the headquarters of the African National Congress (ANC) was situated. However, her family moves from Zambia to Kenya, Canada, back to Kenya, then to Ethiopia and eventually to South Africa, which the author refers to as "home", after the 1990 release of Nelson Mandela from prison, and the unbanning of anti-apartheid organisations (Msimang, 2017:1-2). Msimang cements herself in South Africa as her education and work opportunities contribute to her social upward mobility. The narrator reflects on the injustice and inequalities she witnesses in South Africa, and her disappointment in the ANC. She also reflects on the choices and opportunities available to her, and her alienation due to the privileges accrued from social class/status. Msimang, however, takes agency by addressing the injustices and inequalities in South Africa through her writing. Msimang' narration of her experiences in exile and home contributes to South African literature on autobiographies, apartheid, exile and South African politics.

This chapter examines Msimang's life experiences through her country's history, her individual traumatic, and other lived experiences, her pursuit of home and belonging, and how this leads to the reconstruction of her identity. It also explores how Msimang claims her place in South Africa, the country which under apartheid rule excluded and oppressed people of colour. I draw on life narratives, memory, and feminist theories in my analysis of Msimang's experiences of exile and the euphoria of returning home to South Africa. The analysis focuses on Msimang's

longing for, and pride for her country, South Africa, and unpacks her reflections on personal experiences of injustice and rage against ANC's hypocrisy. The key concepts considered here are experiences of exile, attempted rape, xenophobia and racism, and identity reformation. Msimang takes agency by standing firm in her family values, working toward social upward mobility, and through believing in her dreams and her family. Theories on feminism, memory and life narratives reviewed in Chapter 1, in particular the concepts of race, gender, narration, identity, memory and belonging as discussed by Bartels et al. (2019), Derbel (2019), Decker and Baderoon (2018), Dlamini (2018), Ahmed (2017), McAdams and McLean (2013), Clark (2010), Nuttall (2006), Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002), Smith and Watson (2001), Ricoeur (1996), Nuttall (1994) and Crenshaw (1991) are used in the analysis of Msimang's experiences of exile and trauma brought about by attempted rape, xenophobia and racism. I argue that although Msimang encounters racism and alienation in exile, she learns important life lessons, remains hopeful in her dream of a liberated South Africa and reconstructs her identity as an adult during the early post-apartheid era. The chapter ultimately highlights Msimang's autobiographical narrator's identity reconstruction in exile and reconstruction of identity when back home. The chapter is heavily informed by McAdams and McLean's (2013:233) view that identity reconstruction takes place after an individual evolves and reconstructs his or her "past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose".

4.2 African feminism in apartheid and the post-apartheid era

Msimang's *Always Another Country* is set in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa and other countries in which the narrator and her family reside as exiles. Msimang experiences racism and inequality and writes about the injustices she endures and her rage against ANC's hypocrisy later in her life experiences. Her migration from Zambia to Kenya, Canada, back to Kenya, then to Ethiopia and eventually to South Africa, life challenges and relationships with others, forces her to think about home and a sense of belonging love and relationships. Msimang's narrative also depicts how women in history try to deal with injustices and make sense of their lives, which is under focus in this study.

The narrator recounts her experiences from a gendered margin, which makes it necessary to examine her lived experiences using African feminist' framework. According to Steady (in

Decker and Baderoon (2018:219-220) "'true feminism' stemmed from 'an actual experience of oppression, a lack of the socially prescribed means of ensuring one's wellbeing, and a true lack of access to resources for survival'". African feminism differs from Western and International feminism in the sense that International feminism only focuses on the experiences of women in dominant social groups (white, middle and upper class women) and not those in subordinate social groups (women of colour, especially those in the lower social class). As a result, women's personal experiences are not relevant to international feminism. What is considered relevant are the political experiences in the sense that women share experiences such as relationships or motherhood because of patriarchy, and not because their personal circumstances (economic, social and political) are the same (Schuster, 2017:648). Ducille (2006:29-30) notes that International feminism in the eastern part of the United States in particular, focused on the social upward mobility of white, middle and upper class women, and their rights to own property. Women of colour, immigrant women and the descendants of female ex-slaves, on the other hand, were fighting for their basic human rights. There is a need for women of different races, classes, nationalities and cultures to forge an alliance to prevent the exploitation and violation of women of colour, and to fight for the advancement of the rights of all women (Rajan and Park, 2005:59). This can be achieved through African feminism which takes a humanistic approach as it does not focus on the gender of the individual but on the basis of the individual being human. According to Lewis (2001:4), "African feminist dialogues have become increasingly less concerned with critiquing western feminisms and progressively more goal- oriented and pro-active". African feminism aims to free individuals from their political, social, economic and cultural oppressions that are based on racial, sexual, class and cultural biases. I particularly focus on Liberal and Black feminism as branches of African feminism. Liberal feminism focuses on achieving gender equality through political and legal reform within the framework of liberal democracy. Black feminist theory argues for Black women's comprehension of the negative effects of sexism, racism, and class discrimination.

Colonialism and patriarchy contribute to the subjugation of women, thus it is necessary to discuss the effects of colonialism and patriarchy by extension. Dlamini (2018:11395) comments on colonial rule and the sustenance of patriarchy as follows:

> […] the colonial epoch was an era of hostile relationship between Black and White men. The aggression was abated by both patriarchy's usage of the female subjects as a field of power. As a result, African women changed tutelage from a private Black male

> patriarch in the home into a public White male patriarch in the city. White patriarchs were very cooperative in this regard because it ensured that their imaginary threat, the black woman, was kept in her position, also, the cooperation was meant to heal the rift of unpleasant relations between them and Black men, thus keep the system of indirect rule in place.

However, "Black women emerged within these cracks with newer subjectivities that both deconstructed neo-traditional cultures, colonialism and its various spheres of limitations" (Dlamini, 2018:11395). Discourses on African feminism by feminist theorists such as Norwood (2013), Msimang (2002), and Bozzoli (1983) note that African women deal with patriarchal power (Bozzoli, 1983: 171), colonialism, slavery, (Norwood, 2013:225) oppression, exploitation and suppression (Msimang, 2002:7), which they resist by expressing these experiences through writing (Bozzoli, 1983:171). The abolishment of apartheid led to the liberation of Africans, and yet, other categories of identities such as race (white) and gender (male) are still privileged and dominate over others. Although Africans fight and succeed in being recognised in society, women may continue to be marginalised based on their gender (Kandiyoti, 1991:434-435). The fight to enhance women's conditions becomes a continuous one and writing about their experiences is one way of healing and educating others. Therefore, the depiction of women's life experiences and the use of the life narrative mode (such as Msimang's memoir) serves as a form of agency as the protagonist and narrator is [her] own representative and owns the story of [her] experiences whilst allowing for the representation of personal and social history and memory (Aurell and Davis, 2019:508).

It is imperative for women to educate themselves about their country's history, and in the process be cognisant of their marginalisation and how this shapes views of themselves. Msimang's memoir captures the awareness that although the end of apartheid led to the liberation of South Africans, other categories of identification such as gender, are still prominent and play a role in creating oppressive social divisions against the gendered other – this is depicted through her experiences of oppression. Msimang's text captures her consciousness of the interconnectedness of gender, marginalisation, race, and socio-economic status, whilst being postcolonial through setting her own schema according to African feminisms, which Chiweshe (2018:79) notes is present in some South African texts. This post-apartheid reality invokes Kandiyoti's (1991:434-435) views on how African fighters' success against colonial domination is usually followed by a post-colonial condition in which women continue to be marginalised based on their gender. Hence, the feminist fight is a continuous

one – Msimang's writing about her experiences as a black woman, is one way of healing and educating others.

The link between feminism and the female writer's process of making sense of one's experiences and confronting one's trauma is significant here. Drawing from life narrative theories in the analysis of Msimang's memoir helps to expose the nature of Msimang's personality and experiences with feminism, and assist in mapping her subject formation. Sara Ahmed's text, *Living a Feminist Life* (2017) and other feminist texts assist me in framing the issues of trauma and memory in Msimang's text. Ahmed's work allows for a critical thinking about feminist living and thinking through different kinds of feminist activities within the broader South African context. Feminism equips women with hope and energy to refuse and rebel against marginalisation.

4.3 Childhood experiences of discrimination, attempted rape and the pressures of exile

The memoir narrator, who happens to be Msimang, recollects her childhood experiences in various cities as an exile and person of colour, and reflects on how these experiences remain in her mind as an adult. These experiences are examined through the concepts of childhood, gender, rape, the psychological trauma suffered by women, being in exile, memorying and narration. The narrator of Msimang's memoir recalls a childhood memory of growing up in Lusaka at Burley Court – just off Church Road and close to the centre of Lusaka. A new generation of urban Africans reside at the vibrant Burley Court as noted in Msimang's description that, "[e]ach block smelled like *kapenta* fish and frying meat" and one could "hear the tinny sounds of Thomas Mapfumo's 'Matiregerera Mambo' or the elegant chords of Letta Mbulu's 'There's Music in the Air'" (Msimang, 2017:7). She also recalls the experiences she encountered in her interactions with a boy named Terrence, known for teasing and indirectly threatening other children through his jokes. The following is Terrence's joke Msimang retells in the novel:

> You! Your legs are so thin. Eh! Please eat so that I can beat you nicely and not worry about breaking you! Isn't it that every night when your mother calls you upstairs for food she just pretending? How can you be eating and still staying so thin-thin like this? (Msimang, 2017:9).

According to Clark (2010:8) life narratives serve as the "unfolding of the dialectic of the self and the other". Msimang is reminded of her exile status through Terrance's jokes and unfolds

"the self" through depicting the vulnerability that comes with being an exile. As a result, the narrator needs to acknowledge him or herself as the narrator of the other's suffering (Clark, 2010:8), and in *Always Another Country*, the narrator acknowledges herself as the author of the childhood trauma she experiences in exile.

Msimang describes herself in a way contrary to Terrence's and knows that she cannot make the same kind of jokes like him because her friends could either laugh at her jokes, or find it offensive. Msimang notes, "the pack could turn against me" and "you are in tears because someone has called you a refugee" (Msimang, 2017:9). In addition, the hesitance to engage in jokes, and the fear of being called a refugee publicly shows how individuals in exile are treated as outsiders and isolated. As a result, the author reflects on the senses of child and exile induced alienation depicted in the novel and the nuances on child identity. Msimang (2017:9) notes: "I spoke Nyanja – though not as fluently as the rest because I was not Zambian. This meant that, although I had all the hallmarks and memories of an insider, I wasn't one". Msimang is aware of her experiences in exile and how they led to her constitution as the "other", and she writes about her experiences with an awareness of her feelings of alienation. Mason (1980:210) notes that female authors acknowledge "the real presence and recognition of another consciousness and the disclosure of the female self is linked to the identification of some 'other'". The recognition of this otherness allows the female authors to write openly about their experiences (Mason, 1980:210). Msimang is aware that although she speaks Nyanja like the Zambians in Lusaka, and share the same memories as them, she is not an insider. Her identity in terms of her nationality is a determining factor of her belonging in Lusaka. Her recognition of these factors allows her to write openly and consciously about her alienation and the factors that contribute to it. Language becomes a medium through which narrators, and by extension, authors, share their truth and experiences (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:7), and express their sense of otherness (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:11). According to Basil (2011:366):

> […] as xenophobic conflicts go on in any society, the surviving children watch the brutal and antisocial scenes and they are psychically traumatized. The evils and criminality of all these are mirrored in part in children especially those living in conflict–ridden zones.

Accordingly, these children's behaviour of calling each other "refugees" are mirrored xenophobic behaviour they witness from adults. They consciously hurt one another, but are perhaps unaware of the psychological effect it has on the victim. This invokes Smith and Watson's (2001:24) view that, "The writers' "[…] 'experience' are already an interpretation of the past and of [their] place in a culturally and historically specific present". In this way, we are compelled to compare the race-based discrimination and categorisation as outsiders endured by Msimang in Zambia with that of her race in apartheid South Africa. Both serve as narrative indicators of the discrimination in both countries, and the trauma caused by the racism and xenophobia Msimang had to endure as a child in exile.

In addition to Msimang's experiences of xenophobia, the narrator and her family are ostracised and othered by some of their Zambian neighbours at Burley Court. The gossips at Burley Court, who Msimang's mother scornfully refers to as Rungarers, ostracise Msimang and her family for being South African, their way of life and because the family only has female children. Msimang (2017:13) notes:

> Mummy possessed a number of traits that would doom her to a failed marriage. For one thing, she worked too much, sometimes only arriving home after six, while Geurilla came and went whenever he pleased, collecting insects that were ostensibly related to his 'studying' and dragging the children along with him in dungarees and denim. […] It was obvious that he wanted to turn those three poor little things into boys – their hair was cut short and they did not have pierced ears, among other notable offenses.

The gossips draw on Msimang's parents' parenting styles and the way they handle domestic and work roles. Her mother is employed and her father who is mostly occupied with research takes care of the children. Their roles do not conform to the traditional roles of the father as the breadwinner and the mother as the caretaker, hence the Rangarers judgement. The neighbours also have traditional patriarchal notions about men's desires to only father female children as noted in their comments. They laughably held the view that Msimang and her siblings appearance serve as "proof" that their father wanted boys because they were not stereotypically girly. Msimang's parents challenge stereotypical roles of marriage, motherhood and fatherhood, hence, the Rangarers judgement of their marriage and parenting.

It should also be noted that Msimang experiences traumatic child exclusions, which include being othered/ostracised through adults who gossip about their parents. Msimang, her sisters and Terrence play a game of hide-and-seek when Msimang eavesdrops on Mama Tawona and

the Rungarers gossiping about her mother. Mama Tawona tells the Rungarers that: “Instead she will be crying, crying, crying tears of sorrow. Eh-eh! Because men are like that. If they don’t get their heir, they will leave you. Until she has a son, she will never be guaranteed that man’s love” (Msimang, 2017:20). Msimang is devastated by the Rungarers gossip and feels insecure about her place in Zambia and in her father’s heart. This results in her psychological displacement. Nonetheless, the memoir shows moments of positive self-awareness and growth constituted in Msimang as she deals with the gossip. Msimang, the narrator conveys to her father what the Rungarers said:

> She said that, that you only want boys and that we don’t belong here in Zambia we foreigners and we should go back where we came from and then she said we don’t even belong to you, that only boys belong to fathers, girls are a curse (Msimang, 2017:23).

The revelation of the Rungarers’ views is met by the comforting silence made by narrator’s father, which assures her that what Mama Tawona said was not true. Ultimately, the narrator learns that although they do not belong in their community, they belong to one another as father and daughter (Msimang, 2017:23).

Msimang endures an attempted rape, which leaves her with another psychological scar. In the year 1981, before Msimang's parents left Lusaka for Nairobi, Msimang, at the age of 7, is dropped off at her paternal uncle Stan and his wife, Angela's house - the Sangweni house. On this particular day, the Sangweni’s servant, Praisegod, takes Msimang to school on his bike. After school, Praisegod calls Msimang to show her a grasshopper, but with the intention of luring her to his quarters. Msimang hesitates and hopes her aunt would call her, but enters his quarters nonetheless. As soon as they enter his quarters, Msimang (2017:53) describes:

> He moves quickly and is suddenly on top of me and then I am afraid. [...] everything in me wants to live and die at once. But it is too late to decide which way it will go - life or death. [...] my powder-blue shorts are off and I am fighting to keep my panties on [...] then he is ramming against me with his body and trying to prise my legs apart [...] then he asks, 'Is it nice?' I say yes. The 'yes' unlocks a door and he tenses up. He stops holding my arms so tightly and he just lies there. [...] I am sore from where his fingers have gouged, and from where his penis has tried to enter me. He has not succeeded but he has hurt me.

Msimang and Praisegod get up, and walk out whilst holding hands to Praisegod's quarters after the attempted rape. She lets go of his hand soon after, and thinks to herself: "I make up my mind about what has just happened. I solemnly swear that he will never touch me again. I do not even cry, because I know in myself, exactly what I need to do to be safe" (Msimang, 2017:54). Msimang thinks of the ways in which she can prevent it from happening again and to keep herself safe, instead of calling out Praisegod for attempting to rape her. Therefore, Msimang's recount of the attempted rape is a narrative of resistance as Clark (2010:4) notes: narratives of resistance narrate the painful truths of subjugations and mistreatments, and emphasise consciousness.

Msimang cries and refuses to stay with Praisegod every time she is asked to, but her parents and the Sangwenis never bothered asking why. She never tells them either, because "[t]elling would put everyone in the unbearable position of having to do something about it" (Msimang, 2017:55). Msimang found herself in a complex situation, hence, her decision to remain silent about the attempted rape. It should also be noted that, Msimang's decision to remain silent about the attempted rape does not indicate that she forgot what happened – she can recall the memory of her rape but chooses to remain silent. Ironically though, silence protects the perpetrators of injustice and reproduces injustice. Witnesses (in the case of Msimang, a victim) of injustice usually remain silent because of the consequences of identifying and speaking up against perpetrators (Ahmed, 2017:260). This invokes Susan's encounter with her perpetrator in *The Camp Whore* that rekindles the memory of rape and other associated trauma. Radstone and Hodgkin (2017:11) argue that "the unspeakable or the unwitnessable makes its incognisable mark on the mind as traumatic memory, or in the body, as embodied memory". These unspeakable memories survive through "silent bodily gestures and movements" (Radstone and Hodgkin, 2017:12). As a result, both Msimang and Susan's encounters with their perpetrators Praisegod and Hamilton-Peake respectively, render them mute to any verbal reaction, whilst Msimang's only physical reaction are her cries and refusal to stay with Praisegod. Msimang and Susan embody their trauma, as they were silenced through attempted rape and rape respectively, and are silenced by their encounters with their perpetrators and their recollection of their experiences. In *The Camp Whore*, Susan refers to the Anglo-Boer War as "her" war: "That war was mine" (Smith, 2017:12). The war is "hers" in the sense that she is a citizen affected by the war, but more importantly, because she fought a personal war against Hamilton-Peake and her other two perpetrators within the Anglo-Boer War. Boje (2016:6)

notes that rape is used “as a ‘weapon of war’ the violent means of maintaining patriarchy and the subjugation of women”. Hamilton-Peake uses rape as a weapon of war within a war to subjugate Susan, and, Praisegod uses it as a means of maintaining patriarchy and subjugation in his country, Zambia, to subjugate Msimang, an exile. The contexts of the authors differ; however, their perpetrators’ aim to subjugate them and to maintain patriarchy are prevalent in both events.

The consequences of the attempted rape according to Msimang include her fear of being viewed as “altered - damaged and no longer innocent” (Msimang, 2017:55) by her family and her family possibly questioning why she did not scream during the attempted rape. Hence, Msimang’s decision to withhold the experiences from her family. In addition to her family’s possible judgement, Msimang is left with emotional and psychological scars. According to Gqola (2015:15), the emotional and psychological scars should be dealt with solely by the victim. Msimang bears her own trauma and fears being ostracised by her community. George and Martínez (2002:110) state, “a victim who refrains from reporting avoids the potential ‘secondary victimization’”. Acquaintance victims are blamed more than perpetrators for their rape because of their acquaintance with their perpetrators (George and Martínez, 2002:116). As a result, the possible questioning of why she did not scream is an indirect way of blaming the narrator for not reacting. In spite of all this, Msimang notes that as an adult she still vividly remembers the attempted rape and comforts herself with this thought "What matters most is that [...] I said yes so that I could live" (Msimang, 2017:60). Msimang remains firm in her reaction to the attempted rape that saying yes to Praisegod was her way of choosing survival. The memoir and the narrator’s recollection of the attempted rape serves as an extension of her healing and reconstruction of her identity.

Msimang and her family travel from Zambia to Kenya and then to Canada to take exile. However, they experience racism and this contributes to Msimang’s childhood trauma and constitution of a fragmented sense of the self. Msimang and her sisters need citizenship, but South Africa is still plagued by apartheid, and Kenya and Zambia did not have the revolutionary spirit her parents possess; thus, they planned to move to Canada in 1984, a decade before South Africa’s independence, and apply for citizenship there. Moving to another country does not guarantee a life free of discrimination; as Msimang experiences racism in Canada as well. Msimang recalls how, at the age of 11, an unidentified male classmate and some Canadian

classmates call her a monkey with none of her other classmates coming to her defence as they laugh and join in by imitating monkey sounds. Msimang feels humiliated, cries during the incident and shares how the event still haunts her as an adult: "I still hate him. […] there are some hurts we nurture to guard against forgetting" (Msimang, 2017:74). Msimang is discriminated against on the basis of her race as a black female and is ostracised because she is an exile. Susan in *The Camp Whore* is discriminated against in the workplace because she is a woman, while her gender and foreigner status results in rape at the Winburg concentration camp. Karoline in *Killing Karoline* (2017) is discriminated against by the apartheid government and society based on her race, which leads to her adoption and a subsequent life marked by identity crises. Nevertheless, Msimang's refusal to forget her childhood trauma of racism in Canada, indicates the lasting impact that trauma has in her adulthood.

Msimang's narration of the attempted rape incident is also significant in reflecting the theme of memory and growth of consciousness, and dealing with trauma. According to Ricoeur (1996:15), memory is the link between one's consciousness and the past. The process of narrating a memory is an attempt at resurrecting and reliving the moment of the experience (Ricoeur, 1996:20). Thus, Msimang's recollection of her memory is an act of her reliving her experience. She narrates a past event of racism and is conscious of her hatred toward her childhood perpetrator. Language becomes a medium through which narrators, and by extension authors, share their truth and experiences, attain a "post-colonial voice" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:7) and express their sense of otherness (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:11). Msimang shares her true feelings of hatred and her unwillingness to forgive her childhood perpetrator. Her unwillingness to forget the incident indicates the degree of trauma the incident caused her. The narrator, Msimang (2017:75), further notes that:

> remembering is a form of preparation; because, one day soon, one of my children will come in crying because their skin will have captured the attention of someone's pink child and I will have to hold them through the awful discovery that something as simple as skin has been perverted by so many.

Therefore, Msimang's memory of her childhood experience of racism serve as preparation in making her future children aware of racism and comforting them through these painful experiences. In addition, Msimang guards against forgetting her childhood experiences of trauma, namely xenophobia, attempted rape and racism, and makes a conscious decision to

prepare her children against possible similar experiences, and prevent or minimise trauma constituted from being ostracised.

The 11-year-old Msimang also reflects on the way she and her family are not viewed in high regard in Canada, and only recognised for their difference in race and nationality. Msimang and her family are used to the Kenyan ideals of success and upward social mobility and the pride it comes with. The situation in Canada is however different:

> We had been indulged not in the usual way that one spoils a child, but in the way that only a community of exiles can do. We weren't just children – we were representatives of ideals. We were a clean slate and a fair go and a new breed and everything our parents wished for in South Africa. And now, here we were – far away for the sake of freedom, but no more special than anyone else (Msimang, 2017:91).

Msimang and her family are special to the Kenyans they are acquainted with in Nairobi, as they represent the ideals they strive for – to be educated and to succeed in the workplace. In Canada, however, they are not special as the Canadians are not familiar with their struggle for liberation and the importance they place on upward social mobility. It is ironic that the Msimangs' do not gain recognition for their progress in a place in which they seek upward social mobility. Unlike in Nairobi where the Msimangs' are spoiled with pride as they are celebrated for their education and careers and they are trusted, in Canada, they are not seen as representatives of a nation but as individuals residing in Canada. Msimang and her family live out their values of success in every country they reside in irrespective of the cultural climate of that country.

One of the challenges Msimang faces as an exile is her inability to fully belong to a country as she is frequently uprooted when she starts to feel a sense of belonging. Despite Msimang's struggle to fit in and the racism and bullying she endures in Canada, she finally settles in and feels as though she belongs. However, her parents inform her that they were moving back to Nairobi because her father had to start work as the county director for a large international humanitarian agency in Nairobi in the following January. Her sisters are excited and oblivious to the uprooting of moving from one country to another. Msimang's mother detects Msimang's discontent about moving but tries to deviate from the situation and tells her about their Canadian citizenship and that they will be in Kenya as expatriates and spend Christmas with the Sangwenis. Msimang reflects on the challenges of being an exile: "I am tired of always being the one who has just arrived, tired of leaving just when I am starting to feel like I finally belong" (Msimang, 2017:101). The challenges exiles face are "their emotional links with and

dependence on their past, the refugees' marginality within or identification with their former home country" (Kunz, 1981:42). Wherever they reside as exiles, they identify with the inhabitants of that country, take on the culture of that country and feel a sense of belonging. As a result, leaving the country they connect with dislocates the narrator, just as it does to other exiles and refugees. The production of life narratives and transformation of the narrator's perspective results in new ways of questioning social reality. As a result, Msimang's narrative allows for the author's self-awareness and identity reformation (Anderson, 2006:130) as she becomes aware of the effects that belonging to a country has on one's identity.

4.4 Returning to South Africa, racism and the displacing effects of exile

The narrator visits South Africa for the first time with her aunt and uncle who had been offered a job at a university in the then Natal Province. They visit after the 1990 release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the unbanning of anti-apartheid political organisations. This offers Msimang an opportunity to experience the conditions in South Africa and connect with family in the now KwaZulu-Natal province. The visit from Nairobi, as the narrator was staying there with Uncle Stan and Aunty while her parents stayed in Ethiopia where her father worked, introduces the narrator to the social and political issues, such as racism defining South Africa that demand her constitution of agency. Msimang recalls an evening when she and her cousins, Slumko, Mandi and Lindi, witness racism at a café in Johannesburg – the evening before her and the Sangwenis' leave for Pietermaritzburg. A white waitress chases a black elderly beggar away and pours water on him much to the rage of the author and her cousins who call the waitress out on her behaviour. Msimang labels the waitress: "You're racist. That's your problem. You're racist and you think you can talk to him any way you like because he's black" (Msimang, 2017:118). According to Ahmed (2017:21), feminism is ignited with a sense of issues, such as inequality and prejudice, which cause great public interest and ignite feminists to respond in combatting inequality. As a result, feminism is a functional reaction to the inequalities in the world, as we need to make sense of what does not make sense. The narrator's identification and addressing of the waitress' racism, makes the author a willing participant in fighting against racism. Spivak (in Bartels et al, 2019:159) suggests that women claim agency by being empowered to "fight for specific interests in temporary alliances and marks their entry into discourse as speaking subjects". Therefore, Msimang's speaking against racism is a form

of claiming her agency and subjectivity as a black female South African in a country that is transitioning to multi-racial democracy.

Msimang and her cousins do not back down in their fight against racism with the café waitress. The waitress does not show any remorse but snaps back at Msimang and says: "Don't tell me I'm a racist. You foreigners think you know everything about this country but you know nothing. This isn't America, this is South Africa" (Msimang, 2017:118). The waitress is not only racist, but xenophobic. She suggests that they do not belong in South Africa and thus do not have the right to stand up against racism – taking into consideration that the apartheid government was still in power at the time. The other customers at the café chime in to defend the waitress, but Msimang and her cousins do not back down. Msimang (2017:119) notes "We have found the racism our parents fled and we intend to mine it for all it is worth". It is necessary for feminists to snap, and to speak angrily and harshly when they have had enough if the strategy gives them the opportunity to be heard (Ahmed, 2017:190). Hence, Msimang's bold reaction to the waitress can be understood from this angle and viewed as her opportunity to be heard and to continue their parents' fight against racism as South Africa transitions from apartheid to the post-apartheid era.

The visit also enables the narrator to know more about her father and her identity. Msimang and the Sangwenis travel to Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, to visit Mkhulu, Msimang's paternal grandfather the day following the racist incident at the café. The narrator describes Mkhulu's stories of Msimang's father during his earlier years in exile. While her grandfather narrates these events, Msimang notes: "There is no space for mementos when you are running. It is as though he did not exist until he became my father" (Msimang, 2017:126). The grand parent's recollection enables the narrator to deal with another form of exile she had been exposed to, which is that of not knowing her father well. Connolly (2008:296) notes that "lack of attachment to family fosters an emotional exile in which she feels disconnected from her origins". Msimang's unfamiliarity with her father's upbringing and political movements during his youth disconnects her from her father's origins. This gap is covered by Mkhulu's stories and the pictures of Msimang's father in his youth that Mkhulu shows to Msimang. Upon Msimang seeing the picture, she thinks to herself:

> It never crossed my mind that they took out his pictures and looked at them. That they cried when they thought about him and prayed for him to be safe. I was too busy wondering about them and mourning their absence in my life (Msimang, 2017:127).

The narrator's understanding of the self-identity in relation to the narrative one tells about oneself, and the unfolding of the narratives of others about the narrator, create an identity that is intertwined in narratives. These narratives are merged into the life narratives of significant others, and stories that appeal to a group of people and their past, tributes, shared history and counter-memories (Clark, 2010: 5). Msimang and her paternal family's narratives are intertwined as both parties mourn and long for each other, and they share experiences of exile and the loneliness it comes with. Msimang's meeting with her family is an emotional one, she finds herself crying over the family members she never got to know and because of her gratitude to be home. People living in exile experience loneliness and long for familiar voices, surroundings and belonging to a community (Connolly, 2008:291-292). This explains Msimang's longing for her family, to know them and her father, and to feel a sense of belonging in South Africa. More importantly, Msimang's connection to her origins in South Africa allows for the author's self-awareness, identity reformation, and provides the author with a sense of belonging in South Africa. This is also followed by a return to Nairobi with Aunty Angela to complete her high school education, while Uncle Stan remains in KwaZulu-Natal for work. After Msimang completes her high school education, she starts her tertiary education at Macalester College in St Paul, Minnesota, United States of America.

4.5 Sexual harassment, racism and agency in the United States of America

Msimang's experiences in the United States of America are defined along the gap between the view of the country as "the home of the brave and the land of the free" (Msimang, 2017:148) and experiences of racism and harassment that take place in this idealised nation. On Msimang's first day in the United States of America, she is harassed by a male character whom she calls "Trouble". He meets her outside the university and follows her back to her residence, insisting that she gives him her phone number. Msimang is able to escape the harassment after asking two girls to walk with her to her room. The next day however, he returns to her residence and bangs on all the doors in her corridor, demanding her to open her door. When he knocks on the last door, he angrily says: "I will fucking see you again, College girl. You hear me? I'm gonna get that number" (Msimang, 2017:147) and leaves. Msimang highlights in her narration the vulnerability of women and their exposure to harassment and violence. Msimang notes cynically that:

> there is nowhere in the world any of us can go to be safe because America - the home of the brave and the land of the free - has just proven to me that, when you are a girl, Trouble is always just around the corner and you never know what he is going to look like (2017:148).

Her narration is significant here, some women silently tolerate sexual harassment and other abuses to avoid further humiliation and psychological attack that they may receive if they speak out and resist harassment and abuse (Crenshaw, 1991:1467). In addition, she alludes to survival through sisterhood connections evident in the two girls that walk with her, being strategic by ignoring the banging on her door the following day, and avoiding humiliation and attack by avoiding "Trouble". However, women like Msimang may continue to be marginalised based on their gender (Kandiyoti, 1991:434-435).

The narrator' experiences reveal the complex social and gender based oppression South African female exiles endured. Crenshaw (1991:1467) discusses how women of colour are silenced and subordinated through sexism and racism. Msimang experiences sexual harassment (as aforementioned) and racism in the United States of America. This is shown through a strategy that the narrator is taught to prevent police brutality and hence institutional racism: "When I volunteer at the Minneapolis Urban League the project I work on focuses on training teenagers to know their rights and respond politely and respectfully when the cops stop them. Every lesson begins and ends with, 'Put your hands up and don't run or you will get shot'" (Msimang, 2017:151). In addition, Msimang (2017:150-151) notes: "I learn very quickly that to be black in America is to be looked through, passed over, ignored or locked away. It is to be constantly misrecognised". Hence, the narrator develops an awareness of her intersectionality as a woman and racialised other, and how this contributes to her oppression. Tamale (2020:67) notes that intersectionality links the structural and empirical, and examines how control and privilege function on different levels (empirical, political and structural) simultaneously, transversely and within categories of experience and personal identity (gender, race, class, etc.). Intersectionality focuses on the experiences of individuals whose voices have been ignored. These identities can also be intersectional, an author can possess two or more categories of identities, such as gender and race. In the case of Msimang, her identities as black and female intersect and worsen the oppression she experiences.

Nevertheless, Msimang's experiences of racism and sexism ignite political activism within her, and inspires her to fight discrimination in her college setting. The narrator learns to put her

political knowledge into action through working with other oppressed women as noted in her involvement with college friends in political art and performances on diversity, and various actions that challenged institutional discrimination. Msimang (2017:155) notes:

> [w]e stage a sit-in at the president's office, demanding that the university review its policies in relation to hiring black professors, admitting greater numbers of students of colour and addressing the high dropout rate. We win some concessions and we celebrate.

Msimang (2017:155) further notes: "[w]e have not yet learnt […] that institutional racism is a wily old beast, and that these are just superficial wins". Msimang's actions reflect agency against existing specific social injustices, in this case, gender and racial discrimination, which also remind us of Susan's experiences of discrimination based on her sex and nationality, and the resultant rape and decision to confront her perpetrator and trauma head-on, as depicted in *The Camp Whore*. In addition, King in *Killing Karoline* experiences racial discrimination from the apartheid government and society, and takes agency by seeking her truth and finding healing, home and belonging in South Africa. Nonetheless, Msimang's awareness of racism and her willingness to fight against it shows her political growth. She is aware of injustices linked with racism and the importance of fighting them, as her parents do, but it is her first time putting her political and radical knowledge into action, and in the process she realises that fighting against oppressions is an ongoing fight.

Msimang's upbringing in exile taught her about politics and the fight for equality but it also kept her away from the tensions taking place in South Africa to which they only aim to return to when apartheid is over. In 1993, Msimang's parents move back to South Africa; and in the same year, Chris Hani, the leader of the South African Communist Party, is murdered. Msimang's parents are friends with Chris Hani and his wife and as a result, Msimang wants to return to South Africa upon hearing about his death but her mother asks her to remain in the United States of America. The narrator finally returns in 1994. Msimang recalls her participation in the first multi-racial democratic elections as noted in her statement: "That X marked in a voting booth in Chicago marks my spot in history. It marks my place in a new nation at the start of a new era" (Msimang, 2017:175). The text hints at a link between Msimang's personal history and South Africa's. The sense of correlation produces "a new and different sense of how public and private history, national and individual identities intersect" (Nuttall, 2006:191). Therefore, the author narrates her individual experiences during historical

events, such as casting her first vote as a South African with full citizenship rights; and in this way, she contributes to South Africa's collective history. Finally, South Africa's day of freedom arrives on 27 April 1994.

4.6 South Africa: home, belonging and whiteness

Msimang's decision to return to South Africa is motivated by her readiness to return home to her family and to settle in South Africa. The return takes place after her break-up with Jason. Msimang meets Jason at Stairstep, a church-based initiative in North Minneapolis. They flirt with each other the day they meet, and Jason requests to join Msimang and her roommate, Simone, for dinner at their accommodation. Sisonke and Jason become friends and soon after enter a romantic relationship together. Msimang describes her relationship with Jason as one that is honest, dependant, challenging, yet passionate. Jason is brutally honest about her appearance, behaviour and life choices, sometimes to the point of offending Msimang and causing her to cry and feeling frustrated. A lesson Msimang learns from her relationship with Jason is "what it looks like to belong to your own self" (Msimang, 2017:194). Thus, Msimang's decision to return to South Africa on her own terms, allows her to "speak, act and know" (Spivak, 1988:71) for herself. In addition, she exerts agency in making and maintaining her decisions.

It is ironic though that Msimang's move to South Africa does not result in an immediate sense of belonging for her. She feels displaced because of her lack of connection with the country. Msimang notes: "Being home, I am acutely aware of the dissonance between being of a place by virtue of psychological heritage and being from a place by virtue of memory and experience. I look like I belong, but I don't" (2017:213-214). Msimang reveals that she looks as though she belongs because of her heritage, but notes that her sense of belonging stems from memories and experiences in South Africa that she does not yet possess. According to Smith and Watson (2001:24), the writer's "[…] 'experience' and that of their characters are already an interpretation of the past and of [their] place in a culturally and historically specific present". This lack of a rooted experience in South Africa causes Msimang to feel disconnected from a culturally and historically specific present. However, these revelations of alienation amidst a search for belonging are significant from the perspective of self-writing and subject formation. The writing of one's own narrative, and by extension, the focalising of a female protagonist's

experiences allows for the restoration of subjectivity of both, and their refusal to continue suffering from the effects of their trauma (Borg, 2018:448). In addition, Jensen (2019:602) notes that subjectivity encompasses the urge to tell of the self and the process of self-construction. Hence, Msimang reflects on her sense of alienation in her motherland South Africa, and through that identification, aims to reconstruct herself through finding her sense of belonging in South Africa.

Msimang, however, employs a strategy to "make herself South African" and works her way into the heart of South Africa by reporting on the TRC proceedings. The narrator starts a new job at the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) as a programme officer. Her first big assignment requires her to "report on a special set of hearings of the TRC that focus on the experiences of women activists during the apartheid era" and "looking at areas where Australian funding will be useful" (Msimang, 2017:213). The reports on these women's experiences serve as a:

> […] blueprint for how I will make myself South African. I report on TRC thoughtfully, analytically and with an outsider's eye. This is how - in the years to come - I will work my way into the heart of this country. [...] The TRC makes me want to be South African even as it shows me how lightly I got off - how lucky my childhood was (Msimang, 2017:216).

According to Aurell and Davis (2019:508) the life narrative mode serves as a form of agency as the protagonists and narrators are their own representatives and own the story of their experiences in history, whilst allowing for the representation of personal and social history and memory. Msimang narrates the memories of these women's experiences in apartheid, and in that way contributing to social history, whilst simultaneously serving as a representative of these women through her writing, exerting agency and using it as a strategy to belong. Msimang utilises her education and empathy toward victims of apartheid to report on their oppression and to write her way into the heart of South Africa.

Post-apartheid South Africa allows for multi-racial relations; however, Msimang's relationship with an Australian, Simon, opens up another level of personal experiences that treat themes on whiteness, internal conflict and new angles on identity formation. Msimang meets Simon in 1997 at her new job with the Australian High Commission and they connect instantly. He is introduced working on drafting South Africa's first national youth policy in Cape Town, South Africa. Simon returns to Australia the next day, and they remain in contact and continue to

meet in Cape Town up to a point they realise that they are attracted to one another. However, Msimang feels anxious about being in a relationship with Simon because:

> Simon […] is white […]. I raged against whiteness in college; I poured my heart into poems about beautiful black love. I am in South Africa, where we have just defeated white supremacy, and I am in love with a white boy. It makes no sense (Msimang, 2017:220).

Msimang feels as though she has betrayed herself and what she stands for – her strong opposition to whiteness, yet she falls in love with a white man. Twine and Steinbugler (2006:344) discuss individuals' focus on interracial intimacy only as a social problem rather than seeing "its potential as a dynamic site where racial meanings are produced and transformed". These racial meanings can be produced and transformed through Simon developing "racial literacy". Racial literacy can be learned as "It is an intensive analytical practice that demands an ongoing analysis of how bodies are racialized and resources are distributed across various familial, local, and institutional sites" (Twine and Steinbugler, 2006:358). It is evident through Msimang's observation that Simon is racially literate. However, he can never be empathetic enough. Msimang notes (2017:220): "I want him to be black but he is not and this is South Africa [...] and he can never be angry enough about it to satisfy me. [...] What does he know of suffering?" Msimang relates empathy to actual experience – although Simon is understanding of the oppressions black people face, he will never fully understand unless he is black.

Msimang eventually marries Simon in 2003, despite her internal conflict regarding race. Msimang's marriage to Simon and her upward social mobility exposes her to further challenges within her home. Msimang and Simon purchase a home and the narrator recollects the memory of signing the contract:

> Set in a gorgeous neighbourhood, [...] it had once been off limits and now we have just bought it. Where once we would have been locked up for breaking the immorality laws, now we simply signed on the dotted line (Msimang, 2017:244).

The Immorality Act prohibited physical intimacies between white people and people of colour (Martens, 2007:223) and "[…] produced and policed - legally, symbolically and reproductively" (Carolin, 2017:112) to maintain whiteness. Thus, Msimang and Simon's ability to be in an interracial relationship and purchase property together shows the social and political progress now in existence in the country. However, with this ease comes Msimang's

internal conflict with whiteness. Msimang notes: "it takes me a long time to figure out that this is the core of all the troubles we experience in the house on Congo Road: it places us firmly in the heart of whiteness" (Msimang, 2017:247). These troubles include property maintenance and the eventual caregiving of their daughter. Msimang further notes: "[…] by choosing to buy beautiful old houses in Emmarentia and Sandton and Melrose, the beautiful tree-lined neighbourhoods from which people like us were barred only a decade before, we were killing certain parts of ourselves" (Msimang, 2017:276). Msimang and Simon employ a domestic worker and gardener to maintain the property, as well as babysitters, Nikki and Dipuo. Msimang observes that their employees "have trouble treating us as equals because they know we are the haves and they are the have-nots" (Msimang, 2017:252). This class distinction between Msimang and her employees enables Msimang to notice her privilege and matters related to whiteness. That is, in order to live in the suburbs that were previously only accessible to white people, requires maintenance, and unfortunately people employed in the domestic and gardening work field are predominantly people of colour. As a result, the marriage to Simon, a white Australian, and their finding a home in a former white suburb places Msimang in a dominant position to that of her employees, which speaks to whiteness.

Msimang makes a clear distinction between equality and privilege – equality affords all people of colour to have equal access to resources as white people; whilst privilege only provide unfair leverage to a small group of people of colour. Msimang notes:

> We told ourselves that this is what our parents had fought for. This was not true, of course. Our parents had fought for equality but we were not occupying spaces of equality – we were simply ascending to places higher up on a ladder that we knew provided unfair leverage to a tiny group. We were now part of that group (Msimang, 2017:276).

Msimang forms part of a small group of black people who live in the suburbs of Emmarentia, Sandton and Melrose. This indicates their privilege to live there and exposes the inequalities within their household, as their employees only access these spaces through work and not because they can afford to reside in those areas. Msimang's return to South Africa marks her navigation of a sense of belonging, social mobility, entering new social spaces and human relations (romantic and domestic), which result in identity formation.

4.7 Reflections on belonging in South Africa

Msimang, whose return to South Africa is marked by hope and a dream of positive possibilities, finds herself in perpetual anxiety such that she ends up questioning her belonging in South Africa. Msimang shares her frustration about South Africa's crime rate:

> […] the legacy of brutality that South Africa hasn't managed to confront directly. I want to give up. I feel like the whites who whinge about crime on the radio. I become obsessed with everything that is failing and yet I find it impossible to walk away (Msimang, 2017:263).

The narrator and author finds it difficult to walk away from a country whose liberation she and her family have been anticipating, and the hopes and dreams they have been awaiting to fulfil. However, the inequality, crime and corruption within the ANC causes her to lose hope. Msimang is concerned that "[t]he momentum of freedom has carried me just past a decade but I am beginning to wonder if it can take me any further. I am out of step; more an exile than I thought" (2017:274). She feels more disconnected to South Africa, not only as an exile but because her hopes for South Africa differs from her reality. Msimang further notes that "[…] nothing in South Africa is safe – especially not your dreams" (2017:275). The tone of Msimang's statement is that of disappointment in her country. It symbolises the lack of faith she has in her country and its inability to restore her pride and hope in South Africa. Despite the collapse of apartheid as a system of government in 1991, and the institution of a democratic government in 1994, the effects of its history are still prevalent. Reconciliation in the post-apartheid era focused on the work of the TRC. However, transformation in post-apartheid requires more than truth about apartheid and forgiveness, it requires restitution and a restoration of respect for human rights and liberation (Henrard, 2002:37). Msimang mistrusts the safety of their dreams as the ANC government is still trying to redress inequalities that hamper South Africans from accomplishing their dreams.

Later in her life, Msimang is offered a fellowship at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. She sees it as an opportunity to get out of South Africa without committing to leaving the country. Msimang reflects on her privilege and what it means to truly be a feminist: (283):

> It is one thing to understand feminism as a concept and it is quite another to practise it in a real and authentic manner. It doesn't come naturally, even when you are marked

> by your blackness or your womanness; even when you try to be thoughtful. Sometimes it is only cold, hard experience, it is only fucking up, that opens your eyes to your own privilege.

Msimang left her CEO position at Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa in South Africa and pursued the fellowship at Yale University. Her absence from the company resulted in great loss for the company. Her colleague suggests that she quit her job and she does. Her failure in her workplace serves as an eye opener to her privilege. She realises her privilege as a black woman, who is a CEO of a firm, but has the option to embark on a fellowship at Yale University, whilst still receiving a salary for her job in South Africa before her resignation. Msimang (2017:284) further notes:

> This story is more complicated, because it reminds us that, when you have the safety net of class in a world that is largely poor, you get to lose your innocence without losing your life. You get to fall forward because there are many strong and powerful arms waiting to pick you up and set you right again.

Msimang loses her innocence through her upward social mobility. She becomes less relatable to other black women who are striving for upward social mobility. Msimang (2017:282-283) reflects on her privilege:

> I had options that most women and black people don't. Those networks – that social capital – were a massive asset. There were people in positions of power who liked and trusted me and who continued to do so, in spite of my mistakes. This is as it should be for everyone. The mistake I made was assuming that my exceptionalism was the norm.

Even if Msimang fails in one aspect, she "falls forward" because she still has her Yale fellowship and later a job at the *Daily Maverick* to fall back on.

It is difficult for Msimang to permanently leave South Africa, so she starts leaving the country psychologically through writing about her hurt for South Africa and her disappointment in the ANC. Cixous states that women should partake in writing to regain ownership of their narrative and bodies, and place themselves within their narratives, the universe and history in order to gain their voice (Cixous, 1975:319-323). The writing of one's own narrative, and by extension, the focalising of a female protagonist's experiences allow for the restoration of subjectivity of both and their refusal to continue suffering from the effects of their trauma (Borg, 2018:448). As a result, Msimang regains ownership of her individuality and shows her transition from

seeking belonging in South Africa and finding belonging in love and relationships. She places herself in history and gains her voice by writing against the injustices of the ANC. One of the injustices Msimang writes about is the Marikana incident that took place on 16 August 2012, when the South African Police Service shot a crowd of protesting mineworkers. The government was unapologetic and stated that they had done what was necessary. The ANC also blamed the miners for the incident and boycotted the miners' funerals (Msimang, 2017:289-290). Msimang notes: "Leaving – breaking ranks, saying goodbye to the ANC, moving away from my need to be in South Africa as a geographic space – is a process. It begins with writing. Leaving begins when I pick up my pen" (Msimang, 2017:292). Her memoir and journalistic writing for the *Daily Maverick* serves as an act of agency as she engages in political discussions and serves as a representative for other women. According to Smith and Watson (2001:114), women were suppressed by men to public silence and took to writing as a means of exercising their right to freedom of speech and to proclaim and discover their identity publicly. Therefore, Msimang's act of writing about South Africans' experiences serves as a testimony of human agency. The process of writing about these experiences also contributes to their healing from trauma. Msimang views her writing as a platform that represents women in media. Msimang notes: "[…] there aren't enough women's voices in the media, so I am writing, in a sense, for the sisterhood" (Msimang, 2017:293). The lack of female representation in media is a way of silencing, oppressing and prohibiting women from circulating views that may challenge patriarchal, social, religious and political systems (Derbel, 2019:56). Thus, it is necessary for women, like Msimang, to express their opinions and fight against the silencing and oppression of women in media. Spivak (in Bartels et al, 2019:159) suggests that women claim agency by being empowered to "fight for specific interests in temporary alliances and marks their entry into discourse as speaking subjects". In this way, women, as Msimang does in her memoir, will resist marginalisation and ensure their subjectivity (Bartels et al, 2019:159).

Furthermore, Msimang expresses her hurt and her disappointment in the ANC. Writing for her becomes a means to "manage my hurt" (294). The narrator and author states further that:

> I have been hurt by the betrayals of the ANC. I am writing because I don't know what to do with how I feel about myself and South Africa and the political movement I once loved. […] I love this place so deeply yet I am not of it so there is always a level of superficiality in what I can know in my bones about this place. I am the observer – the outsider who can see precisely because she stands apart (Msimang, 2017:294).

Msimang expresses her disappointment in the ANC regarding the Marikana incident (amongst others) here. Smith and Watson (2001:22) note that the process of writing enables the writer to find "words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable". Writing provides the author psychological relief through the expression of her emotions (Smith and Watson, 2001:22). The memoir presents the narrator and author's disillusionment with the way the ANC handled the Aids pandemic, the Marikana incident and other issues of corruption and injustice. She also expresses her battles on how to belong to a country which she loves but feels disconnected from because she did not grow up in the South Africa. Her reports on the TRC is her way to "make herself more South African" but her writing for the *Daily Maverick* makes her feel like an outsider and observer who writes on her disappointments and not on her hopes and dreams she has for herself in the country. Msimang further notes: "I write my way into forgiving myself for not being able to become the ultimate insider. I write from where I am, rather than where I want to be" (2017:294-295). Narrators are able to express to themselves and to others who they are presently, what their backgrounds are, and where they envision themselves heading in the future (McAdams and McLean, 2013:233). Therefore, Msimang is able to reflect on her past self, her desperate desire to belong in South Africa, and how she presently made peace with the fact that she may not find a physical sense of belonging in South Africa, and has to forgive herself for pressurising herself to be "more South African" and to belong. Writing provides authors psychological relief through the expression of their emotions (Smith and Watson, 2001:22), hence Msimang's reflections on the self and her experiences free her from the pressures associated with searching for belonging in South Africa, and allow her to come to terms with her present reality.

Msimang's writing also serves as a medium to represent people of colour and women. Msimang notes: "I write because Africans and women and humans who have been considered less than others have always had stories and imaginations to take us out of the impossibility of the situations in which we have found ourselves stranded" (Msimang, 2017:295). This serves as representation of Africans, women and humans who are marginalised. Her writing also "subvert[s] their assigned positions as 'invisible' black women and [….] 'rewrites' the apartheid narrative by producing [their] own texts" (Nuttall, 1994:89). This is achieved through Msimang's writing for the *Daily Maverick* as well as the writing of her memoir.

Finally, Msimang's psychological departure from South Africa and the death of her mother, prepared her to depart physically from the country. When Msimang's mother passed away in South Africa in 2014:

> Simon was ready and I finally accepted that, given everything that happened – the betrayal and the sadness and Mummy's no-longerness – I would rather be homesick than home. Without her, I was free to belong wherever it was that I happened to be and so, finally – finally – we left (Msimang, 2017:306).

Her parents' determination and eventual return to a liberated South Africa to fulfil their hopes and dreams is what kept Msimang in the country. However, her mother's passing destroys any feelings tied to the country and this leads her to decide where she wants to reside.

The memoir ends with Msimang's realisation that her sense of belonging is not found in a country, but in love and relationships. The narrator notes: "Until her death I believed that geography and belonging were intertwined. I had this idea that who you were was tied to where you came from" (2017:307-308). This reflection allows for the author's self-awareness, identity reformation, and transformation of the narrator's perspective which result in new ways of questioning social reality (Anderson, 2006:130). This realisation also goes hand in hand with the growth of her social awareness as she grows into a critic of the ANC she grew up knowing and loving. Ultimately, the memoir recounts her life experiences, growth in social awareness and agency as a feminist writer who boldly addresses issues of injustice and inequality existing in post-apartheid South Africa.

4.8 Conclusion

The memoir, *Always Another Country*, captures Msimang's transition from a young child growing up as a vulnerable and dislocated character in exile and haunted by a desperate desire to belong in South Africa. Upon her return to South Africa, she strives to be more South African through her writing, and later uses her writing to reflect on the failures of her country, as well as her process of forgiving herself for the pressures of wanting to belong. Jensen (2019:602) notes that subjectivity encompasses the urge to tell of the self and the process of self-construction. Mismang renders herself visible and highlights both the historical value of her text and that of her experiences as an exile. Msimang's arrival in South Africa is significant as she returns to a liberated South Africa she has hoped for, and accomplishes her dreams of excelling as a black woman. However, she soon realises that there is still inequality in South Africa and that the ANC, a political party she grew up in through her father's anti-apartheid activism, and supported, contributes to the injustice South Africans endure in the post-apartheid

era. Consequently, she develops a new awareness regarding these injustices and in the way she connects with her country. In addition, Msimang's experiences are also narrated in a way that recollects her country's apartheid and post-apartheid history, and thus underlines the link between her individual traumatic, and other lived experiences, and her identity formation as an exile.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how the depicted female narrators challenge "global power relations, economic, political, military, and cultural hegemon(y)" (Rajan and Park, 2005:54) through their agency. The study unpacked how the experiences depicted by Msimang in *Always Another Country* , King in *Killing Karoline* and the female character Susan in *The Camp Whore* link with the search for, and attainment of healing from traumatic experiences and ultimately leads to the reconstruction of identities. The research, which draws on life narratives, memory, trauma and the feminist concepts, focused on the representation of the gendered subject, their specific experiences in history and everyday life experiences, and the different ways in which the narrators attempt to resist existing oppressions as well as engage in memory making and healing in order to reconstitute themselves. The research described the depicted women's specific personal and political experiences in history, and unpacked how this links with the constitution of self-awareness and belonging in their society. The research also evaluated how the narrators claim their place in historical events and narratives that erase and do not acknowledge them. As such, the arguments in the foregoing chapters have drawn from life narratives, feminist, memory and trauma theories.

Chapter 1 reviewed the life narratives, feminist, memory and trauma theories which guide my study. One of the forms of agency is constituted in women's narratives and memorying, an area that is tackled in existing life narrative studies as postulated by Aurell and Davis (2019), Jensen (2019), Borg (2018), Wiegandt (2017), and McAdams and McLean (2013) reviewed in Chapter 1. Those who theorise life narratives argue that the writers' "[…] 'experience' and that of their characters are already an interpretation of the past and of [their] place in a culturally and historically specific present" (Smith and Watson, 2001:24). The narrators of the aforementioned texts share their own and their characters' personal experiences during historical events (Anglo-Boer War, apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa), and describe how these events contribute to the constitution of trauma and agency.

The authors and character under study narrate their truth through their life narratives. Smith and Watson (2001:125) argue that the narration of the author's life narrative is more truthful than the experience itself, as the narrator depicts events in a way that is reflective of himself or herself. According to Gusdorf (1956:38), when an event takes place, one is unable to view the experience in its entirety, thus the autobiographical reading of an experience is more truthful

than the event itself, as one is conscious of what has taken place during that time and space. The auto-biographer becomes significant here because he or she is able to narrate the events from his or her perspective, and is able to reflect on his or her experiences and behaviour. The narrative's significance lies in the author's consciousness in pursuit of its own truth (Gusdorf, 1956:44). Mason (1980:210) notes that female authors acknowledge "the real presence and recognition of another consciousness, and the disclosure of the female self is linked to the identification of some 'other'". As a result, their recognition of this otherness allows them to write openly about their experiences (Mason, 1980:210). This underlines women's agency that answers Spivak's (1988) discussion on the ownership of those rendered subaltern, as the women writers speak for themselves. The writing of their life narratives contributes to the exploration of their identities and indicates their determination to try and control their destiny (Mason, 1980:223).

It was also noted in this chapter that, life narratives allow narrators to express to themselves and to others who they are presently, what their backgrounds are, and where they envision themselves heading in the future (McAdams and McLean, 2013:233). This link between self, time and history allows for what McAdams and McLean's term "narrative identity", which is "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (2013:233). The authors and character under study share their past and present experiences and indicate where they envision themselves through their acts of agency.

The chapter defined Msimang and King's life narratives as productions that "subvert their assigned positions as 'invisible' black women and [….] 'rewrites' the apartheid narrative by producing [their] own texts" (Nuttall, 1994:89). In addition, the way in which the aforementioned narrators "[…] construct a sense of self through writing" (Nuttall, 1994:98) was also discussed in this chapter. The writing of life narratives is also linked, in Chapter 1, to the way language acts as a medium through which narrators, and by extension authors, share their truth and experiences, and allows for a "post-colonial voice" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:7) and an expression of senses of otherness (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002:11).

The chapter also drew on various critical feminist critics' research, such as that of Bartels, Eckstein, Waller and Wiemann (2019), Ahmed (2017), Schuster (2017), Butler (1988), and Spivak (1988) who theorise on notions such as women's experiences under different oppressive

conditions, and the search for different forms of agency. Highlighted as significant here, is Cixous' (1975:323) view that women can partake in writing to regain ownership of their narrative and bodies, and place themselves within their narratives, the universe and history in order to gain their voice. The other view is that writing one's own narrative, and by extension, the focalising of a female protagonist's experiences allows for the restoration of subjectivity and their refusal to continue suffering from the effects of their trauma (Borg, 2018:448). Finally, the chapter also underscored Jensen's (2019: 602) point that subjectivity encompasses the urge to describe the self and the process of self-construction. The chapter also explored feminism theorist, Ahmed's (2017) concept – feminist 'snap". Ahmed (2010:190) argues that in some instances, the only way for feminists to be heard is to "snap" – to speak punitively and indignantly. Wall (2018:575) states that all feminists have a snapping point, in which they refuse to reproduce injustices such as sexism and corruption. In the case of the authors, King and Msimang, and the fictional character, Susan, in the texts under study, each experience snapping points in their narratives. For Msimang, this happens when she fights against racism and the political injustice of the ANC. King snaps when she contacts her biological mother and confronts her feelings of rejection and abandonment, and for Susan, this happens when she snaps at her employer for his sexist remark, and snaps again when she kills one of her rapists.

The chapter also considered theories on memory by Radstone and Hodgkin (2017), Clark (2010), Rajan and Park (2005), and Ricoeur (1996). The process of narrating a memory is noted as an effort to resurrect and re-experience the moment of the event (Ricoeur, 1996:20). Individuals have their own view of their past and their memories. Accordingly, King, Msimang, and Smith's fictional character, Susan's, individual perspectives and their memories create a glimpse into the different elements of South Africa's long history from the Anglo-Boer War to the present post-apartheid era, and narrates against official history. In addition, memory and trauma are major themes treated in the nation's literary and cultural productions. Life narratives are one of the mediums through which memory and trauma are recalled. A pertinent example is the establishment of South Africa's TRC, which was held in the hope to create national reconciliation and justice for victims of apartheid after the perpetrators had pleaded guilty and confessed to their crimes. Hence, this research explored for example, Smith's account on the public memory of the Anglo-Boer War, in *The Camp Whore*, Msimang's narration of the trauma suffered as she grew up and her reports on TRC hearings that focus on the experiences of women activists during the apartheid era and in that way contributing to the recollection of the country's social history and exerting agency.

Chapter 2 explored Susan's transition from being a victim of rape and an inhabitant of the Winburg concentration camp to a recovering being who restores her subjectivity. The analysis showed how Susan's subjectivity develops through her confrontation of trauma and social upward mobility that begins the moment she leaves the Winburg caves for Bloemfontein. The research also discussed how Susan's painful truths of subjugations through sexual violation and sexism, and her mistreatment by the British officials in the Winburg camp during the Anglo-Boer War, emphasise the growth of her consciousness (Clark, 2010:4). Susan is traumatised by her rape and ends up unintentionally repressing her memories. According to Liem (2007:159), "the absence of dialogue is not an indication of the loss of memory". Thus, the chapter also explored how Susan recalls the memory of her rape and the failure of language to verbally describe what exactly took place. It further explored how Susan internalises the shame she feels about her rape and how it cultivates her silence and subordination. Susan's narration of her experiences is underlined in the analysis as marking the beginning of the confrontation of her traumatic past and her recovery. Finally, I also presented in this chapter the link between Susan's experiences and the recollection of her country's history. I therefore underlined the link between her individual traumatic and other lived experiences, and her identity reformation and that which the Afrikaner nation sought after the Anglo-Boer War.

Chapter 3 discussed King's experience of being 'illegally' born in apartheid South Africa, and this leads to her displacement as an adopted child in the United Kingdom. I discussed King's trauma and holding of feelings of abandonment in relation to her toxic relationships, alcohol abuse, eating disorders, obsessive exercising and self-harm as she grew up in the United Kingdom. The chapter also explored the significance of Sarah Jane's reflection exercises at the treatment centre in South Africa after her return her country of birth, and later the writing of her memoir in the depiction of her growth of self-realisation. It is thus clear in Chapter 3 that King's self-narrative enabled her to "[…] construct a sense of self through writing" (Nuttall, 1994:98) and "unfolding of the dialectic of the self" which has "the power to say, the power to do, and the power to recognize oneself as a character in a narrative" (Clark, 2010:8). The chapter also highlighted the way in which South Africa is presented as the place of Sara-Jayne's journey to finding her truth through confronting her past, rekindling and bidding farewell to the life of Karoline, and finding healing and belonging. Finally, the chapter

underscored that King's writing about her suffering is an act of making narrative sense of the trauma she experienced and the identity issues she faces and contributes to her healing and agency.

Chapter 4 explored Msimang's experiences in exile in countries that include Zambia, Kenya, and Canada during apartheid, and her return to South Africa during apartheid and the post-apartheid era. It also explored Msimang's experiences of racism and inequality in exile and back home, the significance of her writing about the injustices she endured and her rage against ANC's hypocrisy later in her life experiences after the advent of multiracial-democracy in South Africa. These experiences were examined through the concepts of childhood, gender, rape, the psychological trauma suffered by women, being in exile, memorying and narration. The study examined Msimang's transition from a helpless and displaced young child in exile who is desperate to belong in South Africa, to an empowered black female who asserts herself as a South African, reflects on the failures of South Africa, and the process of forgiving herself for the pressures of wanting to belong through her writing. Msimang's experiences are studied in terms of how she recollects her country's apartheid and post-apartheid history, and the link between her individual traumatic and other lived experiences, and her identity formation as an exile and returnee.

In conclusion, it is clear that the authors and characters studied in this research, transitioned from positions of displacement and subordination to those of empowerment. Women capture their transitions through the writing of their experiences. Gqola (2001:14-15) underscores that ground breaking representations of African females need to be formed and reinvented in order for females to be represented in various moments of history and thus in postcolonial ways. Females can be represented as empowered by having political, economic, and social equality, and grappling with various forms of subordinate positions. The women in the texts studied here indeed write themselves into South African history, write their selves out of marginality, and concurrently question the structures and views that previously defined them. They do not only share their experiences of their specific traumas and oppression but also raise awareness about existing oppressive conditions. In addition, the women reflected their agency through fighting for specific causes. For instance, the character, Susan, initiates and supports the journey of healing of her patients as a psychiatric nurse; her wounds led her to assist others in their journey toward healing. Msimang serves as a representative of women through her political writing,

and King finds her truth through her reflections and the writing of her memoir. Finally, the authors and character studied here attain their subjectivity through writing.

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