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*Dedicated to Georg, Max, Niko and Teresa.*

*Thank you!*

The present is a consequence of the past.

(Gordimer 2012: 411)

## **Declaration of authenticity:**

I confirm to have conceived and written this paper in English, unassisted and on my own. Quotations from other authors are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are equally truthfully acknowledged and identified.

Sabina Feith

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|        |                                                                  |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ANC    | African National Congress                                        |
| BEE    | Black Economic Empowerment                                       |
| COPE   | Congress of the People                                           |
| COSATU | Congress of South African Trade Unions                           |
| CPI    | Consumer Price Index                                             |
| FIFA   | Fédération Internationale de Football Association                |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Product                                           |
| IRR    | South African Institute of Race Relations                        |
| LDCs   | Least Developed Countries                                        |
| OECD   | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development           |
| NATLEX | National laws on labor, social security and related human rights |
| SACP   | South African Communist Party                                    |
| SACSIS | South African Civil Society Information Service                  |
| UN     | United Nations                                                   |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund           |
| WEF    | World Economic Forum                                             |
| ZAR    | South Africa                                                     |

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# 1. Introduction

Reflecting on the term 'post-apartheid era' one may be tempted to date the end of apartheid precisely with the year of the first democratic election in 1994. However, at this point, one should always bear in mind that this cutoff date may be seen only as the starting point of a new era that heralds a slow transition from the days under apartheid to the 'new South Africa', viz., the birthdate of the new democratic Republic in its quest for seeking justice and equality while struggling with the dark shadows of the past. Apartheid precedes the post-apartheid era, comprising the aftermath of forty years of atrocities and segregation and also the legacy of colonialism, when after some five hundred years of suppression in total, millions of indigenous Africans are traumatized affecting the "generations to come" (Magona 2012:96). Although

some whites will argue that Europeans "brought civilization to Africa for the blacks"[, they] did not. They built "civilization" on the backs of black slavery, for themselves, and were just recently forced to share the spoils of their exploitative history with the indigenous people of this land. (Shutte 2014)

Eventually, unifying South Africa's people means making traumatized Africans forgive and reconcile with their white perpetrators which is certainly not an easy task. Although the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (1996-1998) led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu has proclaimed in 1998 to have fulfilled its endeavor successfully it is questionable if this possibly could have happened sustainably. Considering the long period of oppression and the operating time of the Commission of only three years, it appears in the eye of the beholder far too short to bring the victory over the past the Commission has been hoping for. However, it seems that with the limited amount of time the Commission has been operating, the intention may have rather been to overcome the past quickly, which might have been a false assumption in search of a long-term success enabling South Africans to live together in peace.

Closing the door to the past might mean shutting out those who have not yet tried – or been able – to walk through this door. A real and lasting reconciliation will only come about if the country's political and economic problems can be solved. (Mengel 2012: 146)

The thesis “Living together in the aftermath of apartheid” aims to analyze to what extent the transformation from the segregated into the united ‘new South Africa’ has taken place, and how this is portrayed through fictional characters of black and white South Africans living in the aftermath of apartheid. Four novels by contemporary South African authors have been selected, two of them are written by black male authors, Nape ‘a Motana and Zakes Mda, the other two by white female authors, Pamela Jooste and Nadine Gordimer. All novels reflect the relevance of South African history in everyday life following the phrase “The present is a consequence of the past” penned by Gordimer in her novel *No Time Like the Present* (2012: 411). By comparing the contents of the authors’ works with secondary literature published by scholars, veteran politicians and freedom fighters, but also in the light of media coverage through the national and international press, this thesis intends to investigate whether the transition into the ‘new South Africa’ has been completed.

## **2.Fanie Fourie’s Lobola (FFL)**

### **2.1 The author Nape ‘a Motana**

Nape ‘a Motana is a Pretoria-based black social worker, part-time poet, playwright and author. After having been a poet-activist in the early 1980s and some previous writing attempts, ‘a Motana has published his satirical play *The honeymoon is over* in 1995, depicting the difficult relationship between the National Party and the ANC in the early post-apartheid era (ESAT 2014). The play has been honored with the *New Voices Award* in the same year (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press 2007). In 2004, ‘a Motana continues his writing career, publishing his poetry collection *Sepedi Proverbs* followed by his first novel *Fanie Fourie’s Lobola* in 2007.

‘a Motana writes in English and Sepedi. Sepedi is an indigenous African language also referred to as Northern Sotho, a Bantu language which is spoken by 4.7 million or 9 percent of native Africans in the north-eastern part of South Africa (Reh 1993: 562) and is one of the eleven officially recognized languages in South Africa. His novel *Fanie Fourie’s Lobola*, originally written in Sepedi and

translated into English, is “filled with the richness of African story tellers” (KZN Literary Tourism 2008). Peppered with Afrikaans and Sepedi vocabulary as well as ample idiomatic language, the author underlines with wit and irony the differences but also the mutual attraction of the African and Afrikaner cultures. Like other contemporary South African authors ‘a Motana uses history, political and social development as templates for this plot while he writes from a black South African perspective (KZN Literary Tourism 2008).

## 2.2 Plot overview

Born in the early 1970s, Fanie Fourie grows up as the offspring of an Afrikaner family, as a true *boere seun* (Afrikaner farmer’s son) on his grandfather’s farm in Potgietersrus (later Ga-Mokopane, FFL 98), playing with the black servants’ children from whom he picks up their mother tongue, Sepedi. Although *kleinbaas* (little boss, FFL 327) Fanie realizes the differences between himself and his black friends, he being neatly dressed while the others go barefoot, Fanie does not spare a thought until the day when he is chasing some black girls and his mother Louise loses her temper, screaming at him,

“If I see you chasing those *kaffer* (abusive word for native Africans, FFL 326) girls again, *ek gaan jou nek breek! Verstaan jy?* (I’m going to break your neck! Do you understand?)” (FFL 98)

Being afraid of his violent mother, a typical, farm-raised Afrikaner (FFL 65) and ardent racist who whips him and his younger sister Anna-Marie “like a man” (FFL 98), his relationship with his black playmates becomes a more distant one. At the age of thirteen, his family moves to Koedoespoort, a suburb in east Pretoria, where they live in a small house together with their black domestic worker, Selina (FFL 63). Two years later, Fanie’s father dies in a railroad accident, at a time when “black people are still regarded as no-people” (FFL 139). Consequently, widowed Louise raises her two children with the support of Selina. However, ever since, times have been changing: with the fall of apartheid in 1994, black and colored people have been moving to the former low-income suburb Koedoespoort reserved for white workers and tradesmen, much to the dismay of Louise. After high school, Fanie passes Pretoria West Technical College exams and works for the Jacaranda Welding Company. At the age of 29, Fanie finally leaves his family home and

moves to Strijdomhuis, an apartment building complex, strictly reserved for white people where “right-wing values” are their “standards” (FFL 26). The only black person tolerated is the black flat-cleaner, Nicholas.

When his general practitioner doctor has moved away, Fanie’s black boss George recommends he consult his doctor where Fanie happens to be the first white patient “in [the doctor’s] five years of practicing” (FFL10), “more than a decade in ‘new South Africa’” (FFL 3). In the surgery, Fanie feels strongly attracted to the nurse Dimakatjo Machabaphal, a black beauty, who is currently dating Tau, a young township man. Not daring to challenge a woman’s traditional role or to disappoint her family, Dimakatjo initially is not ready to break up with her drinking and chain-smoking boyfriend. However, when getting acquainted with Fanie and the white man’s tenderness, Dimakatjo is open to a new relationship and she accepts Fanie’s marriage proposal, overwhelmed with joy.

This man did not need her woman’s hands to scrub him until he was ‘clean and *twaas*-white like a sheet soaked in a champion washing powder’. He would not come to her stinking of alcohol and cigarette fumes, hardly able to stand on his two feet (FFL 77).

However, their luck is tarnished when the two lovers are facing the hard reality of cross-culture dating, that even a decade after the end of apartheid the ‘new South Africa’ has not overcome its dreadful past. Racism, prejudices and distrust are daily fare. There is Fanie’s mother Louise in the first place, for whom an inter-racial marriage between her “lily-white son and a black woman” (FFL50) seems to be absolutely unacceptable.

“What’s wrong with you? [...] Are you mad, Fanie? How can you dump a decent Afrikaans *meisie* (girl) like Gerda, with whom you have been in love for many years, for a black *hoermeid* (prostitute) you hardly know? You don’t even know if the tart has AIDS or not!” (FFL 50);

followed by Fanie’s co-residents gossiping about him and his black girlfriend, “This white boy has a screw loose!” (FFL85). Equally, Dimakatjo’s rural kinship turns out to be prejudiced which complicates the work of the groom’s and bride’s negotiation teams for lobola, the traditional bride-price (FFL 328); and last but not the least, the lovers themselves seem to be insecure in their decisions, also influenced by cultural and social resentments, misunderstandings and upsets, sometimes touch

and go whether Fanie and Dimakatjo will be married or not, if there weren't some prudent people attempting to forge bridges between the parties, such as Dimakatjo's uncle Phari and Fanie's uncle Pieter, both men in their sixties, full of respect for each other, who seem to have overcome the past. With their assistance and for the sake of the two lovers, all hurdles finally can be cleared and, in the end, even with Louise's blessing, Fanie can enfold his true love Dimakatjo in his arms. Love conquers all "for love knows no color (FFL 58).

## **2.3 Themes**

*Fanie Fourie's Lobola* is a classic love story; but narrated through this simple plot, 'a Motana succeeds in providing profound insights into modern-day lives of Sepedi and the Afrikaner people (KZN Literary Tourism 2008), their differences in living conditions based on their descent and their mutual outsider views of the other's culture. The following three chapters seek to illustrate the paramount topics of the novel, inequality, tradition and the attempt at building bridges by some solo pioneers for a better future and mutual understanding in South Africa.

### **2.3.1 Social inequalities in the 'new South Africa'**

Inequalities in South Africa based on skin complexion are some of the "leading themes in inequality studies" (Leibbrandt et al. 2010: 21). Even two decades after the end of apartheid, differences between races have been mitigated but they have certainly not vanished yet.

#### **2.3.1.1 Education**

Two years after the end of apartheid, the *South African Schools Act* of 1996 was passed where compulsory primary schooling for all children aged seven to fifteen was introduced. This act focuses on mutual responsibilities, on the one hand that children are sent to school by their legal guardians and on the other hand that the state grants schooling for all children, which includes that schools need to be "accessible and affordable", as "in South Africa, where the majority of children live in poverty, lack of money can be a barrier to schooling" (ETU 2007). For this program, the government is currently spending around 7 percent of its *Gross Domestic Product (GDP)* which is one of the highest investments in the educational

sector in the world (South Africa. Info 2013, UNICEF 2014). This tremendous need to catch up, in particular for the indigenous African population, derives from the *Bantu Education Act* of 1953 when black people, referred to as “Bantu” people, were excluded from formal education, considered to be a waste as Africans should be trained for “perpetual serfdom as the servants of their high-and-mighty white bosses” (Tutu 1999:21). The originator of the legal act is the later Prime Minister of South Africa, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd (1958-66).

The school must equip Bantu to meet the demands which the economic life will impose on him [...]. What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it (!) cannot use it in practice? [...] Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life [...]. (cit. in Tutu 1999: 21)

With the introduction of compulsory schooling statistics of educational rates of Africans have been drastically changed within ten years.

The percentage of African men with less than nine years of schooling fell from 61% in 1997 to 47% in 2007. The percentage of African men with less than 12 years schooling fell from 83% in 1997 to 73% in 2007, similar numbers for women. (Branson et al. 2012: 7)

However, completely contrary to Branson et al.’s findings (2012), Boraine (2014) argues in his book *What’s gone wrong* that lavish investments in education so far have failed to yield any tangible outcomes, as necessary reforms in the sector have not been undertaken due to nepotism among the new black leadership of South Africa. Teachers are not adequately trained and/or “do not have the commitment to do the job they are paid to do” (2014: 114-115, UNICEF 2014). With Matsobane ‘Mayibuye’, Dimakatjo’s cousin, ‘a Montana refers to the problematic school system employing people with few moral values and questionable characters (FFL 120, 178, 264). Hence, poor quality of education, combined with irregular attendance and interruptions leads to minor results.

The majority of learners in poor schools start falling behind required literacy and numeracy levels in their first year, and by the time they end the ‘foundation phase’ in grade 3, many have effectively dropped out and will predictably fail to master the curriculum in later years. This is the main reason why around 50% of children drop out of school before they reach matric. For example, last year’s class started grade in 2001 as a group of 1,159,637 learners but only 551,837 wrote the 2012 National Senior



Certificate examinations (National Education and Evaluation Unit 2013 cit. in Boraine 2014: 114-115)

Studies point out that only 35 percent of South African children are proficient in reading and counting (Bloch cit. in Boraine 2014:115); trustworthy numbers of literacy rates among adults are difficult to be researched as official statistics are based on data by self-reported abilities of reading and writing (Pretorius 2013). Consequently, this lacking system is substrate for a two-class society, insofar as wealthy, mostly white parents enroll their children in private schools rather than trust in the public system.

It's supposed to be completely integrated, but most of the kids there are from the townships. I'd say it's about 80 percent black. I hear the same thing from teachers at other pre-schools in Pretoria. No one knows where all the white kids have gone to - it's a big mystery. (FFL 143)

Currently around ten percent of pupils are attending private schools but still ninety percent of South African children, mainly black children, are educated in an inefficient educational system with inadequate infrastructure.

Of the nearly 25,000 public schools in South Africa, 93% have no libraries, 95% have no science laboratories, 2,402 have no water supply, 46% still use pit latrine toilets and 913 have no facilities at all. (Cape Times of 21 November 2012 cit. in Boraine 2014: 117)

Besides lacking the desired integration of races from childhood on, pupils schooled in the public schools will achieve only insufficient education. "It is extraordinarily difficult to deal with high-level skills if the foundations are not right" (Bloch cit. in Boraine 2014:115). With this unfavorable start, life's chances are unequally distributed which inevitably leads to different job opportunities and earnings and finally living conditions. Therefore, for better achievements and fair future prospects, extensive strategies need to be developed to *Equal Education* (Bloch cit. in Boraine 2014:116, UNICEF 2014).

### **2.3.1.2 Employment**

Consequently, the poor public education has a major impact on the forthcoming generation of job seekers on the labor market as,

[w]hile half of black pupils don't get to matric, 98 % of whites pass. While maybe 15-20% of black matriculants go on to further study, some 60% of whites do." (Bloch cit. in Borraine 2014:116)

This is mirrored in tremendous differences in employment and unemployment rates of blacks and whites respectively. In 2008, the unemployment rates of whites in South Africa are 10.3 per cent, whereas those of African people are 27 per cent, almost three times as high as white South Africans; among black youth the unemployment rate is even as high as 67% (Leibbrandt et al. 2010: 11). Besides poor education, these bad preconditions for indigenous Africans are consequences of the apartheid politics when blacks were forced to live in homelands or urban townships based on the *Group Areas Act* 1950 (O'Malley 2004), which is an ongoing source for segregation in all aspects of life. As a result, a significant number of black people are forced to work in the informal sector or as domestic workers, similar to Louise Fourie's servant Selina (FFL 63), the flat-cleaner Nicholas (FFL 26) and Dimakatjo's aunt (FFL 99). Not being sufficiently protected by South African labor laws, these workers are "open to exploitation in terms of wages, hours, leave, etc." (Leibbrandt et al. 2010: 15), not to mention that they are neither entitled to any health care plan nor social security, which is of particular importance considering that there is an estimated 6.1 million people or 17.9% of South Africans who are currently infected with the HI-Virus (South Africa 2012 Statistics), mainly black citizens (Medwiser 2015). Living in poverty, black people can hardly break the cycle by leaving townships or homelands to find alternative living conditions, hence these areas become breeding grounds for drug and alcohol abuse (FFL 119) as well as criminality (FFL 276-278).

But breaking the vicious cycle and escaping from bad living conditions, yet overcoming the past and facing future challenges certainly depends on individual efforts, willpower and self-discipline. 'a Motana covers the topic of different life opportunities following the well-known proverb: "Where there is a will there is a way!' His understanding of the 'new South Africa' and the long way to equality between races is mirrored by depicting four native Africans who have managed to move up the social ladder in their own right although they live in townships or homelands. Firstly, the author describes his main female protagonist Dimakatjo who, born and raised by villagers in a Bantustan, a homeland (South African

History online 2014) in Limpopo north-east of Pretoria, a province where the unemployment rates are some of the highest of South Africa, has managed to work as a nurse at a black medical doctor's surgery. Dimakatjo has passed the Kalfong Nursing College exams (FFL 39), and it seems that improvements of education and training for black people are in the flow, as according to some official university statics the numbers of black students have increased by 82 percent from 1994 to 2011 (Sehoole 2012) – a noticeable increment. Besides Dimakatjo, 'a Motana also refers to uncle Phari, a South African Police captain (FFL 173) a man of the older generation who has lived under apartheid most of his life. He acts prudently, Phari is fluent in Afrikaans and Sepedi, and highly respected by his people as well as by his colleagues regardless of their origins or skin colors. Thirdly, 'a Motana describes Fanie's colleague George Maunatlala, a smart black, who has been moved up to become Fanie's boss (FFL12) – a remarkable advance, in contrast to the early post-apartheid era when black people were not promoted because of their skin color (FFL14).

While Fanie respects George as his boss, 'a Motana also pictures that, in many cases, the impact of skin color on hierarchal understanding seems to be of ongoing importance as, for many, it still appears unnatural that white people work on the same level with black people or even under a black boss. His white colleagues "refer [...] to him as *kafferboetie*" (FFL 245), an insulting expression in Afrikaans for men who are on friendly terms with black people (FFL 326). But also Fanie's ex-girlfriend Gerda is one of these white conservatives. Not quite from her own choice, Gerda works for a black business woman after her former employer has sold her hairdresser salon to Thoko Masilela. Gerda has "decided to swallow her pride and stay on", preparing tea for her black boss and cleaning floors (FFL 128), while her white colleagues "resigned, deciding they would rather look for employment elsewhere than work under a black woman" (FFL 128). Eventually, this illustrates that South Africa's white supremacy has been destabilized and that white skin color does not necessarily guarantee prosperous lives or better chances, which is additionally underpinned by a white homeless asking black Thoko for her permission to wash her "snow-white, three liter BMW" (FFL 128).

### 2.3.1.3 Living conditions in townships and homelands

Even though some measures have been undertaken to ensure equal treatment of the different races in the labor market, such as the *Employment Equity Act, 1998* (NATLEX 2015), discrimination has not yet been overcome according to 2008 statistics which show tremendous differences in monthly earnings between Africans (ZAR2,576) and European descendants (ZAR11,240) (Leibbrandt et al. 2010: 11). Branson et al. state in their report “Education and Inequality” that

[i]n fact Africans with 15 years of education (a completed university degree) have similar earning returns to whites with grade 12 (completed secondary school). This difference persists with time. (2012)

While Fanie who, after having passed “a 2-year diploma in Personnel Management at Pretoria West Technical College” (FFL 14) works as a company employee and lives in a nice apartment building with regular flat-cleaning, Dimakatjo on the other hand, also holding a college diploma and having a decent occupation at a surgery cannot afford living in a proper home in a nice residential area, although Fannie and Dimakatjo may have similar educational backgrounds. Quite contrary to Fanie’s home, she lives like many other black people in a “*mokhukhu*, a shack that she calls home” (FFL 35) in the township, Mamelodi, east of Pretoria.

Maki’s shack consists of walls made of planks and roofed with corrugated plastic. In an attempt to make the walls more presentable and durable, the planks were covered with zinc sheeting firmly fastened with nails. The two rooms facing the street were fitted with large windows framed by curtains, giving clear indication that the owner had a special taste for good things. The green *stoep* [patio] in front added a touch of glamour. The tiny patch of lawn in the yard was neatly cut and well looked after [...]. In summer, flowers of diverse colors, heights and shapes made the place even more attractive. (37)

Townships such as Mamelodi are relics of the apartheid era when Africans were allotted homes according to their ethnic group in order “to prevent them from living in urban areas” (South African History online 2014). Black people were only allowed to move outside designated areas when working for white households (O’Malley 2004) which needed to be proven by carrying a pass that gave information of name, sex and age but also of ethnicity, occupation and tax payments. Being picked up without a pass had grievous consequences and was

severely penalized (South African History online 2014). Like the townships, some twenty years after the *Group Areas Act*, homelands in rural areas were established in 1972 according to the *Bantu Homelands Constitution Act*.

[T]his represents a fraudulent form of decolonization. 'Independence' [can] be proclaimed for a 'Homeland', and Africans assigned to that area [are] denied citizenship. The purpose [is] to keep South Africa purely white, except for labor purposes. Africans [can] then come in on passes as temporary residents. Geographically, the Homelands [are] scattered fragments of land and [can] never develop any real nationhood. (Thompson 1995: 190-200)

Both townships and homelands were erected as informal settlements which have survived the change to the 'new South Africa'. There are still insufficient hygienic standards, such as the lack of running water, electricity and sanitation (FFL 60 & 197). Besides the challenges of daily routines such as body care or homemaking (FFL 197), the absence of security in townships and homelands is one of the direst threats, in particular with regard to women.

#### **2.3.1.4 Summary**

Although various measures to fight inequality have been undertaken, so far no equal status of blacks and whites has been achieved. After all, social differences are ticking time bombs and urgently need to be overcome. As a first step, a well-conceived action plan for black people's education needs to be developed including improved teacher education, training and monitoring which will ensure a higher quality of education. Consequently, well-educated people will gain superior employment, which may lead to more satisfaction and higher incomes which enable adequate homes with higher hygienic standards as a basis for better and healthier living conditions. Overall, education may lead to a decent existence and a reduction of crime rates and violence. In his novel 'a Motana refers to the need for improvement by contrasting the less-educated characters such as Dimakatjo's relative Geelbooi (FFL 245) and the criminal MaGents (FFL 276 -279) with her smart and well-educated cousin Thomas (FFL 264) and uncle Phari (FFL 286).

## 2.3.2 Tradition

On the one hand 'a Motana describes South Africa's non-homogenous society by referring to the unequal distribution of life's chances, on the other hand he underpins the divergent cultural understanding and tradition of African and Afrikaner descendants, although dividing South Africa's society into strictly black and white would be a simplification. As the following chapter seeks to underline, the challenging coexistence of both ethnic groups, some topics, in particular the interplay of generations, gender roles and bride-price negotiations, *lobola*, have been exemplarily selected to illustrate the differences between black and white cultures.

### 2.3.2.1 The intergenerational interplay in the post-apartheid era

According to 'a Motana, black tradition seems to have survived hundred years of oppression under colonialism and apartheid, in particular the interplay of genders and generations is described as sound and unimpaired: women act according to their designated roles, children obey their parents and young people respect their elders. However, one source of ongoing tensions between younger and older Africans in the post-apartheid era roots in their different approaches to white people and the common history. While 'a Motana sees the older generation to be eager to reconcile with their former oppressors, young blacks tend to criticize their elders for their perpetual servility.

"Hao, uncle, are you still treating white people as gods? Are you still afraid of them, even now that we are long in new South Africa?" said Mayibuye [Dimakatjo' cousin] scornfully.

Silence descended heavily into the room, creating a tension that reminded one of the heavy, threatening atmosphere before storm-clouds burst into rain. The threat was so palpable that no one even ventured to breathe. The eyes of all were glued on children's uncle, whose frown-wrinkled forehead and glaring gaze expressed volumes. Uncle Phari drew in a wrathful breath and fired a baleful look at his target. He raised a warning finger; but as he opened his mouth to speak, the words jammed for sangoma-aunt interrupted him: "Matsobane! How dare you talk to your uncle like that? Your uncle is no ordinary man! Have you forgotten that he is the head of policemen?" [...]

The now-repentant Mayibuye got down from the sofa and unexpectedly knelt in front of Uncle Phari, as he too, earnestly engaged in the *phophotha* ritual [conciliatory ritual].

Uncle Phari gazed at the offending one for a long moment without speaking. Children's uncle waved his finger warningly at the repentant Mayibuye. Then his stern face relaxed: "Because there is too much fermented mud in your head, and not your usual clear brain, I have forgiven you."

Mayibuye returned humbly to his seat on the sofa. Smiles of relief flashed on everybody's faces. (FFL 177-178)

"It's our culture" (FFL) is the frequent commentary when outsiders but also family members seek explanations. Black tradition seems to be unchangeable and unquestionable. In order to support this idea of the wise elder versus the young impetuous men, the author plays with stereotypes, introducing uncle Phari, the prudent black police officer on the one hand, and the young crooks, Dimakatjo's brother and cousin, on the other hand, corrupt and uneducated, greedy and addicted to alcohol. It seems that an old man is needed "to sort out the mess" that has been caused by the younger generation (comp. FFL 286). Young people have to wait for their time. "That is when words of wisdom will be expected from you" (FFL 293), and 'a Motana's characters seem to accept the rule.

While, according to the author, sticking to cultural rules is typically African, the young white generation represented by Fanie Fourie seems to cross the racial line, falling in love with an African woman: "Love knows no color" (FFL 58). Fanie, driven by love, would not accept his mother's prejudices towards his black girlfriend. He does not obey but, on the contrary, he breaks with his mother instead of leaving his love although he feels guilty. In African culture, Fanie's behavior would be impossible, not respecting his mother's decisions would be considered to be inappropriate. But it is Fanie's stubbornness that makes Louise a better person, overcoming her cultural bias, yet it seems that she is even rescued by overpowering her "burden of her prejudice and hatred – this burden that had nearly cost her health and life" (FFL 189). Her soul seems purified: "She [is] now a much better person, who [has] decided to be Fanie's blessing and no longer a curse" (FFL 189).

Again, the author illustrates opposite pictures of African and Afrikaner descendants: while in African society the older generation is considered to be prudent and conciliatory and therefore to be heard and respected, white people

seem to be more flexible in their understanding of generations. The strict attributions such as authority, wisdom and responsibility to the older generation seem to be blurred but it eventually depends on the person him/herself whether respect is deserving or not.

### **2.3.2.2 Gender roles**

One of the main differences between black and white cultures is what 'a Motana describes in his novel the strong patriarchal system in African society where women generally are subordinated to men, regardless of their education or professional background, and age only gives older women some authority over younger men: "Matsobane! How dare you talk to your uncle like that?" (FFL 178), especially, when they try to mediate delicate situations. Overall, patriarchy influences all aspects of life, which has a strong impact on living together, on economy and politics. "Men dominate and control female labor, reproduction and sexuality as well as define women's status, privileges and rights in society" (Mohutsiwa 2012). Hence, a black woman's highest goal, so it is anticipated, is to find a husband, and to be humble towards him.

A woman's hands are meant to clean her man and his mess; it is this same man of whom you will speak proudly to your children telling them how far you have come with him. But you young women, your hands are there only to receive what the man has to give. (FFL 8)

Additionally, besides feeding her man, "A woman's business is to make her man fat" (FFL 109), and a woman has to be available to satisfy her man's sexual appetite.

In [Dimakatjo's] culture, when a man had sex with a woman, he later boasted: 'I have eaten her!' That reduced any woman to a mere object and gave her the status of a victim. (FFL 78)

Besides her role as a sex object, a black woman's value is measured by her reproductive capacity as childlessness, be it voluntary or be it infertility, is considered to be a true burden for an African woman. A life without motherhood in the black South African society will

have a serious effect on both the psychological well-being and the social status of women in the developing world [but also] negative social



consequences including marital instability, stigmatization and abuse. (Dyer et. al 2002: 1663)

While this understanding of the woman's role is widespread and accepted naturally by men but also by women, in particular by older and less educated ones in rural areas, younger and better educated women, mostly living in urban areas, such as Dimakatjo, perceive the imbalance of men and women as inequity. However, these women are not ready yet to question tradition or to fight for improvements, being still firmly intertwined with their social and familiar backgrounds. Therefore, when Fanie Fourie enters the surgery and falls deeply in love with the nurse (FFL 2), the course for Dimakatjo is set for her to escape her prescribed destiny.

By comparing Dimakatjo's ex-boyfriend Tau with Fanie Fourie, 'a Motana emphasizes the dichotomy of black and white masculinity.

[Fanie] was so much the 'modern man' in his outlook – unlike Tau, son of a chief whose values were steeped in what [Dimakatjo] and her more sophisticated peers regarded as 'backward' culture. (FFL 82)

'a Motana depicts black men, their social status and education notwithstanding, as conservative, unwilling to concur with gender equality (FFL 57), whereas Fanie is referred to be the prototype of the modern white man, a Prince Charming, who is gentle and sensitive, delicately handling his love.

White men, when they are in love, have tender care: they spoil their women with nice presents, breakfast in bed ... they help to cook, and change the baby's nappies, and... [...]. They read newspapers when there's work to be done, and they are quick to "panelbeat" their women. (FFL 57)

However, the picture of the open-minded whites in contrast to the reactionary blacks that 'a Motana seeks to convey is strongly contradicted by Daniella Coetzee in her article "South African education and the ideology of patriarchy", claiming that patriarchy is firmly rooted in both cultures, in the black *and* the white culture, where "the idea of the supremacy of the fathers" has an ongoing tradition (cf. Van der Walt 1994: 160 cit. in Coetzee 2001: 300).

Although patriarchy is hierarchical and men of different classes, races or ethnic groups have different places within the patriarchal system, they are simultaneously united in their shared relationship of dominance over their

women and they are dependent upon each other to maintain that domination. [H]ierarchies 'work', at least in part because they create vested interest in the *status quo*. Those at the higher levels can 'buy off' those at the lower levels by offering them power over those still lower. In the hierarchies of patriarchy, all men, whatever their rank in the patriarchy, are bought off by being able to control at least some women. (Coetzee 2001: 301-302)

Albeit in the post-apartheid area gender mainstreaming has been emphasized (comp. Plaatjes van Huffel 2011: 3), equality of sexes has not yet been achieved nor the patriarchal system overcome: according to Coetzee, in black but also in white culture, women are still inferior while men are considered to be superior (2001: 302). Some significant indicators of inequality are still the differences in earnings which is indicated in gender gap statistics such as, according to the *International Trade Union Confederation*, the gender wage gap that shows a gross average hourly income of female employees of 33.5% below the hourly male income (2009). The reasons are that "women are concentrated in less-productive jobs and run enterprises in less-productive sectors with fewer opportunities for business scale-up or career advancement" (International Trade Union Confederation 2009 cit. in Grant 2015), part-time jobs, and unpaid work such as housework, childcare and elder care (Grant 2015).

### **2.3.2.3 Lobola, bride-price negotiations for African women**

Contemporary gender discrimination becomes obvious when 'a Motana refers to bride-price negotiations, *lobola*. The "Prevalence of marriage payments" has a more than five-thousand-year long tradition, worldwide practiced by all "ancient civilizations such as Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Hebrews, Aztecs, and Incas" (Anderson 2007: 152), and all religions, where marriages were only acknowledged when marriage payments had been rendered. While in most western oriented societies "marriage payments have tended to decline and eventually to disappear" (Anderson 2007: 168), in many non-Western oriented regions of the world, such as in Asia, best-known in India and sub-Sahara Africa, this tradition has survived until contemporary times.

Marriage payments are considered to be compensatory payments that can be transferred between "marrying partners and the parental generation" (Anderson

2007: 151) in either way, from the bride and her kinship to the groom and his family, which is known as groom-pricing or dowry, or the opposite way, which is known as bride-pricing, *lobola*, in Sepedi. However, while both cases have in common that patriarchy is the predominate system, where gender roles for men and women are strictly designated, and marriages pre-arranged by their paternal generation (Anderson 2007: 152), cultural backgrounds of the two variants nevertheless differ significantly from each other. Dowry societies are considered to be more developed and urbanized, where men have economic values whereas women do not (Anderson 2007: 164), while bride-pricing is practiced in more primitive societies, in

tribal societ[ies] with homogenous men and homogenous women, [...] where women have economic value of their own, via their input into agriculture production, and hence receive a brideprice in equilibrium. (Anderson 2007: 164)

Hence, men pay for women's labor and reproductive capacity. Another important difference between the two systems is that dowry payments are practiced in monogamous societies, whereas in bride-pricing societies, polygamy is more common, a tradition also described by 'a Motana that, in particular wealthier and people of higher societal hierarchy in the tribal system, may marry more than one wife. "Sons of chiefs marry several wives" (FFL 9).

It is interesting enough that parting with *lobola* is not only still widely spread in South Africa but also mostly accepted by the younger urbanized generation.

Hey men, behold Africa's beautiful one, blessed with dimples that evoke appreciative laughter from guests! Son of Fourie, to part with *lobola* for her is not to waste cattle! (FFL 223)

Modern women such as Dimakatjo perceive this tradition as proof of love on the one hand, but additionally appreciate knowing their own value converted into heads of cattle, and therefore confirm bride-pricing on the other hand.

You know that if you are in love with a black woman, then you must be prepared to part with *lobola* for her?  
*Lobola*? You're not serious! Why should I pay *lobola*? It's 'new South Africa' now!  
'New South Africa' or not, *lobola* is still a must in our culture, *boetie*! (FFL 93)

Modernity is mirrored in *lobola* calculators (<http://lobola.net/>) (Lobola calculator 2015) which have been created to determine a woman's value, regardless of whether in rural or in urban areas. As families, in particular in urbanization, hardly have room for livestock, calculations "move quickly to cash" (Derby 2006). Hence, *lobola* has become a purely financial transaction which has been heavily criticized by the older native Africans, such as Amanda Gcabashe, a traditional healer who claims that "[*Lobola*] is a beautiful ceremony that has been bastardized by opportunistic people and inflation!" (Gcabashe cit. in Derby 2006). Like Gcabashe, 'a Motana criticizes the negative impact on tradition, where parting with *lobola* seems to become more and more the immoral enrichment of greedy kinship:

Parting *lobola* is not child's play. It's a serious business between two families... Most of the time things go smoothly, but I know of lobola negotiations that become caught up in a web of difficulties. You must pray that [Dimakatjo]'s people are truthful and fair people, that they should not be people with head as hard as rocks. If they are a bunch of *tsotsis* full of *mathaithai* – trickery – then the lobola negotiations will go along like a limping cow that is forced to walk up a steep mountain. When the girl's relatives are gripped by greed and jealousy then you are faced with problems. Some relatives can also foment a lot of trouble so that the girl should not be married. (FFL 125-126)

*Lobola* negotiations follow a strict set of rules. Each marrying party nominates their chief negotiators, *mmaditsetla*, bargaining the bride's value, but bride and groom must not be involved in the conference. While the bride is supposed to play only a passive role, the negotiators inform the groom during the entire process in which the size of payments are being discussed. Other than in dowry societies where payments depend on the wealth and social status or class of the families, which may amount to "several times more than total annual household income", bride-pricing focuses only on the "object woman" as such and her value. However, both dowries and bride-pricing represent "large financial burdens, [in particular] for poor households" (Anderson 2007: 154-155).

#### **2.3.2.4 Summary**

Living as a native African in the 'new South Africa' one seems to be caught in the middle of tradition and progress. In particular, young women seem to be torn between the black and white cultures. On the one hand, it is important to please

one's elders and to stick to the roles and rules along which family and friends would expect one to act, but on the other hand, they comply with the white "modern" tradition they have learned in the 'new South Africa'. Similarly to black people, open-minded white people struggle with the hybrid atmosphere of the 'new South Africa'. As for Fanie, it seems absurd that in times of change and transition archaic traditions such as parting with *lobola* could have survived. But as in case of Fanie, he is willing to accept this tradition and become part of it for the sake of love.

### **2.3.3 Bridging the gap: the rocky path to growing together and mutual understanding in the post-apartheid era**

With the collapse of apartheid in 1994, a history of horror and atrocity has come to an end. Hence, the major challenges in the years of transition are to conquer five hundred years of suppression and forty years of segregation and, most importantly, to take care of millions of traumatized indigenous Africans.

Trauma assumes that an ordinary life is disturbed, so violent that the harm will last. [...] In South Africa, perhaps the single most violent event in the nation's history was the coming of the white tribe into the continent [...] ending in the complete domination of the indigenous culture by the invading culture. The ensuing trauma turned endemic. Its effects will be felt for generations to come. (Magona 2012: 95)

In order to be able to live with the dreadful past but also to seek forgiveness and reconciliation, Nelson Mandela's Government establishes the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (1996-1998) to bring justice and hope to millions of black people "We are wounded people [...] we all stand in need of healing" (Tutu cit. in Mengel 2009: 302). The goal of the Commission is peacemaking between victims and perpetrators by unearthing the truth in order to overcome the past and eventually to forgive the culprits (comp. The Forgiveness Project 2015). All these efforts follow the superior aim to create one unified South African nation, the Rainbow Nation, where people of all races and origins can live peacefully together.

According to South Africa's new leadership, the politics based on truth, forgiveness and reconciliation seem to be the only practicable way which Mandela supports with his famous saying "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies" (Mandela cit. in Leveen Sher 2013). However, to

what extent the path taken is successful or not, is subject to many discussions. In particular, in a good many contemporary South African novels truth and reconciliation are at the center of interest that may range from total approval to absolute rejection (see for example James and van de Vijver 2000; Wilson 2001 cit. in Mengel 2009: 302).

Also 'a Motana deals with recent South African history, drawing a fairly positive picture of the post-apartheid era: he seems to follow Mandela's dream of mutual understanding, of growing together, narrated by means of the romantic love story of Fanie Fourie and his black fiancée Dimakatjo, when the formerly conflicting groups of the Afrikaners and Africans finally celebrate their unification and become one big family, like Mandela's vision of the Rainbow Nation. However, bearing in mind the atrocities and segregation black people had to suffer from under the apartheid regime (comp. for example FFL 14, 79, 107), it goes without saying that people of the 'new South Africa' have a path of trial and tribulation ahead to reach this ultimate goal. 'a Motana gives manifold examples of difficult situations to describe post-apartheid reality that South Africa's society has to struggle with. They are frequently initiated through everyday trivial gestures or an evil eye causing distrust, misunderstanding and discomfort, especially among indigenous Africans.

The young white couple's face froze into masks, while the old man and woman looked at each other and cast their eyes heavenwards, giving clear signal of their disapproval. Their expressions were those of people who smelled a bad odor but were too polite to say so. (FFL 27)

But as such incidents are daily fare it is hard for black people to increase their self-confidence or to have trust in other than their own folk. Years of oppression have created feelings of inferiority that hardly can be overcome. Hence, black people often feel insecure in the presence of white people, even well-meant gestures or short conversations cause unease.

[Joyce]: "How is life in Pretoria, *baas* Fanie?" Joyce asked him, venturing to break the ice.

[Fanie]: "Please don't call me *baas*! Just Fanie, okay?" [...]

[Joyce]: "It's very nice *baas* F... *askies* tog (excuse me) – I'm very sorry ...bathing (oh people.) [...] You know Fan...aowaa!...ag, please let me rather call you Mr. Fourie."

[Fanie]: "No, please call me Fanie," he said this time in Sepedi.

Joyce laughed in surprise.

[Joyce]: "Okay...Fanie ... you see, I am not used to addressing whites by their first names..." (FFL 218)

In particular, Fanie's girlfriend is torn apart. Although Dimakatjo seems to be deeply in love with Fanie she keeps being assailed by doubts. On the one hand, she hardly knows white traditions apart from those she has learned from her glossy magazines such as *Valentine's Day* or *White Weddings* but hitherto she does not have any personal experiences with white people, let alone white men. Moreover, "[I]ike many black people in the community" (FFL 22) she believes in the common prejudice that a relationship between a black woman and a white man is immoral:

[S]he had always considered that black women who took up with white guys were women of questionable morals. *Tiekie-lines* (prostitutes, FFL 336) – brazen tarts! Gold-diggers! She had despised them passionately. [...]

The voice of her upbringing warned her that this was not the right way to behave. (FFL 22-23)

On the other hand, she is fascinated by Fanie's charm and gallant behavior, and she loves him for them, he who, unlike her black ex-boyfriend, is pampering her and giving up bad habits without having to be asked. But, at the same time, she also feels insecure wondering if Fanie's intentions are truly honorable, causing mutual distrust between the lovers:

[Fanie]: "What are you doing, [Dimakatjo]? Don't be afraid of me."

[Dimakatjo]: "I'm not afraid of you!"

[Fanie]: "It is because I'm white and you're black?"

[Dimakatjo]: "No!"

[Fanie]: "What then?" Fanie reached towards her with the intention of rubbing her shoulder soothingly.

[Dimakatjo]: "No, don't touch me!" protested Dimakatjo.

[Fanie]: "Don't be so difficult, baby! This is 'new South Africa'!"

[Dimakatjo]: "So what?"

[Fanie]: "A white guy can lay a black chick!"

[Dimakatjo]: "Fanie, what do you take me for? A prostitute?" (FFL 32)

Discussions like these illustrate how deeply rooted bias between whites and blacks is, which can hardly be overcome not even in love relationships. It also happens that Fanie, albeit open-minded and unprejudiced against races, catches himself

thinking that he might have “tak[en] advantage of the fact that he [is] white and she [is] black” (FFL 33).

But unlike other contemporary authors, such as John Maxwell Coetzee (e.g. 1999) or Nadine Gordimer (e.g. 2012) who draw pessimistic pictures of South Africa, ‘a Motana holds on to his fairy tale with a happy ending. The solutions he offers to resolve conflicts are simple; people eliminate difficulties by laughing together and sharing friendly gestures, like the two lovers who manage to put aside prejudices and to eradicate cultural conflicts. In the end, it seems that cultural differences, rather than separating them, bring the couple together. Fanie and Dimakatjo show respect for each other and mutually accept traditions and cultural backgrounds, according to Mandela’s great teaching: “You must move beyond resentment to reach your goal!” (Mandela cit. in Leveen Sher 2013).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

When Fanie and Dimakatjo finally board a helicopter amid loud applause from their guests, to take off to their love nest it eventually reminds one of Prince Charming on white horseback abducting his princess to his fairy tale castle, leaving behind an idyllic scene with uncounted guests, happily united, in the midst of them Fanie’s family, warmly welcomed, cheering and celebrating. “Black hands firmly clasped white ones in the elaborate and prolonged African handshake, accompanied by approving exclamations” (FFL 308). Filled with joy, Afrikaners and Africans share their meals, they laugh and dance, making a night of it. Forgotten are resentments and prejudices; hostility belongs to the past. Blacks and whites hug each other, “Today apartheid is dead! A white man is our son-in-law!” (FFL 303) and approve Fanie’s and Dimakatjo’s relationship  
... ‘and they all lived happily ever after!’

With the fall of apartheid in 1994, Mandela had, as in ‘a Motana’s novel, the vision of peaceful transition, from segregation to equality, speaking of better life chances for all South Africans, good education and equal pay, regardless of whether black, white or colored. However, twenty years after, reality shows a different picture of the ‘new South Africa’. According to statistics (e.g.: educational rates cit. in Branson et al. 2012: 7, income rates cit. in Leibbrandt et al. 2010: 11),



paramount differences can be traced in all aspects of life such as education, employment or income.

The vision of a 'better quality of life for all the country's citizens' proclaimed by the *African National Congress (ANC)* has so far only become a reality for a minority of people. Although a new black middle class is beginning to develop, large swathes of the population feel excluded from the progress. Poverty and growing inequality could pose a threat to social peace. Violence and crime are already impeding the country's economic and social development. (GIZ 2015)

Eventually, gaps between races open up rather than close. Inequality seems to segregate South Africa's society anew, as if "apartheid as a mental and social model persists" (Ohlson 1994: 185).

### **3. *Black Diamond* (BD)**

#### **3.1 The author Zakes Mda**

Born as Zanemvula Kizito Gatyeni Mda in the Eastern Cape in 1948, the author spends his early childhood with his family in Soweto. His father Ashby Peter Solomzi Mda, being the founder and President of the *ANC Youth League*, means Mda will grow up in a highly political environment. After his father's imprisonment the family has to leave South Africa, seeking exile in Lesotho where Mda graduates from high school. In the early 1980s Mda migrates to the US for political reasons, where he studies drama and mass communication at the *University of Ohio*. After years of exile, Mda returns to South Africa to earn his PhD at the *Cape Town University* in 1990, and to become a Professor of Drama at the *University of the Witwatersrand*. Since 2002 Mda has been Professor at the English Institute of the *University of Ohio* (comp. Kozmus 2005-2015 and Fincham 2012: 1).

Publishing his first short story in Xhosa in the early 1960s, Mda has become one of South Africa's leading novelists, poets, playwrights and filmmakers, writing exclusively in the English language under his pen name Zakes Mda.

His work in both theater and fiction has been compared to that of leading African writers including Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Andre Brink, Njabulo Ndebele, J.M. Coetzee, Ivan Vladislavic, Antjie Krog and Etienne van Heerden. (Fincham 2012: 1)

His novels have been honored with several literature awards including the *M-Net Book Prize* for his novel *Ways of Dying* (1997), the *Commonwealth Writers Prize for Africa* and the *Sunday Times Fiction Prize* for his novel *The Heart of Redness* (2000), winning also the *Hurston/Wright Legacy Award* (2003) (University of Johannesburg 2010). Besides educating his audience in democracy, Mda aims to

[...] mirror the establishment of post-apartheid South Africa, which began with the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the election of the country's first ANC Government in 1994. What makes [...] Zakes Mda particularly timely is the author's engagement in the cultural, historical and social complexities of the 'new South Africa'. (Fincham 2012: 2)

With sarcastic undertones, Mda describes developments since the fall of apartheid when the new black elite has arisen from former freedom fighters and Ministers of Mandela's first Cabinet to cooperate with the formerly hated oppressors, to be "palatable to white business" (BD 21).

### 3.2 Plot overview

Don Mateza is a former freedom fighter engaged in the liberation struggle against apartheid. "He, a child of a single mother, sacrificed even his mother who was tortured to death by the Boers in a vain attempt to get at her son" (BD 15). Under his nom de guerre Comrade AK Bazooka, Don has been praised by black people for his fortitude and courage. However, while his comrades have moved up the ladder of success and have become Black Diamonds, Don merely works as a bodyguard for the *VIP Protection Services*, cynically enough protecting exactly those people who seem to have forgotten about him and the praise he earned during the struggles.

His name lives on only in songs that the youth sing at parades on such national holidays as Freedom Day, Human Rights Day and Youth Day, about AK Bazooka and his battlefield exploits against the enemy. (BD 15)

Besides these humiliations, his model-girl friend Tumi additionally causes stress. She, a powerful and successful black business woman, wants to create her own man, her own Black Diamond (comp. BD 88):

His childhood sweetheart ha[s] high hopes and big plans for him, and [has] determined to groom him, not only into the clean, fresh and urbane man he is today but into a Black Diamond. (BD 22)

Hence she picks his clothes, such as a lemon Versace suit (BD 93) or an orange Zara Man jersey (BD 196) and decides about him sleeping in silk pajamas rather than naked (BD 92). She determines what he is to eat and puts the lid on his home-cooking (BD 66). She urges him to get rid of his Himalayan cat Snowy (BD 197) and to break up with his friends, his brothers-in-arms from the freedom fight (BD 45). She makes him drive a Saab convertible rather than a car he could afford (BD 20).

The car was Tumi's choice and she paid the deposit for it, and promised she would help whenever Don had problems with the monthly payments. He didn't tell her that he was having difficulties and now gets threatening letters from the finance company, which he hides from her.

Don lives in Tumi's flat, a fashionable one-bedroom apartment in North Riding, a fancy area north of Johannesburg's business district. It is located in a gated community offering all amenities such as security guards, coded access and designated private parking lots (BD 17). It is truly a life of comfort but, in exchange, Don has to accept that he has no say in anything. Like a kept man, he has to agree with his girlfriend's decisions in order not to lose her donations or his place to stay.

However, Don's new assignment has a great impact on his life yet changes everything. Don has to protect the Afrikaner magistrate Kristin Uys who seems to crusade against criminality and prostitution in particular. Although found not guilty, she sentences the *boertje* (farm boy, BD 146) Stevo Visagie to six months in jail for contempt of court (BD 27). Consequently, Stevo, a petty gangster and pimp, compels his naïve brother Shorty to threaten the magistrate on his behalf. But as Kristin does not take the harassment seriously, the Chief Magistrate mandates protection for her. It is not an easy task for Don to protect the magistrate, she is uncooperative and stubborn and seeks to get rid of her bodyguard, like shaking off a pursuer, and much to her dismay, Don moves in with her where he starts to clean and reorganize her house and garden. However, after witnessing her dancing an erotic dance dressed up as a prostitute, Don becomes aware of her being

vulnerable and sensitive. He starts cooking for her and she allows to bring his pedigreed cat Snowy to play with her mongrel cat-without-name. Eventually, they have sex and leave for Cape Town to relax from the threats ordered by the one Visagie brother and conducted by the other. Albeit she obviously enjoys Don's company, Kristin still resents showing her feelings in public.

When returning to Johannesburg everything seems to get out of hand. Don's girlfriend Tumi, who has become suspicious of Don's flimsy excuses for rarely coming home and leaving town for a secret mission, catches the lovers. After a bitter quarrel with Tumi, he packs his clothes and moves in with the magistrate. Kristin downplays the possible danger and asks for time to reconsider their relationship, or even to end his assignment. Don, on the contrary, seems to be truly in love with the magistrate. Hence, he secretly puts up a bloody pig's head in front of her house, pretending a new assault by the Visagie brothers to make her change her mind. The endeavor does not miss its aim and Kristin asks Don to stay. But happiness is fragile and Kristin shortly thereafter learns that it was Don who put up the pig's head and not the petty gangsters. As a consequence, Don has to leave Kristin's house. Not knowing where to go, he drives to Soweto to meet his old friends. But both keep their distance and refuse to accommodate him for even a few days (BD 289-290).

"You are an idiot. You leave a woman like Tumi for an old white woman!" They are mad at him because he has betrayed their home girl. They even attribute his so-called dumping of Tumi to the fact that he 'tasted a white woman's cake', and it has drained him of all common sense. "He thinks a white woman's cake is the fastest way to becoming like Comrade Capitalist," says Fontyo. "Soon he will be looking down on us, treating us like dirt like he doing to Tumi."

Bova looks him straight in the eye and asks, "Comrade AK, did we fight the liberation struggle so that we can get between the thighs of white women? Do you think our comrades die for that?"

Don is taken aback by the vehemence and the disgust in his voice. (BD 290-291)

Left alone by his comrades, Don remains in the bar in Soweto where he watches the Stevo Visagie release from prison on TV, welcomed by his friends and relatives copying Nelson Mandela's March to Freedom in 1990. Being aware of the danger

posed to Kristin, Don drives to her home being just in time to rescue her from Stevo Visagie.

Although Don finally moves up the ladder of success and becomes the CEO of *VIP Protection Services*, he seems to have missed his goal. Tumi seeks to create her own customized Black Diamond, while Kristin – still prejudiced - only realizes his deep love after he has saved her life. The former freedom fighter has not managed to be on an equal footing, not with Black Diamonds nor with his former girlfriend, nor with Kristin with whom he is in love.

“When are you coming home?” [Kristin] asks instead.

“I have no home,” he says matter-of-factly.

“Home is where your cat is,” she says.

He smiles for a while, and then says quite earnestly, “For now... maybe. Me and Snowy... we can no longer be kept.” (BD 315)

But the last sentence “[...] we can no longer be kept” (BD 315) may be the first step of his own march to freedom, to finally find his own way of living and happiness.

### **3.3 Themes**

Although some features of *Black Diamond* seem to resemble the new popular genre of romance novels which are “aimed explicitly at the audience of a black female readership” (Warren 2014), Mda only follows partly the script of those post-apartheid romances about young powerful successful black women growing up in poverty, falling in love, and ending in “harmony with the professional triumph of the heroine” (Warren 2014). On the contrary, his love story is embedded in a plot that tells of unscrupulousness, greed and nepotism – and, overall, without the happy ending. Mda confirms every possible South African cliché and creates characters who perfectly fit the stereotypes (comp. BD blurb). The following chapters aim to illustrate the main topics of the novel, the winners and the losers of post-apartheid, status symbols, and mixed-racial couples.

#### **3.3.1 The winners and the losers of post-apartheid**

With the collapse of apartheid in 1994, South Africa’s black people were liberated and had hopes of future chances. To what extent the ‘new South Africa’ has been

offering opportunities to its indigenous inhabitants are subjects to be discussed in the following sections.

### **3.3.1.1 Black Diamonds**

The term “Black Diamond” may be misleading and mistakenly be associated with the rare carbonados found exclusively in Brazil and in the Central African Republic (International Gem Society 2015) or blood diamonds which are sold to fund “armed conflicts and civil wars” in Africa, such as “in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone” (Amnesty International USA 2015). However, the term is attached to South Africa and does not refer to any minerals at all but was introduced by the *UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing* in 2005 to classify the uprising black middle class when investigating the different spending power of the different racial groups.

To be tagged with the term first coined by the Institute in 2005, Black Diamonds must earn between ZAR16 000 and ZAR50 000 per month, have a tertiary qualification, a white-collar job (probably working in government) and be under the age of 44. (Radebe 2013)

After years of segregation during apartheid, when black people were systematically excluded from public life such as, among others, the education and economy sectors, the ‘new South African’ Government has “undergone profound reconstructing” (Department of Trade and Industry cit. in SouthAfrica.info 2013: 4). Hence, as studies by the *UCT Unilever Institute* show, various measures have been undertaken in the ‘new South Africa’ in order to reduce inequality between blacks and whites. One is to accelerate fair access of the black people to higher education, to universities in particular (comp. Branson et al. 2012: 7), another one is that blacks are preferentially accepted as civil servants, therefore “40% of skilled black people work in government as opposed to 13% white skilled individuals” (Radebe 2013). However, the most promising governmental program is the policy of *Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)*.

South Africa's policy of *Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)* is not simply a moral initiative to redress the wrongs of the past. It is a pragmatic growth strategy that aims to realize the country's full economic potential while

helping to bring the black majority into the economic mainstream. (SouthAfrica.info 2013)

This program seeks to include South Africa's black people in the economic growth of the post-apartheid era, to redistribute assets (Tangri 2008: 699) and to provide them with fair access to the labor market as the basis for lives in wealth and security (Department of Trade and Industry BEE strategy document 2013: 4).

[However], [d]espite the economic successes and a broad range of state policy, strategy and program interventions aimed at overcoming economic disparities, entrenched inequalities continue to characterize the economy and act as a deterrent to growth economic development, employment creation and poverty eradication. Vast racial and gender inequalities in the distribution of and access to wealth, income, skills and employment persist. As a consequence, [South Africa's] economy continues to perform below its full potential. (Department of Trade and Industry *BEE* strategy document 2013: 4)

Unfortunately, the extent to which [the economic] growth has been shared equitably amongst all South Africans is not yet adequate for the requirements of a stable, integrated and prosperous society. Accordingly, [the South African Government] need[s] to take additional collective actions in order to achieve their objectives. Further growth can only be accelerated and sustained if all South Africans are meaningfully integrated into the economy. (Department of Trade and Industry *BEE* strategy document 2013: 6)

While much has been achieved, the extent to which the majority of black people participate meaningfully in [South Africa's] economy remains far too limited and it is necessary to introduce a coherent and focused strategy for broad-based black economic empowerment. (Department of Trade and Industry *BEE* strategy document 2013: 7)

Although, from 2005 to 2013, "South Africa's Black Diamonds have doubled from 8 percent to 16 percent of this population segment, and their spending to a whopping ZAR400 billion" (Radebe 2013), the majority of black people still lives in poverty, excluded from the progress of South African politics.

The reasons for slow and unsatisfactory improvements for the majority of black people are illustrated in Mda's novel when he actually refers to the new black elite of so-called Fat Cats who have gained tremendous political and economic influence, and not to the new black middle class classified by the *UCT Unilever Institute* having a monthly income of ZAR16 000 to ZAR50 000 (Radebe 2013) like

Don Mateza when he eventually accepts the position of CEO of the *VIP Protection Service* (Leung 2004). The Fat Cats are a group of hand-picked former freedom fighters and Mandela's fellow prisoners from Robben Island, most of them becoming Ministers of Mandela's first democratically elected Cabinet in 1994 (Murphy 2014). "Fill[ing] the power vacuum" of the disempowered white leadership, "opened up [...] new economic prospects and opportunities" (Murphy 2014). As, after the collapse of apartheid, the former oppressors are on the one hand in need of black middlemen to influence the 'new South African' Government for their own good, on the other hand, the *BEE* strategies enable Mandela's confidants to join in the international stage of business, such as Comrade Molotov Mbungane, a former freedom fighter who fought under Don's command in the liberation struggles.

[Molotov Mbungane] was able to morph from a poor kid growing up in the village of Engcobo in the Eastern Cape to a Marxist guerilla to a political prisoner to a Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister in the first Mandela Government. In the last stages of that process he accumulated the political capital that he was able to convert into financial capital and equity in some of the biggest corporations in the land as soon as he left government services. It is the political capital that made him palatable to white business. Banks plied him with cash, until he became known as Comrade Deal-a-Minute because he put together consortia that acquired huge stakes in the mining industry. In less than five years, he was the owner of some of the most lucrative diamond, gold and platinum mines, and had interests in the banking, health care, wine and engineering industries. When his former comrades gossip about him in the township taverns, they say it didn't hurt his palatability at all that he was married to an Afrikaner woman. During their days in political power the Afrikaners knew how to create affirmative action for themselves. Now they are teaching the art of accumulation to their son-in-law, Dr. Molotov Mbungane. (BD 20-21)

Mbungane is not a mere fictional character but is based on the well-known South African politician, business man and Mandela's intimate friend Mosima Gabriel "Tokyo" Sexwale (Sheen 2015). The biographies of the two, Mbungane and Sexwale, seem to be identical: Like Mbungane, Sexwale is born and raised in poverty, joining the ANC when he was still young. As a member of the ANC military wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Zulu for "Spear of Nation"), he enjoyed training as a guerilla fighter in the Soviet Union (BD 96-97). Returning to South Africa to engage in the liberation struggles he was captured after a shooting incident and was imprisoned on Robben Island in the seventies, where he met Nelson Mandela.



Holding a degree from the *University of Swaziland* and being fluent in Russian, Sexwale became one of the professors of Robben Island, then known as the “University” (Sheen 2015 and Leung 2014). Released in 1990, Sexwale married his Afrikaner attorney and became one of the most powerful wire-pullers of the post-apartheid era. In Mda’s novel, Sexwale serves as the perfectly matching example for a “handful of black leaders and former political prisoners who have gotten really rich by converting their political capital into capital” (Leung 2004).

The most successful black businessmen have had some help from white corporations. Since apartheid ended, white companies have been afraid for their survival under the new black government, and they’ve been eager to win lucrative state contracts, so they’ve been offloading parts of their holdings to blacks... especially black politicians.

"You need to be palatable and acceptable to your white business, because white business still holds the purse strings, and Tokyo Sexwale is extremely palatable," says Alec Hogg, South Africa's leading financial analyst and broadcaster. For the past six years, he's been tracking Sexwale's rapid rise in the business world. (Hogg cit. in Leung 2004)

Like Mbungane, Sexwale’s economic power is valued at some 500 million US Dollars. Besides his gold, platinum and diamond mines, he is a shareholder of banks, engineering and health care companies (Leung 2004). Being one of the most influential business men in South Africa, “the leading banks in South Africa [have] virtually given him an open checkbook” (Hogg cit. in Leung 2004) to invest in various companies and deals which is why Sexwale, like his fictional counterpart, is nicknamed ‘Comrade Deal-a-minute’. Besides a grand imposing mansion in Johannesburg’s best, formerly white, residential area, the former Marxist guerilla fighter owns a vineyard in one of the most beautiful regions of South Africa. Sexwale is engaged in the South African Soccer League and was even favored by the former German world-league soccer player and official Franz Beckenbauer to succeed Sepp Blatter in the *FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association)* Presidency in order to do away with all deceptive practices of the past, although there were rumors that Sexwale may have bribed FIFA to bring the World Cup 2010 to South Africa (Sheen 2015). But despite this tiny drawback, Sexwale still might have been the perfect fit – he is palatable to the whites (comp. Tangri et al. 2008: 711).

All in all, Comrade Capitalist, be it Sexwale or his fictional counterpart, are certainly the winners of the post-apartheid politics, especially of the *Black Economic Empowerment*, bearing in mind that this strategy has been meant to improve economic conditions for all blacks which, in fact, enriches only “a small number of former *ANC* figures” (Tangri et al. 2008: 699); according to the international accounting firm *Ernst & Young*, 60 percent of the 6 billion US Dollar deals “went to consortia led by either Tokyo Sexwale or one other top black businessmen” (Leung 2004) who, interestingly enough, see themselves as benefactors, sharing their tremendous fortunes with the poorest of South African society, their former co-fighters and political prisoners in particular : “By the way [...] we don't have to. It's out of pure philanthropy of thinking about those you were with in prison. There's no law, no rule to help anybody” (BD 47-48 and Sexwale cit. in Leung 2004).

### **3.3.1.2 The losers in the ‘new South Africa’**

It is obvious that Mda, in his novel *Black Diamond*, strongly deplores the personal gains of the new moneyed aristocracy (comp. Crosswaite 2012: 31) by consciously criticizing the aims and strategies of the *Black Economic Empowerment Program*. He blames the black leaders who are profiting from the new system for forgetting that it was

ordinary black civilians who made the country ungovernable, and the workers who brought the economy to its knees. [...] [T]he so-called mass action brought the government to a standstill (BD 98),

initiating the final collapse of the white supremacy. Moreover, the author accuses the new elite of showing only little respect for those “who bore the brunt of the war” (BD 98); consequently, it seems, for him to be legitimate, that dissatisfaction is widely spreading among those having been excluded from prosperity and the wealth of the post-apartheid era.

Resentment has mounted within the *ANC* and its trade union and communist (the *South African Communist Party* or *SACP*) alliance partners regarding empowerment's penchant to create a small black elite while hardly spreading the benefits of *BEE* more widely. Indeed, by the time of its national congress in 2006, *COSATU* was complaining that the ‘national democratic revolution’ had been taken over by anti-working class forces and that there was no ‘a life and death struggle’ underway within the *ANC*

‘between the working class and the comprador, parasitic, aspirant black capitalist class’. (Southall et. al. 2006 cit. in Tangri 2008:701)

Albeit “[m]ounting protests have spurred the government to legislate that *BEE* become a much more ‘broad-based’ process serving, in particular, the interests of the mass of impoverished South Africans”, (Tangri 2008: 701) the gap among indigenous Africans is significantly widening instead of closing (Meredith 2014: 570). On the one hand there is this group of ‘self-made riches’ (comp. Crosswaite 2012: 31) seeing themselves as the new ‘Randlords’, reminiscent of “[...] white immigrants who trekked up across the veld to the Witwatersrand after the discovery of gold there in 1886” (The Economist 1997). However, unlike them, they live in comfortable homes and drive splendid German cars (The Economist 1997). They evoke memories of the former colonial masters when they assemble in South Africa’s old-fashioned country clubs enjoying international delicacies and sipping on French Champagne, talking business and politics, just like Cecil John Rhodes did a hundred years ago (comp. BD 95).

On the other hand, there is the “large majority of black people growing poorer since 1994” (Tangri 2008: 701), like Fontyo and Bova, Don’s comrades in the liberation struggles. However, it is not only poverty they are suffering from, but it seems to be the lack of future prospects and the feeling of powerlessness that has shattered their dreams of equality and justice in the ‘new South Africa’: although they have fought for freedom at the risk of their lives, they have not received their fair shares.

Yet despite government’s proclaimed shift to an inclusive, black equity acquisition, this has been observed in the breach. In practice, if not in policy, black equity acquisition is still viewed as the crux of empowerment, and this focus on ownership has been to the benefit mainly of senior ANC members and their families. (Tangri 2008: 701)

### **3.3.1.3 Summary**

Hence, “[p]ersonal wealth is the new arbiter of class and privilege. ‘[I]t’s no different from the days of apartheid. Only now it’s black discriminating against black” (Murphy 2014). Instead of creating similar opportunities for all South Africans, post-apartheid politics have created anew a system of winners and of losers (comp. Schneider 2015), of those who are able to afford a ‘bling’ lifestyle on the one hand

and, on the other hand, of those who live below the breadline (Crosswaite 2014: 189). To summarize,

“[t]he success of the liberation’s struggle [is] not to be measured on how many billionaires [South Africa] ha[s] produced, but rather how the poverty experienced by the majority [is] addressed” (Guemede 2011 cit. in Martinez-Roca et. al 2012: 6)

### **3.3.2 Status symbols**

The rise of the black upper-middle class in South Africa goes hand in hand with a life in the lap of luxury, with a ‘bling’ lifestyle which, in the times of segregation, was merely reserved for the white elite and inaccessible to indigenous Africans (comp. Martinez-Roca et. al 2012: 2). “[B]anning Africans from it was another way of domination, and of depriving them from the sense of individual worth and social status.” (Martinez-Roca et. al 2012: 2). But with the black empowerment programs of the post-apartheid politics, black Africans no longer are to be excluded from luxury lifestyle which has led to

“[o]ne of the shared meanings of nowadays South Africa [...] that ‘bling’ – that is, a culture of ostentation and conspicuous consumption as a show of wealth - is mainly related to [b]lack South Africans” (Martinez-Roca et. al 2012: 10).

While displaying wealth through luxury goods and lifestyle is positively accepted when carried out by European descendants, it is negatively connoted when non-Europeans, people of dark skin complexion in particular, similarly demonstrate their financial success.

If the showing of wealth and power by the means of status symbols is a typical feature of the ‘new rich’ post-apartheid black society duplicating former white supremacy (comp. Martinez-Roca et. al 2012: 1), or if it is deeply rooted in the South African tribal system (Crosswaite 2014: 190) is subject to discussion in the following sections.

#### **3.3.2.1 Historical roots**

Although Mda uses the widely accepted cliché that displaying prosperity by the means of status symbols is a current development of the post-apartheid era and, in general, correlating with a dark skin complexion (Chevalier 2011 cit. in Martinez-

Roca et. al 2012: 3, Martinez-Roca et. al 2012: 8), anthropologists tend to explain that the propensity of black people to a show of wealth and success only partly derives from the “inherited value system of apartheid” (Martinez-Roca et. al 2012: 1), but for the better part, it roots in ancient cultures of the South African tribal system (Crosswaite 2014: 190).

Status distinction and display go further back to pre-colonial times. Not only did a tribal African aristocracy exist, African society was itself emblematic. Proper attire and display of wealth were perceived as honorable, expressing the wearer’s dignity and setting codes of social behavior. Particular honor and pride were granted to age, genealogical seniority, male adulthood, and political position. Aristocratic chiefs signaled their authority by wearing special animal-skin clothing, ornaments, and other paraphernalia of power. They were entitled by custom to display, mobilize, and increase their wealth through the acquisition of wives and large herds of cattle. (Kuper 1963 cit. in Crosswaite 2014: 190)

Traditionally, it was not only the South African aristocracy that marked its social standing; everyone did, signifying their age, gender, kinship, rank, and ethnicity through their attire and etiquette. For example, a woman’s clothing indicated whether she was married or not, could indicate her age, and even the specific role she fulfilled when wearing a particular type of dress. (Crosswaite 2014: 190)

Following Kuper (1963 cit. in Crosswaite 2014: 190) and Crosswaite (2014), status symbols have had a long tradition. “Status display is not something new. [...] It is partly sharing one’s success with others which is expected in South African society” (Crosswaite 2014: 190). Moreover, as in many other cultures inside and outside Africa, native South Africans have been accustomed to display hierarchal social systems visibly, which indeed could have been witnessed when Nelson Mandela, belonging to the Xhosa tribe, was buried “draped in a lion skin” (Baetz 2013) according to his social status of a tribal chief. In the eye of the beholder of the Western hemisphere, this may have appeared as an archaic indigenous African tradition, however, considering European royal weddings or coronation ceremonies, some similarities to those of South African tribal culture can be found. Instead of draping a lion skin on his shoulders, Willem-Alexander, when, in April 2013, “he was sworn in as king of the Netherlands”, was swathed in the ermine-lined coronation mantle as sign of his Royal power (BBC 30 April 2013).

Overall, only few traditions have survived colonialism and apartheid, when wearing labels was the one of the few means of showing individuality and status.

Even in the heydays of apartheid, young men like him had to boast of Bang Bang jeans, or at least Levis. They had to wear Crocket and Jones shoes, Bostonians and Ballys. They had to seek refuge in *jewish* (sic!) – as sartorial elegance – because they had no other way of expressing themselves. (BD 122)

These days, after dismantling apartheid, well-off black people enjoy the newly achieved wealth and, as “expected in South African society”, they share their success (Crosswaite 2014: 190). As status symbols change over time (Crosswaite 2014: 189), the black bourgeoisie of course no longer indicates their high social status by wearing leopard or lion skin clothing but, like in Western democracies, by living in decent homes, by wearing fancy designer fashion, and by driving expensive European cars.

Many wealthy South Africans who have moved out of the townships are going back on the weekends. For some, it is about not forgetting their roots, while for others, it is about ‘sharing’ their success. A popular leisure activity is to meet at the car wash where suburban and township locals come together to display their cars and other possessions, and have a barbecue and drinks. Brands employed there to ‘share success’ need to be easily recognizable to act as a badge of achievement, they need to have ‘cultural cool’ capital. Those who stay in the township are proud that their rich friends are coming back and perceive them as aspirational role models for the youth, as they have gone from ‘zero to hero’. (Crosswaite 2014: 190)

Following Crosswaite (2014), “[s]tatus display is part of South African culture, and this is reflected in [their] relationship with luxury goods. Proper attire and display of wealth are perceived as honorable”. Hence demonstrating wealth through visible symbols and signs is justified by maintaining ancient indigenous traditions and also to be esteemed by South African society including the less fortunate.

### **3.3.2.2 The obsession with status symbols of the post-apartheid era and the consequences for the ‘new South Africa’s’ economy**

Martinez-Roca and Vazi (2012) – both researchers of the *International Foundation for Interdisciplinary Health Promotion and Mental Health First Aid South Africa* – present different observations and strongly contradict the acceptance of the new ‘bling’ society among the rest of South Africa’s black people. Moreover, it seems

that Black Diamonds are strongly criticized by their own people for their status-driven and compulsive consumer behavior, being obsessed with shopping and spending a fortune on luxury brands (comp. Chevalier 2011 cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 3). "It is estimated that, by 2020, 420,000 South African households will have disposable income that exceeds US\$ 200,000" (Rice 2013 cit. in Crosswaite 2014: 187). But instead of stimulating South Africa's economy by financing or founding new businesses, the new black upper-middle class prefers to spend a good share of its annual income in lavish lifestyle. Being severely reprimanded by black African union leaders, "King of 'bling'" Keni Kunene, a native African businessman rejects these reproaches as follows:

You remind me of what it felt like to live under apartheid. You are telling me, a black man, what I can and cannot do with my life [...]. You are narrow-minded and still think that it's a sin for black people to drive sports cars or be millionaires at a young age. (Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 2-3)

Like the leaders of the black trade union, *Black Diamond's* author Mda condemns the consuming behavior of the new black elite and their main concern with self-fashioning. Don's model girlfriend Tumi seems to be exemplary of the class of black new riches. Throughout his plot, the author inserts passages referring to Tumi's compulsive consumption, yet he draws a picture of her obsession with buying designer labels to display her wealth.

"You don't like [the new chaise longue]?"

"It's nice, Tumi but..."

"Nice? Only nice? It's from Bakos Brothers [Italian furniture designers], Don. From Bakos Brothers! And all you can say is nice?" (BD 19)

Moreover, Tumi seems to have slightly adapted Mark Twain's famous saying to fit the South African society from "Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society" to "Designer clothes make the man. Poorly dressed people have little or no influence on society". She obviously makes every effort to shape her own Black Diamond by changing Don's outfit and dressing him up in a "lemon Versace suit she bought him on a trip to New York" (BD 93) or a jersey she bought in Europe (BD 196) regardless of his own preferences:

"Guess what I brought you," she says.

She rummages through one of the suitcases and brings out an orange jersey.

"A jersey?"

“It’s a Zara Man, baby. You can’t get it in South Africa. You’re going to look like a real Black Diamond in that.” (BD 196)

Additionally, in order to attain her goal, Tumi relentlessly introduces Don to the new black leadership such as Kenny Meno, an influential business man. However, “[...] [the] [...] meeting with Kenny Meno has finally convinced [Don] that all this ‘networking’ that Tumi is always organizing for him is futile. Nothing will ever come of it except his humiliation” (BD 100).

It seems that Mda seeks to draw a controversial picture of Don, representative for the black majority. He stands for people who cannot afford to wear Versace suits (BD 93) and Givenchy shoes imported “straight from the Shoe Box in London” (BD 206), he exemplifies people who feel the inequality and the injustice of post-apartheid politics when being confronted with the visible signs of prosperity of the new black elite. Moreover, Don symbolizes the people’s loss of self-respect when being invited by their rich friends and relatives to join in the weekly car wash while being offered a *braai* (South African barbecue) sipping on cold drinks (comp. Crosswaite 2014: 190). Like many blacks being supported by their well-off kinship, Don seems to lack self-confidence when living on his girlfriend’s expenses, however not feeling strong enough to escape. She, on the other hand, modelling her own Black Diamond makes him feel like her kept-man.

“You know I don’t like it when you spend all this money on me, Tumi. Unlike you, I worry about money.”

Once more she shuts him up with a kiss.

“You gonna get that promotion, baby. You gonna be the chief executive of VIP Protection services. You’re a Black Diamond, Don. You should learn to live like one.” (BD 19)

In order to satisfy the black emerging upper-middle class’ wants, “luxury retail locations such as *V&A Waterfront* in Cape Town or *Sandton Mall* and *Hyde Park Corner* in Johannesburg” (Crosswaite 2014: 187) have been erected. However, ‘bling’ lifestyle merely has a positive influence on South Africa’s gross domestic product through the retail effect while the major part of value addition is happening in Western democracies, from where the major share of luxury goods is imported. Consequently, the purchasing power of Black Diamonds flows in a large part abroad and is lost for reinvestment in the local economy which is described and



summarized by Onyeani, the *African Sun Times*' Editor-in-Chief and author of *Capitalist Nigger* as follows:

The [b]lack [r]ace, is a consumer race and not a productive race [...]. We have become a sheep-like consumer race that depends on other communities for our culture, language, feeding and clothing. We have become economic slaves in Western society. [...] The [b]lack race needs to wake up and stand on its own feet. [We need to learn] from others what it takes to succeed." (Onyeani 2007 cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 4)

Gumede (2011) and Bloom (2010) support Onyeani's reproach because instead of what has been stated as a main goal to be achieved through *Black Economic Empowerment* creating

an integrated and coherent socio-economic process [...] aimed at redressing the imbalances of the past [...] [and] ensuring broader and meaningful participation in the economy by black people to achieve sustainable development and prosperity (Black Economic Empowerment Commission cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 5),

only a handful of black people have reached the goal, however, not in a managerial position or in entrepreneurship (Gumede 2011 and Bloom 2010 cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 5). Both researchers claim that post-apartheid politics, in fact, have been prolonging economic structures of the apartheid system rather than changing them (both cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 5). Furthermore, their criticism is that

*BEE* has contributed to the creation of popularly called 'tenderpreneurs', business people mainly identified as [b]lack Africans that have got rich by using political influences in order to secure government tenders and contracts through corrupted processes. (Gumede 2011 and Bloom 2010 cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 5)

'Tenderpreneurship' is a business model for an exclusive number of black influential people making a fortune with prosperous outlooks. Mda incorporates this unfavorable development enabled by post-apartheid policy makers when referring to Kenny Meno, who, like other Fat Cats, has been engaged in politics or governmental services. In order to confirm the *BEE* guidelines, it has become necessary to employ black people as members of the boards of South African companies. Instead of being involved in economic processes or decision making, black board members only act as front men. While this handpicked number become Rand-billionaires, the majority of black people without political influence

are unable to climb up the ladder of success, left behind without any positive future prospective:

“Perhaps I missed some seminars on how to convert my political capital into capital, as my friend Bova would say,” says Don sarcastically.

“You don’t need a seminar on how to convert political capital into equity in the biggest conglomerates in South Africa,” says Kenny earnestly. “White capital has a way of finding you. When you have political clout, white capital comes knocking at your door to drag you screaming into its boardrooms. That is why I am not in government service today. They badgered me until I gave in. Even those of us who may resist at first, professing some misguided conscience, we always end up with a broad self-satisfied grin and the dazed eyes of a cat that has eaten too much cream. What I am saying, Comrade AK, is that if they haven’t yet come knocking at your door, you’re not worth anything to them.” (BD 100)

Overall, avarice and greed seem to be some of the central problems of post-apartheid-politics, because “[b]ling’ culture has infected the political, administration, and business culture [...]. [It] encourages corruption [and] dishonesty” (Gumede 2011 cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 5). This can be reviewed in the *Corruption Perception Index* 2014, South Africa, which shows a score of 44 out of 100, while 0 means highly corrupted and 100 very clean (Transparency International 2014).

### **3.3.2.3 Summary**

Although displaying wealth by visible signs does not necessarily have a negative connotation, in the ‘new South Africa’ status symbols seem to split the black population underlining the obvious differences of social classes. “Conscious consumption [...] is used to demonstrate one’s social status and to signal a higher position in interpersonal exchanges” (Knaus 2010, cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 8). This is further proof that gaps within the South African society are rather widening than closing which means that South Africa’s society is segregated anew, not by races but into the classes of the well-to-do and the less fortunate.

### **3.3.3 Mixed racial couples**

Unlike à Motana’s romance *Fanie Fourie’s Lobola* where the engagement of the interracial couple Fanie and Dimakatjo is celebrated as a sign of reconciliation, Mda describes a more pessimistic picture and depicts how cross-racial liaisons are

echoed by South Africa's post-apartheid society. In his novel *Black Diamond*, Mda illustrates the problematic relationship between the Afrikaner magistrate Kristin Uys and her black bodyguard Don Mateza and the societal perception on the one hand but, on the other hand, he profiles the lovers and their own-race bias against their partner's different racial backgrounds (comp. Jaynes 2007: 24), a matter that seems to be strongly intertwined in their shared - respectively unshared – history. “Don feels so liberated but also feels guilty about feeling liberated. Especially for feeling liberated with a white woman. Kristin, on the other hand, feels dirty” (BD 251).

### **3.3.3.1 Historical background**

With the first settlements in the Cape area in the mid-seventeen hundreds,

South African history has been characterized by interactions among different groups of people. As European settlement led to colonialization, South African society was developed by mixed communities of indigenous people, Dutch and English settlers and missionaries, and slaves brought from the East. This diverse society, dominated by the Europeans, was regulated by a system of power hierarchy mediated through discourses of religion, race, civilization, and gender.

Throughout this history, contact between different groups has led to sex – in forms including forced sex, concubinage, marriage, clandestine relations and cohabitation. Cross-cultural relationships have necessarily involved transgression of boundaries separating different groups in the power hierarchy. Of these, race has been the most salient marker of difference throughout South Africa's history. (Sherman et al. 2009: 55-56)

Cross-cultural intimate encounters were always criticized and condemned by all societies and throughout the centuries (comp. Sherman et al. 2009: 55). The climax however, was certainly reached during the apartheid era, although the concept of legally segregating South Africa's society fell on fertile grounds as in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when in 1927 the “first significant piece of anti-miscegenation legislation in South African history” (Sherman et al. 2009: 63), the *Immorality Act No 5*, prohibited “all illicit relations between Europeans and natives” (Sherman et al. 2009: 63). During apartheid, more laws were passed to interdict relationships between whites and persons of other ethnical groups starting with the *Mixed Marriage Act No 55* in 1949 banning legal marriage between whites and non-whites (Christopher 1994 cit. in O'Malley 2004).

The police tracked down mixed couples suspected of having a relationship. Homes were invaded and doors were smashed down in the process. Mixed couples caught in bed, were arrested. Underwear was used as forensic evidence in court. Most couples found guilty were sent to jail. Blacks were often given harsher sentences. (Lasheigh 2014)

In 1950, the *Immorality Amendment Act No 21* became law, also disallowing any extra- marital sexual relations between whites and blacks, a law which was amended in 1957 when, finally, any sexual relation between whites and non-whites was outlawed by the *Immorality Act No 23*.

It makes it an offence for a white person to have intercourse with a black person. It is also an offence to entice, solicit, or importune another to commit any of these acts or to attempt to do so or to conspire with another to commit such acts. The maximum penalty for this offence is seven years' imprisonment. (Dugard 1978: 69f)

Abolishing interracial relationships was one of the backbones of apartheid policies and the *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act* of 1949 “[became] the first major piece of apartheid legislation” (Rebirth Africa Life on the Continent 2000), as miscegenation was prohibited by law in order to “preserve purity of the white race in the face of a huge African majority” (Sherman et al. 2009: 58).

### **3.3.3.2 Mixed racial couples in the ‘new South Africa’**

Although President Botha repealed laws around “‘petty apartheid’ which segregated everyday places” in 1986 (www.capetown.at 2008), even some thirty years later, mixed couples in post-apartheid South Africa only slowly have started to become commonplace. Statistical data are unavailable and can only be estimated. In 2004, only “four of every 100 marriages are between the major race groups: black, colored [...], Asian, and white”, while “black-white marriages are the rarest” (McLaughlin 2004). Besides the daily insults, being called “Top Decks, after a candy bar that's both white and milk chocolate” (McLaughlin 2004), mixed couples have to struggle with prejudices, in particular sexual stereotypes that are daily fare:

Concomitant with the belief that black people are intellectually inferior is the belief that black people are sexually superior. Black women are held to have “increased lubricity, and an unbounded and indiscriminate sexual

appetite”, while black men are held to have “enormous penises and sexual appetite”. (Katz 1996: 25 cit. in Janyes 2007: 27)

The accompanying stereotypes are those of white women as chaste and virginal, and white men as protectors of their women. (Childs 2005 cit. in Janyes 2007: 27)

According to Childs (2005), it is understandable that a white man’s relationship with a black woman finds more societal acceptance, as depicted in *Fanie Fourie’s Lobola*, than as under the given circumstances of Kristin and Don. “And now you’ve made me fall in love with you. And yet you can’t really be mine, can you?” (BD 275). In their case, when the racial ancestries are differently distributed, objections seem to be stronger, which may derive from the archaic patterns of patriarchy and racial hierarchy. Considering the patriarchal understanding of sexual intercourse to be a matter of male dominance over female submission, the superior white women would be dominated by “a man of the subordinate race” (Cornwall 1996 cit. in Sherman et al. 2009: 61).

In order to overcome prejudices and to master difficulties particularly “surrounding interracial couples – racialized/sexualized stereotypes, perceptions of difference, familial opposition, lack of community acceptance”, these issues must not be seen as “individual problems but rather as a reflection of the larger racial issues that divide the races” (Childs 2005: 6), a matter which appears not to have been sustainably realized in post-apartheid South Africa.

### **3.3.3.3 Summary**

Overall, bias, mistrust and misunderstanding between the races are some of the major hurdles hindering South Africa’s society from amalgamating, and the Rainbow Nation as proclaimed by Nelson Mandela from becoming true having a tremendous impact on the coexistence of races and does not spare the most intimate aspects of life. Hence, in analyzing Mda’s characters neither blacks nor whites seem to appreciate the personified reunion of races in the form of mixed racial couples. Instead of supporting Don, his friends rather harshly criticize his relationship with a white woman as being a status symbol rather than bridging the gap or contributing to reconciliation: “Once you become a Black Diamond black

sisters are no longer good enough for you! Fucking a white woman is a bloody status symbol” (BD 279).

But also the Afrikaner magistrate herself seems to be torn apart between avowing herself as the lover of a black man: “He kisses her. She kisses him back. She no longer cares what anyone else watching thinks” (BD 277) on the one hand, and on the other hand, she is still insecure if her relationship with a black man would be socially acceptable:

[Don and Kristin] walk on the white sands of Clifton Beach hand in hand for the first time. It just happens and they are not aware of it. And they walk for some time swinging their arms. She is the first to be conscious of the interlocked fingers and she pulls away. She breaks into a run and he chases her. He catches up with her and holds her to himself. He is about to kiss her but she pushes him away. She is not one for public displays of affection. There is a little bit of the old South Africa still lingering in the environment: What will all these people who are staring at them think? (BD 254)

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In his novel, Mda confronts his audience with the pessimistic picture he draws of the ‘new South Africa’. On the one hand, he depicts the discrepancies between the races as not having been resolved, on the other hand, he underlines the development of a new black elite filling the gap of the former disempowered white supremacy instead of overcoming the injustices of the past. Eventually, he becomes disillusioned concluding that overcoming the past seems to be “[...] more complex than just a matter of ‘black and white’” (Lasheigh 2014).

## **4. *People Like ourselves* (PLO)**

### **4.1 The author Pamela Jooste**

Born in 1946 Pamela Jooste spends “her formative years at the small Docklands hotel her parents managed, a hotel frequented by a [c]olored clientele” (Bassett 1999) which may entitle her to call her childhood “a particular” one (Loots 2005). Unlike the average white South African girl growing up during the days of apartheid, Jooste in some interviews refers to a different social environment when playing

with her friends from the colored community spending their days in the streets and at the docks:

This is where we lived and this is where I learned some things about street life and dock life and bars and gangsters and *Union Castle* liners that come and go and colorful characters. (Bassett 1999)

In other interviews, however, she describes her childhood as

[...] fairly isolated [...] in terms of interaction with other children and so there was plenty of opportunity for the inner fantasy world to grow. I was fortunate, too, in having a mentor who consciously stimulated my interest in reading and the development of an interior life. Also, as you might imagine, in the particular geography in which I grew up there were all kinds of people living the most extraordinary lives. (Loots 2005)

At the age of seventeen, Jooste makes her debut as a writer for the South African women's magazine *Fair Lady*, and starts as a part time author publishing short stories, and thereafter, soap operas and film scripts while working for companies such as *Howard Timmins* publishers and in the communications department of *BP Southern Africa* (Random House Struik 2010). Her first novel *Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter* (1997) as a full time author has earned Jooste recognition as a serious writer. She enchants her reviewers: Barbara Trapido considers her to be

“a breath of fresh air in the often close atmosphere of South African fiction. She has the art of accessibility. Her writing is clear, light and sharply observant. While having a serious purpose, the books are fun to read. Taking a cue from Herman Bosman, South Africa's greatest storyteller, she puts together small, unaffected personal stories, mainly of white South African lives, ordinary lives that resonate with ethnic and political complexities.” (2003)

For her first book, she is awarded various prizes such as the *Commonwealth Prize* for the Best *First Novel Africa Region*, the *Sanlam Prize for Fiction* and the *South African Bookseller's/Book Data Choice Award* (Random House Struik 2010).

In 2003, Jooste publishes her fourth novel *People Like Ourselves* which is “numbered in the *Top Twenty Bestsellers for 2003*, awarded by *Exclusive Books*” (van Heerden 2005) and, in general, positively reviewed: Jennifer Crocker concludes that “[Jooste] has produced a novel of supreme elegance and fine observation [...], [and] it was time she was recognized as one of the country's best

serious novelists” (2003 cit.in West 2009: 39). Shirley Kossick describes the novel in the *Mail & Guardian* as “a colorful, knowing and accomplished work with some penetrating observations about ‘the way we live now’” (2003 cit. in West 2009: 39), and Sally Kernohan writes in her review, “Frankly, those with a conscience will find it disturbing. But it is an exceptional and absorbing read” (2003 cit. in West 2009: 39). Overall, although Jooste being accused of having plagiarized some passages from a student’s writing (Kirby 2005), Jooste’s novel is critically acclaimed, in particular, by white English-speaking South African women (West 2009: 39). Her novel seems to be widely acknowledged as seriously mirroring the contemporary South Africa’s challenges still influenced by its past.

A somber portrait of the deteriorating marriage of a white middle-aged couple beset by doubts and fears in post-apartheid Johannesburg, where the past still casts long shadows and the future is uncertain. South African novelist Jooste [...] also vividly evokes the present: an edgy time of flux, of waiting for new patterns to emerge and for life to assume some definable shape. (Kirkus Review 2003)

## 4.2 Plot overview

Set in the white suburbia of Johannesburg in the early 2000s (PLO e.g. 148 and 234) with flashbacks into the late 1970s (PLO e.g. 259), the plot aims to allow insights into the white middle-class and their struggling “to make the adjustment to life in the new, democratic South Africa, when all their wealth and status depended on the inequalities of the old” (Gale 2003). It promises “a wry look at the brave new world that is the ‘African miracle’ today, where Botox injections keep yesterday’s white madams smiling gamely through while burglars pad around in diving suits to bypass their security alarms” (Robertson 2004).

After the dismantling of apartheid, Douglas and Julia Merchant’s lives undergo dramatic changes. Douglas’ building company lacks jobs due to his refusal to accept black people as shareholders in his company as demanded by the *Black Economic Empowerment* (Black Economic Empowerment Commission cit. in Martinez-Roca et al. 2012: 5)



The name of Douglas' building business is Merchant and Merriman. There's not a Radebe or a Dlala or a Zwane in sight and that won't do these days. All it shows is visible resistance to transformation. All it means is that there's someone who isn't trying enough. These names and names like them are something that needs to be seen on the letterhead. They're a presence that should be apparent at site meetings, at board meetings and in a company's private box at the rugby. (PLO 53)

Unaffected by her husband's financial straits, Julia keeps spending a fortune on luxurious amenities, beauty treatments, and her psychotherapist they actually cannot afford any longer hazarding that her behavior and attitude may be a crucial test for her marriage. Not recognizing that "her days of tea on the lawn are numbered" (PLO blurb), Julia holds on to her life as 'madam', living in a grand house, pampered by her black domestic staff Adelaide and Gladstone who, as in times under apartheid, do not seem to be discerned as thinking persons, "It makes no difference if Adelaide's there" (PLO 2-3). While her run-away and former drug addict daughter Kimmy accommodates herself to the living conditions in the 'new South Africa', Julia only eventually seems to realize that the days of her privileged life may be counted when possible breast cancer is being diagnosed and chances are that she needs to check into one of those hospitals covered by the *Dread Diseases Policy* which, unlike "the five-star clinics [which] are filled with patients who come [...] for discreet readjustment [...]" (PLO 314), lack all those conveniences she is used to.

Julia's best friend is Caroline Bannerman. She and her husband Gus live in the Merchant's neighborhood. Their home is the splendid mansion 'Stonehenge', and the family's societal status is of high significance. When Julia and Douglas married, Caroline's mother-in-law Cuckoo Bannerman offered 'Stonehenge' for Julia's wedding venue, and

[t]he rumor was that Johannesburg people who weren't invited to the wedding went to their beach houses. They disappeared to the Berg. They lay low by the trout streams in their fishermen's huts, so that afterwards they could look at each other and say, in truth, that they were out of town on that day and couldn't possibly have made it, much as they might have liked to have been there. [...]

An invitation to the Bannerman house [...] was a trophy not to be sniffed at. (PLO 24-25)

Some twenty-five years later, left behind by her son James 'Jimjam' Bannerman who has escaped his overprotecting mother's stranglehold to live in London, Caroline decides to master her fate on her own after her husband has had a tragic car accident. She refuses to leave comatose Gus in the clinic but brings him home, "There's not a hospital in the country, private or public, that has anything better" (PLO 130). She employs nurses and orders medical equipment and utensils. "Life may have changed and robbed Gus of himself but Gus' life will not change. Caroline will make certain of that" (PLO 130). Caroline Bannerman is convinced that her husband's destiny is closely intertwined with a terrible accident which has happened years ago during Julia's wedding when the infant daughter of a black domestic servant drowned in the Bannerman's swimming pool. Instead of cancelling the party, Cuckoo Bannerman decided to continue, "Can you have the wedding party while a child's body lies on the deep pile towels on the floor of the pool house? Cuckoo Bannerman can" (PLO 201). Ever since, Caroline has had feelings of dreadful guilt:

"I looked into that woman's face, into her eyes and I knew something terrible was going to happen to me," is what she tells Julia.

It was at that moment she reached a place of unreason, where no comfort is possible and all that came after was already there in that dark place that always smelled of chlorine and antiseptic and mold, no matter how hard you tried to get rid of it. (PLO 204-205)

In the following months, her son tries to convince her to sell their place, to transfer his father to a private clinic, and to pension off her staff (PLO 234) but Caroline has different plans: while enjoying Julia's party prepared for Douglas' ex-wife Rosalie, Gus should die as, according to a notification, electricity should have been turned off early that afternoon. However, instead of informing his nurse or undertaking measures to maintain the vital machines, Caroline decides to keep it to herself and to put an end to his life. "These things happen. Cuckoo Bannerman once said so. No one's to blame" (PLO 321).

While the Merchant's and Bannerman's lives seem to get out of control, Michael Rosenberg's perspectives are highly favorable. He, growing up in a Jewish family where politics had no impact on their lives, has stepped out of line (PLO 11). Before

“[he] now [has] turned wealthy development tycoon [of walled-in security complexes] [...], [he] ran off with Douglas’ ex-wife, Rosalie. Rosalie was more pro-active in the struggle than wimpy Michael, who backed off when the going got tough. That’s when Rosalie, who’d been detained and tortured several times, went into exile in the UK [...] grappling with the onset of a mental illness.” (Robertson 2004)

Being in line with the requirements of the ‘new South Africa’s’ Government, Michael has become a successful entrepreneur in the construction business, allowing him and his family decent lives. However, he starts suffering from paranoia, feeling distressed over the security of his two young daughters (PLO 217-218). With the collapse of apartheid, the living conditions in the ‘new South Africa’ have become insecure. White people seem to be in constant danger (comp. PLO e.g. 222).

The novel eventually has an open ending; the characters’ destinies are left unsaid which seem to aim to draw parallels between their future and the one of the ‘new South Africa’.

### 4.3 Themes

Addressing a white female readership, Jooste’s novel has been positively received by its audience. However, some harsh critiques have also been published, such as the one written by the Afrikaans-speaking reviewer Cecile Cilliers in the South African *Volksblad*:

What leaves the reader unsatisfied is the lack of direction in the book. What is it really now – novel, satire, love story with a[n] (unlikely) happy ending? It falls somewhere between all those [genres] and consequently – it is a great pity – is not a memorable read. (2003 cited in West 2009: 39-40)

Mary West goes even further. In her contribution “Complicity and Cliché in *People Like Ourselves* by Pamela Jooste and *One Tongue Singing* by Susan Mann” (2009:38), she suggests Jooste’s novel should be classified as a ‘post apartheid’s weepy’ (Kirby 2005:23), a term which has been coined by Robert Kirby (2005) claiming that these text types are written by

guilt-ridden white women (Kirby 2005: 23) who have found a niche market in appealing to a premature celebration of new South African [R]ainbow [N]ationhood without having to negotiate the real politics of white normativity. (West 2009: 38)

To what extent Jooste's protagonists and their personal life stories resemble the 'new South African' reality is to be illustrated in the following chapters which will investigate the living conditions of white people in the post-apartheid era and their economic situation.

#### **4.3.1 White South Africans**

"The years since the apartheid system imploded under the pressure of resistance from inside and outside the country have seen major changes in South Africa" (Bendels 2009: 541). After decades of injustice and segregation, many South Africans are in high hopes that their country's different races and ethnicities may be pacified and become united in the Rainbow Nation, a term created by Archbishop Desmond Tutu describing a multicultural nation living together in peace (comp. Kellerman 2014), proclaimed by Nelson Mandela. One step towards this goal, and an attempt to cope with South Africa's dreadful past is the foundation of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in 1996 (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1995) operating for three years. The aim of the Commission is enabling national healing of the wounded state by revealing the truth about the victims and culprits, and in the long run, to allow affected persons to overcome their destinies by forgiving their perpetrators:

[A] commission is a necessary exercise to enable South Africans to come to terms with their past on a morally accepted basis and to advance the cause of reconciliation. (Omar, Minister of Justice (1994-1998) cit. in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1995)

However, if assuming that the whites were leading the way in confessing their "guilt [which regardless] of English-speaking South Africans [...] [or] Afrikaners has been extensive" (Ndebele 1998: 27), one might be, like Tutu, eventually "distressed that not many white people [have come] forward" (1999: 82), as only "7,128 applications for amnesty [have been] received by the Commission" (Rose 2003: 221). However, what even seems more problematic than the minor number of actual confessing perpetrators is that

[t]he vast majority of the white community who, although they might not have been actively involved and even if many deny it, were witness to what happened, benefited from it and who were in that way complicit. (Slovo 2003: 20)

In her novel *People Like Ourselves*, Jooste aims to mirror these old-school whites; rather than facing the new era, being in contrition, or longing for apologizing themselves (Rose 2003: 1), Jooste's protagonists continue living their privileged lives.

#### **4.3.2 White privilege**

In her article "Stark reality of white privilege" (2015), the white South African psychologist Ella Kotze states that "[p]erhaps it's time to feel guilty, to speak out and really listen to others". For a better understanding, she provides her readership with her interpretation of white privilege.

[It] means that we were born in well-stocked, well-staffed hospitals. White privilege means that we went from those hospitals to houses built with bricks, with running water and working electricity. And, as we grew up, white privilege ensured that we got the best type of education. When we went to university, white privilege gave us access to funding, proper accommodation and good nutrition. In some cases, it even meant that we could complete our degrees in our mother tongues. White privilege ensured that we got good jobs, further access to loans for housing and cars, medical care, relative safety and freedom of movement... (Kotze 2015)

However, instead of earning her recognition, she comes under fierce criticism from the Johannesburg labor judge Sara Gon who denigrates Kotze's "approach [for being] naive, simplistic, clichéd and guilt-ridden" (2015), demanding an urgent need for action for "whites must withdraw from taking opportunities available to them out of shame, [and] whites must distribute their wealth" (2015).

Other than Gon, Gillian Shutte, a white South African filmmaker, writer and social justice activist (SACSI 2015), claims that white privilege is not limited to "opportunities and wealth" (Gon 2015). Moreover, she argues that the main problem is that "white people [...] are raised to think [that they] are central to everything, especially in relation to other races" (Shutte 2013), an idea which Shutte promotes in her collection, "A comprehensive guide to white privilege in South Africa" (2014). There she concludes that white people are not even aware of their privilege as "white privilege is [...] invisible to white people" (Shutte 2014). The list of white privileges is long and gloomy, and some twenty years after the

end of apartheid it reflects badly on Mandela's dream of the Rainbow Nation and its realization.

[White privilege] is believing that multiculturalism is non-racism and failing to explore the many levels of racism that lie beneath the veneer of a Rainbow Nation. (Shutte 2014)

#### **4.3.3 Of 'masters', 'madams' and their 'servants'**

In her novel, Jooste addresses the white elite, in particular unwilling to accept societal and political changes of the 'new South Africa'. Representatives of the upper middle-class, the novel's main protagonists, Julia Merchant and her husband Douglas, are characterized as not yielding to the new epoch but still regarding themselves as 'madam' and 'master' of their black domestic workers. The Merchants treat their staff like serfs, but lacking other options Adelaide and Gladstone are "willing enough to go through any reasonable charade this 'master' or 'madam' has resolved upon for that particular day" (PLO 3-4). If the master acts disrespectfully or ruthlessly, none of the domestic workers will dare to dissent, but only risks displaying their disapproval by some small gestures in order not to lose their jobs.

"Show me your hands," [Douglas] says and Adelaide shakes her head, in that sad slow way a compassionate woman reserves for a person mentally impaired, and offers her hands up for inspection. [...] Adelaide says nothing at all. She's not in a position to. (PLO 3)

[Douglas is] lord and master here. He can do as he pleases. He can say what he likes and who's there to stop him? He'll go as far as he can and then, just before it's too far, he'll turn it all around into a joke and pretend that's all it was the first place. (PLO 7)

Like Douglas, when he accuses Adelaide of not working hard enough for her income, Shutte refers to this widely spread attitude of white people by adding it to her list of white privileges under number 15. White employers often distrust black people's work ethics, and instead of honoring their domestic workers' efforts, there

is the common white assumption that all black people are lazy even though between 4am and 7am, the streets are filled with black folk making their way to badly paid jobs in white areas because they work hard to survive and feed and clothe their families. (Shutte 2014)

The permanent disparagement of her job performance makes Adelaide feel “unappreciated, undervalued, and unrecognized, which leads to feelings of unhappiness” (Tola 2013: 7). But what is even worse and putting Adelaide under strong pressure, is Julia when she does not miss a single chance of threatening her maid, to send away her six year-old granddaughter Tula (comp. PLO 3). “No matter what has happened in the interim Julia says this at least once a day to make sure Adelaide is not so imprudent as to slip into complacency” (PLO 4).

These days, “[a]pproximately one million [black] women [are] employed as domestic workers in South Africa” (Mntahli 2015), and according to the Mntahli, this “is emblematic of the country’s massive social inequality which is rooted in its racially segregated past” (2015). However, due to the increasing job competition rooting in the high unemployment rates of poorly-trained black people (comp. Leibbrandt et al. 2010: 11) white employers can continue treating their domestic workers unfairly as, when one leaves the next one in line will accept exploitation and meagre wages (comp. PLO 43). “When I hire someone I tell them that I can afford so much. It’s up to her to agree. If she doesn’t agree, she doesn’t have to stay” (A Gauteng employer cit. in Motala 2010).

Although the South Africa’ Department of Labor has introduced “minimum wages and basic conditions of employment of domestic workers” (Tolla 2013: 7 and PLO 4-5) in 2002 (Witbooi 2014 and Fourie 2014), their working conditions often resemble “modern day slavery” (Motala 2010). Unsatisfactory results have been confirmed according to studies carried out by the *South African Civil Society Information Service (SACSYS)* in 2010, stating that

[t]he discussions conducted with workers and employers were extremely useful for gaining insights into the effectiveness of the labor legislation. However, testimonies provided by both domestic workers and their employers also provided damning evidence of the abuse of workers in South Africa’s middle and upper class homes. (Motala 2010)

Consequently, as the outcomes show, many laws and agreements are being constantly undermined. In need of stable incomes, many black bread-winners are forced to accept less pay than the statutory minimum wage to be able to survive.

Again, this is mirrored in Shutte's "[...] comprehensive guide to white privilege in South Africa" (2014) when she is concluding that

[w]hite privilege is asking your badly paid maid to unpack your daily clothes-buying splurges in which you spend more in one day than you pay her for the month. (Shutte 2014)

Interestingly enough, the Associate Professor for Economics at the *University of Stellenbosch* Johan Fourie does not confirm Shutte's descriptions of black domestic workers' poor employment conditions but contradicts by referring to

two largely neglected research papers [author's note: Dinkelman et al. 2014 and Burger et al. 2013] [which] have appeared within the last year that shed light on two aspects of domestic workers: their incomes and their standards of living. (Fourie 2014)

He claims that

[f]ull compliance with the law would lead to a huge increase in the total wages to be paid to the majority of domestic workers. Economists and others were skeptical: Economics 101 [author's note: introductory course] would tell you that a price floor (a minimum wage) will introduce a gap between those demanding work and those willing to supply work, i.e. unemployment would increase. (Fourie 2014)

Based on his assumptions, Fourie argues that governmental measures will challenge the service industry and, in the long run, South Africa's entire labor market which logically will have a negative impact on the country's already ailing economy. One of the first divisions affected may be the segment of the service industry which includes domestic work. Considering that this sector shows the third highest employment rate of black women (Statistics South Africa 2009 cit. in van Klaveren et. al 2009: 38), Fourie pleads that it is crucial to maintain the numbers of jobs in order to avoid an even higher rate of unemployment among black females of whom currently 46 percent are without jobs. This is the group with the highest unemployment rate in South Africa, the majority are poorly-trained women. Hence, according to Fourie, the government and trade unions should stop challenging South Africa's economy by negotiating minimum standards; and those people concerned, mostly black unskilled women, should accept jobs regardless of pay and work conditions.



Personal services, of which domestic work is one component, constitute 5.4% of *GDP*. More importantly, it creates jobs: roughly one in five South African women works as a domestic worker. Four out of five domestic workers work full-time (more than 28 hours a week). They are predominantly black and [c]olored women, with an average of 6 to 7 years of education. This should suggest that they are the poorest of the poor, but in truth they are not. Because they have a job in a country that has a broad unemployment rate of 40%, they are not within the poorest four deciles; in fact, many of them may even be *above* South Africa's median income. (Fourie 2014)

After all, as Fourie summarizes, those who have employment relationships should consider themselves fortunate in having stable earnings, following Burger et al. who claims that "the households of domestic workers, in comparison to the control group, are significantly less likely to suffer from both adult and child hunger" (2013). Furthermore, in the same study, Burger et al. enthuse that "social ties between domestic workers and their employers" (2013) will be created and will reduce inequalities between the races, a matter which, not very surprisingly, represents exactly the opposite opinion of Shutte and Mntahli.

Fourie's comments on minimum wages cannot be reduced to South Africa's economy only but are global issues. Nevertheless, many governments have introduced mandatory minimum wages although strongly contradicting the liberal doctrines of supply and demand but with the ultimate aim of protecting the poorest of the poor from exploitation.

Considering that Fourie is Associate Professor for Economics at the *University of Stellenbosch*, his position may derive from the cultural and political background of Stellenbosch, which is one of South Africa's elite universities and one of the single institutions where Afrikaans was the language of instruction and teaching until recent days. This is of great significance, as in South Africa there is "an almost perfect correlation between race and language" (Marjorie 1982, 2010), and blacks do refuse to speak Afrikaans, perceived as language of the oppressors (Marjorie 1982, 2010). According to a video posted on YouTube in August 2015,

one male student said: "The color of my skin in Stellenbosch is like a social burden. Just walking into spaces, there is that 'stop, pause and stare' where people cannot believe that you would dare enter the space."

"Being black within the Stellenbosch community, you know you are not accepted and you kind of ask yourself: 'What's wrong with me and what did I do wrong?'" said a female student. (Etheridge 2015)

Within the last months, the University's language policy has come under harsh criticism, "Since English is the common language in South Africa, all learning should be facilitated in at least English to ensure no exclusion due to language" (BBC News 13 November 2015). Under this pressure, English has been introduced as the official language of instruction and teaching at the *University of Stellenbosch* as late as in January 2016 (BBC News 13 November 2015).

Eventually, some twenty years after the end of apartheid, it seems that many middle and upper-class households, in particular those of white South Africans, still do not respect labor laws for their domestic workers although pilloried by many human rights activists as the majority of South African scholars. Hence, it is much to be hoped that future generations have different approaches towards people working as domestic aids.

#### **4.3.4 The 'born-free' generation**

However, not respecting domestic workers' rights is only one of the many aspects contemporary South Africa is struggling with, as according to the 2012-census "racial divide continues" (BBC 30 October 2012). Hence, it is the young generation, the so-called 'born-free' generation, which is challenged not to end in deadlock but to break the back of on-going injustice and inequalities to enable South Africa's multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic society finally grow together.

According to Collins Dictionary the 'born-free' generation refers to "person[s] (in South Africa) who w[ere] born or grew up after the end of the [a]partheid era" (2016), viz., regardless of their racial backgrounds. In this respect, Julia's daughter Kimmy and her best friend's son James 'Jimjam' Bannerman are representatives of the white 'born-free' generation. James, also spending a life in luxury, escapes his mother who coddles her son and seeks to iron out all possible problems for him:

Mummy's looking after it. Everything's going to be fine. Fire, earthquake, volcano or flood. This is how things are between James and his mother,

between Caroline and her son, because Caroline has made it this way. (PLO 128)

But from a young age James seems to be tired of his gilded cage. As a pupil he challenges various South African elite schools reserved for white upper-class children, later on in his late adolescence, he moves to England where he finishes his studies and finally accepts a job offer in London, seldom traveling back to his home country. “Jimjam doesn’t spend all that much time at home anymore. Not even when he’s out on the visit, referred to as a visit ‘home’, when all that means is little more than a courtesy fly-past” (PLO 173). After all, James has freed himself from his mother’s fetters and his former life. Comparing conventions in South Africa with those of the more liberal environment in the Great Britain he is reveling in so much, James most likely will agree with the statement, “[E]ven in this age of jet travel[,] [South Africa] is still a very long way away from England” (PLO 234) which is “abundantly clear [...] [not] simply in terms of geography” (PLO 21).

Like James, Kimmy Merchant grows up pampered by black nannies and maids. In line with her mother, Kimmy has to be addressed as “Miss Kimmy” (PLO 43) by their domestic aids which irritates the girl.

If embarrassment can kill, then Kimmy is destined to die of it and she will die gladly. [...] She’s fed up with the maids too. “Call me Kimmy,” she says. “If I call you Patience/Grace/Irene, why don’t you call me Kimmy?” They won’t and her mother doesn’t like it that she even asked them.

“It’s not fair,” her mother has told her. “It’s nice that you try to make friends with them but they’re not your friends. Not really and anyway, they have friends of their own.” (PLO 43-44)

Taxied by her mother to after-school activities Kimmy seems to be tied up with tennis and dance classes instead of enjoying independence and the freedom she is longing for.

“I don’t know if you realize exactly how lucky you are,” her mother says. “It seems to me sometimes that you take things too much for granted. Don’t you know how many other girls there are who can only dream of having a life even remotely privileged as yours is?” Kimmy doubts that. (PLO 44-45)

Kimmy starts abhorring school where “from the age of ten girls are already ‘young ladies’” (PLO 45) and develops school problems (PLO 47-48). She starts stealing in the school’s neighborhood supermarket, when she eventually “[is] taken to the

police station [still] in the uniform of such a well-known school where all the girls are ‘young ladies’” (PLO 51). “Disgrace upon disgrace” (PLO 51) for “Kimmy’s well-dressed disbelieving parents who always thought there was one set of problems for themselves and one set for the ‘others’” (PLO 48-49). But instead of seeking for reasons or showing understanding on their daughter’s needs, Julia Merchant excoriates Kimmy’s behavior, while her husband Douglas believes that “[this is] a phase. She’s looking for attention, that’s all” (PLO 49).

Analyzing Kimmy’s character, it seems that Jooste has intended to design a protagonist who displays the difficult undertaking of South Africa’s young white generation which appears overtaxed with the new epoch, and, like Kimmy, caught between two stools: on the one hand, the born-frees struggle with apartheid symbolized through Kimmy’s conflicts with her parents who are unwilling to change and ignore the sign of the times. On the other hand, parallels of the young generation with Kimmy included can be drawn as both do not seem yet to have found their new places in society, to be able to participate in the active shaping of the ‘new South Africa’.

Finding out who one is and redefining one’s identity under the new dispensation is the most important task of the younger generation who, in this way, become the bearers of (white) hope. (Mengel 2012: 164)

While Jooste devotes several chapters to the problematic growing-up of Kimmy and James, the black ‘born-free’ generation only plays a minor role in her novel. The representatives of the young black generation are the Merchant’s domestic workers’ grandchildren whereas Tula, Adelaide’s six-year-old granddaughter, is the only one of whom the author supplies her readership with some biographic details. Left with her grandmother by her own mother, a soap-opera starlet in various TV series, Tula’s presence is tolerated by ‘Madam’ for a limited time only.

[This is] definitely not a permanent arrangement. [...] Just as long as you understand that. [...] If you allow this kind of thing on your property, you run the risk of opening a floodgate. (PLO 4)

During her infrequent visits, Tula’s mother tries to make her daughter believe in being emancipated and free, and urges her to remember that the “days of slavery are over” (PLO 78) although the girl experiences a different reality in everyday life:

We never get that thing we want most. Those who fought so hard for freedom can tell it. Even freedom when it comes is not that exact thing that they yearned for or anything like they imagined it to be. (PLO 95)

This ambiguity between the black people's hope and reality is described by Redelinghuys in his article "Is the 'born free' generation really so free?" as follows:

Technically [born-frees] are now participants in a real democracy. They can vote and they can express their opinions. They have freedom of movement unlike many of their parents who grew up with passbooks. They have freedom of access to employment without the job-reservation that excluded their parents from much of the working world. In theory they have freedom from racial discrimination and large-scale transformation is now changing their society.

But how free are they as individuals? They, who have come into their adult life hobbled by a range of crippling impairments that will be difficult to overcome and that will rob them of much their freedom.

Their first captivity is of their own making; the often unrealistic expectations of a first free generation. They and their parents want the best for them and their ambition and hopes for the future know no bounds. They want to be doctors and lawyers and business entrepreneurs. They want jobs and income stability to build their lives and flourish in this bounteous country. For most of them it's just not happening. (Redelinghuys 2013)

Jooste seems to express sympathy for the blacks' aspirations, "Who can blame someone for wanting more, wanting better, for wanting the best, for wanting it all?" (PLO 69). But as reality shows, dreams have not come true. Doomed to disappointment and desperation, many black 'born-frees' "increasingly become more involved in violent protests, and abandon democratic institutions" (IRR 2015). According to the report "Born free but still in chains: South Africa's first post-apartheid generation report" by the *South African Institute of Race Relations IRR* released in April 2015, many young blacks, albeit born in freedom still have to suffer under political, economic and social alienation and discrimination (IRR 2015). The study displays the "time bomb" (Redelinghuys 2013) referring to the majority of black youth lacking education followed by unemployment which is "estimated to be more than 50% for this millennial generation" (Redelinghuys 2013).

The single most damaging loss of freedom is the freedom that comes with financial independence. How many of them will achieve it? How many of them will have the security and benefit of solid working lives? The economic realities of unemployment are obvious and well known. It is the

psychological and self-esteem consequences that are even more serious and will rob much of the 'born-free' generation of its hope for the future.

Living in a world where one's self-concept is derived so much from what one does for a living, not having a job or a clear career path means missing a critical component of selfhood. The unemployed person is marginalized from the mainstream of society, even township society. The sense of being excluded attacks self-confidence and destroys hope for the future. (Redelinghuys 2013)

Besides all these gloomy prospects some 'born-frees', however, trust in the 'new South Africa', such as the black law student and radio DJ Khensani Kohza who thinks that the "ANC Government of the last 20 years should be given more time to make changes" (BBC 25 April 2014):

"I am one of those people who believes in giving my government time. It is very easy to criticize but I think people should remain optimistic and hope they can deliver on their promises." (BBC 25 April 2014)

Also the white motocross rider Tyron Miller is confident about South Africa's future and considers it a good place to live (BBC 25 April 2014).

"I think for my parents' generation it was a really big change," he says of the end of white-minority rule. [...] "I have only known this South Africa. I love it. No other country has the diversity that South Africa has. There is nowhere else I'd rather be." (BBC 25 April 2014)

#### **4.3.5 Living behind the walls – gated communities in post-apartheid South Africa**

A more ambiguous stance on post-apartheid South Africa is taken by the Indian trainee nurse Nisha Lutchman. She says that many things have improved, remarking that people need not to carry passes with them any longer and have the possibility of interracial friendship.

But crime is much worse than before. [...] I don't have freedom. I can't walk to the shops without taking off my jewelry. I passed my driving test but I have never driven on my own for security reasons. [...] I just want it to be a safer place. (BBC 25 April 2014)

With the increasing violence and crime rate, the former white, privileged class but also South Africa's new elite seclude themselves in secured neighborhoods, walled-in "residential estates or gated precincts" (PLO 148).

Behind the walls, the electrified fences and old-established trees in this road are the rambling houses of Government officials and Embassies, bought in quick deals from the bolters who saw a new Government coming and threw in the towel. It's this new elite who feel the need for protection. (PLO 63)

These estates offer all amenities such as various shopping centers, a police station, a golf course plus golf driving range, hospitals as well as primary and secondary schools (Fourways Gardens 2013), but most importantly, of course, the twenty-four-hour security service.

The Estate is access controlled and visitors are pre-cleared from the entrances. At the Security Control Room, the electric fence along the perimeter, access and egress as well as house alarms is electronically monitored on a 24-hour basis. (Fourways Gardens 2013)

The idea of "creating urban neighborhoods and villages" is not new but has been initially introduced to the "urban design and planning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century [...] advocated[, among others,] by protagonists such as Ebenezer Howard [...]" (Landman 2008). With his concept of the *Garden City*, Howard aimed to "address the ills of the industrial city – a place of crime, disease, and poverty" (Lampugnani 1986 cit. in Landman 2008: 229). Although earning fierce criticism for "idealiz[ing] the form of village life and [...] fail[ing] in the modern structure of urban life", Howard's *Garden City* has become role model for South Africa's gated communities, appealing to those "people who want apartness [...] prepared to pay for the stage-set ghettos where they live out their lives" (PLO148).

Michael Rosenberg is one of those people seeking protection in "walled-in security complexes" (Robertson 2004). As the father of two girls, ten and twelve years old, his fear for his two daughters has him suffer from paranoia (PLO 65), much to their mother's dismay.

You don't know what you're doing. Children need to experiment; they need to have space. They should at least know what freedom is. Visiting you is like going to prison. (PLO 65)

Like many other 'born-free' children, Tracy Rosenberg and her younger sister Mandy, overprotected by their father, experience the reality of the so-called freedom in the 'new South Africa', when "safely, securely asleep under [the] roof with the guard muffled up against the night, at his gate and the infrared alarm system activated" (PLO 66-67), and always afraid that

the criminals these days are not the fools people once took them for. They too have moved with the times. If you have infrared beams they come looking for you in scuba diving suits the rays cannot penetrate. (PLO 67)

Consequently, in permanent distress over the safety of their children, many parents develop jailer-like behavior and constantly control their off-spring who, quite naturally, start to rebel against the loss of their freedom (comp. PLO 105). However, what seems even more problematic than raising the future generation wrapped in cotton wool (PLO 66), is the ongoing segregation in all aspects of everyday life. Instead of celebrating integration by focusing on space remaining publicly accessible, eliminating barriers and overcoming boundaries, spatial enclosures of walled-in security complexes pursue the "privatization of public space". This includes the "separation of land use, separation of neighborhoods, fortification, and target-hardening<sup>1</sup> through gates, fences, and electronic surveillance measures" (Landman 2008: 236). Besides city officials voice concerns about "private civilian militias, armed with military-style weaponry and using heavy handed tactics of intimidation" (Murray 2011: 275), Landman raises another "issue related to the nature of gated communities" (2008).

[...] [I]t has become clear to what extent neighborhood transformation can influence urban transformation. Changes on a neighborhood level have had largescale implications for the urban functions, management and maintenance of South African cities, especially in the case of gated neighborhoods. In this way, the cumulative impact of fortress neighborhoods can lead to creation of fortress cities, which can lead either to a total collapse of the urban system or a large-scale uprising and revolution from the masses. In this way, the capital flows and acts of resistance shape and transform the order and form of the city and, as such

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<sup>1</sup>Target hardening or mitigation is a process wherein a building is made into a more difficult or less attractive target. It does not necessarily mean the construction of an impenetrable bunker, although this would be the extreme case of target hardening. [...] To stop a [...] physical attack on a building is very difficult; any building or site can be breached or destroyed. However, the more secure the building or site is and the better the building is designed to withstand an attack, the greater the odds are that the building will not be attacked or, if attacked, will suffer less damage. (SCN 2016)



the form also informs us much about the wider society, including relations of power, respect and discipline. (Landman 2008: 237)

In this respect, the phenomenon of gated communities shows counterproductive effects and contradicts Mandela's vision of racial co-existence under the umbrella of the Rainbow Nation (comp. Kellerman 2014). Moreover, it seems to cause more harm to South Africa's society creating a climate of exclusion and segregation. The new apartheid, which Ohlson refers to as a "mental and social model [that will] persist" (1994: 185), appears to be symbolized through gated communities. On the one hand, there is the majority of people who cannot afford to live in secured places protected by (mostly black) guards. On the other hand, inside the gated communities, their dwellers live, walled-in and under permanent observation, their lives like in prison, "five-star prison perhaps, but prison is prison" (PLO 65).

Escaping his life behind the walls, Michael regularly visits the places where he spent his youth "who played at cricket and small-time politics" (PLO 62); these places on "the wrong side of town" (PLO 62) remind Michael of his days in 'freedom'.

There's nothing that touches him in that way the old houses do and the paper and plastics thrown in the street. No security guards necessary here. Nothing worth taking and everyone knows everyone else anyway.

He likes the way those people live who are living here now, who make the best of what they have and live out their lives with humor and style, that little bit of 'sass' they take out on the street. (PLO 70)

#### **4.3.6 The economic prospects of white South Africans**

Besides various inconveniences such as living a life behind high walls and electrified fences, in continuous fear for his daughters, Michael has also profited from the insecure situation of the 'new South Africa' by accumulating a fortune in real estate. Suffering himself from paranoia, he has created a business model based on the new system's lack of safety, supplying the increasing demand for protected places, "first high-walled townhouses, then full-scale 'security villages', then the shopping complexes with tight-secure parking [...]" (PLO 65).

Unlike Michael Rosenberg, Douglas Merchant does not succumb to the signs of the times but continues his business as if apartheid were not dismantled. “All it shows is visible resistance to transformation” (PLO 53). But although in desperate need of new orders for his construction company, Douglas remains reluctant and ignores the guidelines of the *Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)* (comp. Department of Trade and Industry *BEE* strategy document 2013: 4). When facing near-bankruptcy, his old friends recommend he “black up” and make his domestic worker Gladstone his chairman (PLO 53).

“He certainly looks the part. He’s been with you forever. Much better than pulling someone in from a recruitment service.” He asks if they know that Gladstone’s barely literate.

“So what?” they say. “So are you most of the time and isn’t it just what you need in an MD or even a CEO? The last thing you want is someone who actually writes the Chairman’s Report or can read the financial statements.”

Everyone’s doing it. It won’t kill him to keep a sense of humor and do the same. If he can’t find the real thing he can probably get away with a ‘token’. It’ll cost him a few bob and a company car but that’s the way things are going these days, it’s worth the investment and why kick against it when eventually he’ll have to buy in because there’s simply no choice? (PLO 53-54)

However, stubborn Douglas is convinced that he will be able to handle the situation “when the Department of Labor come knocking at his door to ask why he hasn’t replaced himself with a black managing director” (PLO 54), and certainly will continue to refuse South Africa’s new governmental plan of positive discrimination or ‘affirmative action’ which requires that blacks are categorically to be favored over whites in terms of the filling of jobs or promotions regardless of the qualifiers’ qualifications, which goes as far as white CEOs are mandatorily to be replaced by blacks whereas the rigid execution of these measures is certainly to be questioned.

The time has come to admit that ‘affirmative action’ has failed and that there is an urgent need to replace it with an approach based on excellence and merit. South Africa simply cannot afford the costs of not having the best person in every available position, irrespective of race, color, gender or creed. (News24 13 March 2013)

The concept of positive discrimination is not new and aims to settle debts from the past as the US President Lyndon Johnson, who also coined the term, did in 1965 when proclaiming 'affirmative action' in order to improve the blacks' chances on the labor market.

You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say you are free to compete with all the others, and still just believe that you have been completely fair. (The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights 2016)

Not following the *BEE* guidelines has severe consequences, viz., those companies which oppose positive discrimination will not be allocated orders from the public sector causing growing unease among the white population, being "fearful for their jobs" (PLO 208). "There are people who work for [Douglas] who have begun to look at him wide-eyed with doubt when the end of each month comes around" (PLO 213). Hence, a feeling of discrimination has been spreading among white South Africans (comp. Kotze 2015). This issue is addressed by Simpson when he argues that wealthy whites are still in power.

Everyone here, regardless of color, tells you that white people are still riding high. They run the economy. They have a disproportionate amount of influence in politics and the media. They still have the best houses and most of the best jobs. (Simpson 2013)

But, on the other hand, apart from the lavish lifestyles of the white upper-class, Simpson claims that many whites suffer under miserable conditions as "poorly educated or semi-skilled white South Africans" are generally excluded from the labor market (2013), and "looking [under] the surface" (2013), many of them are caught in the poverty trap. Simpson, furthermore, reports that 400,000 or eight percent of the white South African population vegetates in "white squatter camps" (2013):

[The inhabitants] ha[ve] no water and no electricity. [They] live on two hand-out meals of maize porridge a day, which is provided by local volunteers. There is no social security for them, no lifeline - any more than there was for non-whites when apartheid ruled. [...]

But you will not read about it in the newspapers or see it reported on television because their plight seems to be something arising out of South

Africa's bad old past - a past which everyone, black and white, would like to forget. (Simpson 2013)

After all, although the 'new South Africa's' system aims to redistribute life chances, the question of skin complexion again seems to be a major factor, and following Murphy's quote "[i]t's no different from the days of apartheid" (2014).

### 4.3.7 Summary

Overall, the novel *People Like Ourselves* draws a detailed picture of South Africa's white post-apartheid elite and their persistent lifestyles. The Merchants, Bannermans and Rosenbergers seem to hold on to "[t]he general opinion [...] that [...] the world has been set in its place just for [people with money] to do as they please in" (PLO 176), not eager to accept the end of apartheid and the emancipation of South Africa's society, "Africa in the backyards is fine with me. [...] On the doorstep it's a different story and we don't need this" (PLO 69). However, they eventually recognize the challenges 'people like them' are confronted with in the era of the 'new South Africa'. This is mirrored by the *BEE* guidelines when running businesses, the changes on the labor market or the 'born-free' generation with their difficult mission of seeking new identities, after having been raised by black maids and nannies, possibly questioning their own innocence, if they were "too young to be held fully culpable?" (Horrell 2009: 60).

## 4.4 Conclusion

Jooste's novel *People Like Ourselves* has been harshly criticized for romanticizing apartheid. Metcalf argues that

Jooste apparently feels no post-colonial unease. She is confident enough to write about apartheid without betraying any sense of guilt or consciousness of complicity. Her essential strategy is one of evasion: a choice of narrative perspectives which function as a means to distance, objectify and marginalize her own white community, while avoiding all engagement with the communities of the African majority. She writes about apartheid without allowing either contesting party, black or white, to assume the foreground. Typically she privileges the viewpoint of individuals and groups who can be seen as peripheral and, to a greater or lesser extent, disengaged. By this means she contrives simultaneously to admit the ugly facts of apartheid and to soften their impact in the fictional

context. Her technique varies from book to book, but always evolves in the same direction, away from engagement. (Metcalf 2001)

Metcalf is certainly right, as Jooste, in many aspects takes up a much-distanced position as if she were not part of the apartheid system which roots probably in her childhood when spending her early years with colored friends. But at this point one must not forget that “[g]rowing up white in apartheid South Africa entitled one to massive instant privileges” (Edelstein 2001: 12), regardless of social background. Calling her childhood “particular” (Loots 2005), one may be tempted to accuse Jooste of trying to redeem herself and not “acknowledge[ing] her own culpability”, following the majority of white women (comp. Horrell 2009: 61), as, under apartheid, the tenor was that “there is very little women were guilty of” (Rose 2003: 221). However, this assumption also may be contradicted: when choosing her novel’s title *People Like Ourselves*, she seems to admit her own involvement in the apartheid system as “[y]ou don’t need to have been a torturer [...] to feel ashamed. You can simply feel that you walked away or did not do enough in a hateful world” (Rose 2003:1).

## **5. No Time Like the Present (NTLP)**

### **5.1 The author Nadine Gordimer**

Born in 1923 in Springs, a small gold mining town east of Johannesburg (comp. Academy of Achievement 2014), Nadine Gordimer from early childhood on encounters the social differences and inequalities between ethnicities and races. Growing up as the daughter of a Latvian Jew, she realizes that her family “occup[ies] a stratum below that of the earlier English settlers and the white Afrikaners, mostly descendants of Dutch, French and German colonists” (Academy of Achievement 2014). Young Gordimer also experiences “[t]he brutal reality of the system [...] when local police raided the family home, ostensibly because they suspected the family’s black housekeeper of brewing beer illegally” (Academy of Achievement 2014). While her father avoids any involvement in politics, “turn[ing] a blind eye to any reminder of the oppression to which he had himself been subjected in Czarist Russia” (Wästberg 2001), her mother, an off-spring of an

assimilated “transplanted Londoner” (Wästberg 2001) Jewish family, “troubled by the way blacks [are] treated, [...] [founds] a crèche, a nursery school for black children” (Wästberg 2001). Although having a non-Christian background, Gordimer initially attends a Catholic convent from which her mother withdraws her after “a brief illness” (Wästberg 2001) in order to educate her daughter at home. “Home-bound and often isolated” (Okai 2015), losing contact with the outside world and lacking in-house distractions, Gordimer starts writing “from an early age and publish[es] her first adult story at 15” (Wästberg 2001).

Moving to Johannesburg in 1948, the year in which the *National Party* wins the national election and the apartheid system is built up in South Africa (comp. Academy of Achievement 2014), Gordimer is introduced to the “inventive buoyancy and playful courage of Sophiatown’s<sup>2</sup> and Soweto’s black intellectuals and politicians, the circles where the young Nelson Mandela move[s]” (Wästberg 2001). These new acquaintances but also her close friendship with the labor activist Bettie du Toit (Academy of Achievement 2009) have “a powerful influence on her political thinking and her increasing opposition to the white supremacist government” (Academy of Achievement 2014), and consequently on her authorial work.

For fifty years, Gordimer has been the Geiger counter of apartheid and of the movements of people across the crust of South Africa. Her work reflects the psychic vibrations within that country, the road from passivity and blindness to resistance and struggle, the forbidden friendships, the censored soul, and the underground networks. She has outlined a free zone where it was possible to try out, in imagination, what life beyond apartheid might be like. (Wästberg 2001)

She joins the ANC “when it is listed as an illegal organization by the South African Government” (Okai 2015), and upon his release from imprisonment, Gordimer is one of the first “Nelson Mandela wish[es] to see” (Wästberg 2001). After the end of apartheid, Gordimer fiercely criticizes in her “clear, controlled and unsentimental style that [has become] her hallmark” (Encyclopædia Britannica 2015) the ‘new

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<sup>2</sup> Sophiatown is a former black settlement outside Johannesburg. With the increasing number of black people moving to the city after World War 1, the Johannesburg City Council (JCC) “pass[es] the Slum Clearance programs with the aim of removing black people from the inner city” (South African History Online 2011). When in 1954 the Native Resettlement Act, No. 19 is released “allowing the ruling party [...] to remove blacks from any area within and close to the magisterial district of Johannesburg, [...] two thousand policemen armed with sten guns and rifles [are sent to destroy] Sophiatown and [to relocate] 60,000 inhabitants” (South African History Online 2011).

South African' governmental cabinets under Mandela's presidential successors Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, while "she manage[s] to keep her integrity and [to] observe South African society with [...] a discerning eye in her stories" (Wästberg 2001).

Gordimer's literary work comprises over two hundred short stories, several volumes of essays and fifteen novels translated into more than thirty languages (Wästberg 2001). She earns international recognition and awards such as the *W.H. Smith & Son Literary Award* in 1961, the *Booker Prize for Fiction* in 1974 and the *Commonwealth Award for Distinguished Service in Literature* in 1981 (Herlitzius 2005: 300), while in South Africa some of her stories are banned by the apartheid regime but she determinedly continues writing "as if censorship did not exist", confident that "there [are] readers willing to listen" (Wästberg 2001). In 1991, the *Nobel Prize in Literature* is awarded to Gordimer "who through her magnificent epic writing has - in the words of Alfred Nobel - been of very great benefit to humanity". (Nobelprize.org 2015).

Gordimer's Nobel Prize put[s] the searchlight on a country in painful transition from an oppressive racism to a turbulent democracy. South Africa's literature is rich. But beyond doubt, Nadine Gordimer is the writer that most stubbornly has kept the true face of racism in front of us, in all its human complexities. (Wästberg 2001)

In July 2014, Nadine Gordimer dies, ninety-one years old, in her house in Johannesburg, two years after having published her last novel *No Time Like the Present*. Truly, South Africa's political conscience is living on in her literary heritage.

## **5.2. 'Gordimer's stereotypes' of post-apartheid South Africa**

While Gordimer's recognition as a chronicler of South Africa seems uncontested, Eva-Marie Herlitzius in her doctoral dissertation scrutinizes the trustworthiness of Gordimer's fiction and criticizes her for influencing the "current media images of South Africa" negatively (2005: 8).

Representations of South Africa in today's international (popular) media mostly portray the country's current socio-economic situation, highlighting the extremely poor living conditions of a majority of South Africans, as well as the high occurrence of HIV/AIDS, crime and corruption. This information

usually refers to South Africa as being in a state of exceptional instability as regards its citizens' legal status, its public health and its per capita income, thereby largely drawing on statistical figures without further elaboration on the high incidence of HIV/AIDS, living standards, crime and corruption. However, without such background details the information readers receive is reduced to a minimum and is coded in statistical terms. The effect of this is the presentation of South Africa as a 'dangerous' place 'in an incomprehensible situation', which is essentially opposed to Western standards. The statistical data serves as a foundation in order to draw negative comparisons between countries. (2005: 8)

Herlitzius furthermore criticizes her for producing stereotypes by advocating

[o]ne particular political line of argument, for example, [which] draws on the images of the monstrous, [the] primitive and [the] infantile and transforms these into the contention that Africans are unable to act democratically and are unable to run a functioning democracy. (2005: 9)

Similar to the false assumption of 'neutral' media coverage of South African socio-economic issues is the way in which current fictional discussions of South African society are read as unambiguous, realistic portrayals of the country [...]. (2005: 11)

Although Herlitzius states that her aim is not "to falsify certain representations of South African post-apartheid society" (2005: 13), she questions whether "Gordimer's status is predicated on perceptions of 'accuracy' and 'authenticity' in the portrayals of South African society" (Herlitzius 2005: 16). Also Kathrin M. Wagner challenges Gordimer's reliability in her book *Rereading Nadine Gordimer* (1994) and labels her writing as marketing- and sales-driven fiction, prejudiced and produced for an international readership (comp. Wagner 1994: 2 cit. in Herlitzius 2005: 17).

In Wagner's eyes, Gordimer's position, while on the surface rejecting racism, is constructed as a 'subtext' to a representation of race that maintains racial stereotypes. In this way, Gordimer's fictions are seen by several critics as presenting misrepresentations that raise doubts about her writings as representative for the whole South African society. (Herlitzius 2005: 17)

However, when comparing Herlitzius' and Wagner's findings with the image transmitted by South African but also international media, it seems that the two scholars' criticism of Gordimer's portrayal work of her home country cannot be justified but, quite on the contrary, does reflect South Africa's post-apartheid reality.



### 5.3 Plot overview

Published in 2012, Gordimer's last novel *No Time Like the Present* displays her dismay about the lost opportunities and undesirable developments within the 'new South Africa' and reflects her relentless reckoning with Mandela's heirs. When Gordimer is interviewed about President Zuma's reaction to her novel, she drily responds that it is said that the President does not read (comp. SpiegelOnline 14 July 2014).

*No Time Like the Present* depicts the life of a mixed-racial couple who meet during the struggles in Swaziland where black Jabulile Gumede is in the teacher training program and white Steve Reed, holding a major in industrial chemistry (comp. NTLP 4), makes hand-made bombs to support his black comrades in their fight against the apartheid regime. Still underground, Jabu and Steve get married when interracial marriage is unlawful (comp. NTLP 1), and hide away in a small apartment in Johannesburg on sufferance only by their landlord to whom they are paying an exorbitant rent. Leaving their clandestine place and moving to a decent home with garden some years after the fall of apartheid, Steve and Jabu enjoy a more comfortable life in the formerly 'whites-only' suburbs of Johannesburg, in the neighborhood of their former combatants in the struggle while unwittingly undergoing a transformation from comrades to bourgeois. "Occupying a house in a suburb is a sign of the shedding of whatever remnants of the old clandestinely, the underground of struggle and defiance of racial taboos" (NTLP 18). The couple is eager to foster their two children Sindiswa and Gary Elias and to find the best schools in order to spare them the average South African children's destiny, who experience years of "hopelessly poor schooling" (NTLP 67) when attending public institutes. In the following years, Steve leaves his company to become Assistant Professor at the university while his wife, after having taken a bachelor's degree in law, works for the *Johannesburg Justice Center* preparing victims for their trials against their perpetrators (comp. NTLP 57-58).

Against the background of Jabu's and Steve's biographies, the picture of the 'new South Africa' is sternly unfolded. Embedded in the plot, Gordimer accuses members of the Government of crime, nepotism and corruption. "In her characters,

the major currents of contemporary history intersect” (Wästberg 2001). She lists mismanagement resulting in low educational standards of the public system whereas teaching staff is powerless against the Minister in charge.

[T]hey ought to be demanding meetings with the minister responsible for education in schools. Breaking down his bloody door! It's our business. Education can't be lopped off in two, it's a contiguous process, our Moloï in African Studies gets students who can't read and write in command of their own languages[...]. (NTLP 67),

Additionally, misinformation results in delaying urgently needed measures in the fight against the HIV and AIDS, and the public health care system as such. Besides bad schooling and the deficiency in health care, Gordimer draws a gloomy picture of the brutalization of South Africa's society and the increase of crime which seems to be unstoppably affecting all social classes. After all, the author demonstrates step by step that post-apartheid South Africa has failed.

However, although Jabu and Steve want to move their family to Australia, fleeing their experienced disappointments as well as South Africa's unsolved problems and lost struggles, Steve eventually has a last-minute change of mind and decides not to go. It is the love for his country, “the Spirit of the Nation” (NTLP 421) that makes him stay. He still seems to believe in South Africa's future, just like Nadine Gordimer does who, unlike other South African authors having turned their backs on their home country, has never anticipated emigration as an option.

Everybody must stay at their country to make it right, not run away, we never ran away, we stayed in KwaZulu even while the Boers the whites at the coal mine were paying our men nothing not even for the childrens' school, and getting sick, sick from down in the mines, we stayed, we were strong for the country to come right. (NTLP 204-205)

### 5.3 Themes

Staying in South Africa will make Steve and his wife continue their efforts fighting inequality and injustice, he as Assistant Professor at the university possibly giving voluntary ‘bridging-classes’ to black students to level up their educational backgrounds (comp. NTLP 64), she working on behalf of the *Johannesburg Justice Center* (comp. e.g. NTLP 323). Being “strong for [her] country” (NTLP 205), Gordimer accepts her vocation as critical observer of South Africa and draws on

her literary skills “[keeping] her lines open inside South Africa, out of commitment to black liberation and also for the sake of her own creativity [...]” (Wästberg 2001). In her last novel, the author seeks to create a blunt review of the current developments in South Africa whereas the plot only plays a minor role

with [the] characters rarely going deeper into their personal lives than perplexities and anger about what has befallen a once idealistic liberation culture. [...] Discussion remains at the level of newspaper reportage on the end of political idealism. (Dimitriu 2012: 146-147)

Hence, the plot rather serves as fictional embedding for non-fictional events of the post-apartheid era, where her protagonists lend their voices to South Africa’s disappointed people, many of those former comrades, freedom fighters who have risked their lives in the struggle.

### 5.3.1 Ubuntu

When, after the end of apartheid, Mandela becomes the first President elected in a democratic South Africa, all races and ethnicities of the nation might hope to be united in the Rainbow Nation and be determined to undertake every effort to overcome their dreadful past (comp. Kellerman 2014). However, it seems to be particularly the “African *weltanschauung*” (Tutu 1999:34) of *ubuntu* postulated by the Archbishop himself (Tutu 1999:34) which is considered to enable victims to forgive and to reconcile with their former perpetrators.

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks to the very essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say, “*Yu, u nobuntu*”; he or she has *ubuntu*. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, “a person is a person through other people”. It is not “I think therefore I am”. It says rather: “I am human because I belong.” I participate, I share. A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

Harmony, friendliness, community are great goods. Social harmony is for us the *summum bonum* – the greatest good. Anything that subverts or undermines this sought-after good is to be avoided like a plague. Anger,

resentment, lust for revenge, even success through aggressive competitiveness, are corrosive of this good. To forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest. What dehumanizes you, inexorably dehumanizes me. Forgiveness gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them. (Tutu 1999: 34-35).

Based on the philosophy of *ubuntu*, Archbishop Tutu goes even as far as to encourage people who suffered and were tortured under apartheid to accept their perpetrators as victims in need of forgiveness (comp. Tutu 1999: 35) which has been sought to be accomplished through the work of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, however, with controversial perceptions of the outcome (comp. le Grange 2014).

In line with the critics, Gordimer encounters the concept of *ubuntu* ambiguously. She confirms that living *ubuntu* has become commonplace when referring to the new bourgeoisie, such as Steve's family which has taken up residence in one of the suburbs of Johannesburg, the formerly 'white-only' areas "taken over from the *Boers*" (NTLP 10). The new dwellers are a cosmopolitan amalgam of former comrades and their sympathizers, blacks and whites, heterosexuals and gays, all having in common their anti-apartheid ideology. In this regard, however, acting in the spirit of *ubuntu* seems to be a fairly easy task which Gordimer lambasts by using Steve as her mouthpiece.

Fact is. The Suburb is the bourgeoisie of the comrades. We're not, even in our mix, like the old-style whites, but we're not living the life of the people though some of us are black — the Mkizes and Jabu, our syntheses Sindiswa and Gary Elias. Out of the mouths not of babes and sucklings but adolescents from the privilege of progressive schools your own pretensions are brought to you. (NTLP 393)

Steve's statement reflects Gordimer's critique that the transition to a unified society has not yet taken place but rather seems to open up, mirrored in South Africa's segregated living conditions, "although everyone is supposed to live together, no ghettos, luxurious or new black-and-white middle class" (NTLP 10).

In her novel, Gordimer also unmasks the obvious lack of *ubuntu*, viz. inside and outside the suburban togetherness, when pointing an accusing finger at the dealing

with refugees fled from the dictatorships in their home countries such as Zimbabwe, Congo and other African countries.

As for the house, Jake knew the agent well and the rent was not unaffordably higher than the apartment's had been, on the guarantee to the owner that although the woman was black they were reliable tenants who wouldn't fill the house with immigrant refugees or whatever they were from Congo and Zimbabwe, property values must not be allowed to go down as a result from rowdiness. (NTLP 12-13)

In this context, Gordimer condemns "the whole country's xenophobic" (NTLP 204) misled to an "[i]ntense or irrational dislike of people from other countries" (NTLP 205) resulting in the idea of "African unity" (NTLP 205) seems to have failed.

That rubbish, they must *voetsak* [offensive Afrikaans expression: to reject, The Free Dictionary 2016) back to Mugabe, they are only here, come from that place to steal take our bags in the street, and shame, shame, look what they do to Mr Jake, they wanted to kill him to get his car, it's only God's will he's still alive to see his children grow up, he can't walk quite right, I see him there in the road, *eish!* They tell lies why they come here, the young ones are just *tsotsis*, *Wonke umuntu makahlale ezweni lakhe alilungise!* Everybody must stay at their country to make it right, not run away [...] (NTLP 204-205)

Claimed by Jabu's relative employed as her domestic helper (comp. NTLP 94), this demand particularly appears as a pathetic indictment insofar as it were South Africa's sister states, then freed from European colonialism and former supremacy, which sheltered South African combatants during their struggles. However, like many African leaders of the liberation fights, such as the current Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who "[have careered after a] good start [...] off into dictatorship" (NTLP 24) make their people leave their land of their birth.

Although these "refugees are not invaders from some other continent" (NTLP 205), their appearance is considered to be "a disruption of the city, intrusion, invasion of rightful tax-paying citizens, a threat to business and health" (NTLP 191). At this point, however, Gordimer holds South Africa's post-apartheid society accountable, "not succeeding in meeting the rights of disadvantaged citizens of our own country" (NTLP 212), for the development of xenophobia.

‘Xenophobia’—it’s our distancing from the fact that our people right here in our own country, at home (his hand unconsciously knotting itself, a fist) an existence as refugees from our economy, unemployed, unhoused, surviving by ingenuities of begging, waving cars into parking space for the small change (all of us who have cars drop this handout), standing at traffic lights with packets of fruit to sell through driver’s windows, if you’re female standing with a baby or one that can propel itself playing in the gutter. It’s easy — to call them, our own people xenophobic when they resort to violence to defend the only space, the only means of survival against competitors for this *almost nothing*. It’s not hatred of foreigners. The name for the violence is xenophobia? (NTLP 212)

Against the background of the persisting inequality, it seems that *ubuntu* remains an unfulfilled postulate. To what extent South African politics are responsible for the deviation from Mandela’s dream of the Rainbow Nation will be analyzed in the following chapter.

### **5.3.2 The ‘new South Africa’ under Mandela’s heirs**

One must not be tempted to believe that the author’s intention is to produce a negative image of South Africa when reviewing her home country’s contemporary development, as stated by the two scholars Herlitzius and Wagner who claim that Gordimer’s work is merely based on prejudices and enhancing stereotypes (see chapter 5.2). Quite on the contrary, the audience can experience how Gordimer herself seems to be torn apart between accusing and understanding the challenges the young Republic is facing which is illustrated in the following interview:

As I always say to European friends and friends in America or anywhere, we have had only 15 years after centuries. Since 1652, when van Riebeeck landed at the Cape, there has been racial prejudice and racial separation. How can it be fixed in 15 years? I’m not excusing the things that we are not doing, but I’m simply saying to these people, vis-a-vis racism and class difference, "Have you achieved, in several hundred years at least, a real democracy?" I don't think so. You still got very poor people. You still got prejudice in terms of race and religion and heaven knows what." (Gordimer in an interview with Academy of Achievement 2009)

According to her interview, Gordimer seems to be well aware that the implementation of democracy may be a path of trial and tribulation and certainly cannot be achieved within just a few years. In the difficult pursuit of justice and equality, several South African authors such as Gordimer herself, act as the nation’s moral authority revealing how post-apartheid politicians, with Mandela’s

successors Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma leading the way, stray from the straight and narrow and, eventually, have been discrediting the endeavor of creating the 'new South Africa'.

### **5.3.2.1 Thabo Mbeki**

When in 1994 Mandela becomes the first democratically elected President of the South African Republic, he chooses Comrade Thabo Mbeki to be "the first Deputy President in the Government of National Unity" (South African History Online 2011b). In the early 1960s and "under orders of the ANC" (African National Congress 2011a) Mbeki goes to Great Britain where he "plays a prominent role in building the youth and student sections of the ANC in exile" (African National Congress 2011a) while "complet[ing] his Master's degree at the *Sussex University*" (South African History Online 2011b). After having passed military training in the Soviet Union in the 1970s (African National Congress 2011a), Mbeki plans, together with Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma among other ANC cadres, the struggles against the apartheid regime from outside South Africa (South African History Online 2011b). When the way to democracy has been cleared,

[...] the ANC [begins] preparing for the first democratic elections. It [is] an adjustment period and Mbeki play[s] a crucial role in transforming the ANC into a legal political organization. In 1991, the ANC [is] able to hold its first legal conference in the country after 30 years of being banned. The party now ha[s] the task of finding a middle ground for discussion between all the various factions: the returning exiles, the long-term prisoners and those who ha[ve] stayed behind to lead the struggle. Mbeki [is] chosen as national chair [of the ANC]. (South African History Online 2011b)

In 1999, Mbeki succeeds Mandela in the presidential election, struggling with the ongoing disparities among South Africa's population fiercely condemned by former comrade Steve when arguing with his wife or with his fellow inhabitants during Sunday get-togethers in the suburbs (e.g. NTLP 125-126).

[The] Government has to pick up the spade and tackle where we bulldozed apartheid. How long are whites going to dominate the economy? Who out of the handful of blacks who managed to gain the knowledge, know-how that qualifies, will really be able get into that powerful old boys' cartel? Who's going to change the hierarchy of the mine bosses — from the top? The goose that makes the country rich — blacks, they're the ones who continue to deliver the golden eggs, the whites, grace of Anglo-American and Co. make the profit on the stock exchange.

Blacks are becoming shift bosses and mine captains, used to be only whites. — Jabu in the habit of their arguing enlightenment together, rather than interrupting.

Underground! Kilometres down! Mine managers? No Radibes or Sitholes sitting in the manager's chair, my girl. (NTLP 22-23)

Steve's critique is comprehensible but also naïve at the same time. He, as Assistant Professor of the local university, knows best about the deficiencies of black students. Hence, Steve should understand that minimal educational standards can only be improved in a long-term process and, like democratic achievements, as Gordimer mentions in her interview (with Academy of Achievement 2009) cannot be changed for the better within a few years. However, progress needs to be continuous and certainly to be monitored as Gordimer does when surveilling South Africa's advances. At this point, when observing Mbeki's attitude speaking to his fellow citizens, Gordimer's resentment hardly can be hidden. He, the President privy to the voters' high number of non- or half-literates, "quotes poetry in his speeches, English, Irish poets" (NTLP 24), hence, although probably unwittingly ridiculing the majority of South Africans not grasping the content of his addresses, forgetting that most of them "have had poor schooling even in their own languages" (NTLP 340).

Besides his intellectual distance, Mbeki "betrayed by his brain in refusing scientific evidence that AIDS is a disease caused by a virus" (NTLP 340) is under fire from all sides overshadowing his presidency. Also parodied by the inhabitants of the suburbs in their Sunday gatherings (comp. NTLP 133), Mbeki's misjudgment of the situation is severe as it is considered to be "directly responsible for the avoidable deaths of more than a third of a million people in the country, according to research by *Harvard University*" (Boseley 2008).

In 2000, Mbeki call[s] together a round table of experts, including [...] also their opponents, to discuss the cause of AIDS. Later that year, at the *International AIDS Conference* in Durban, he publicly reject[s] the accepted scientific wisdom. AIDS, he sa[ys], [is] brought about by the collapse of the immune system – but not because of a virus. (Boseley 2008)

Although "South Africa has one of the severest HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world" (Boseley 2008), the President claims that the disease roots in poverty which leads



inevitably to “general ill-health and bad nourishment” (Boseley 2008), “people eating monkeys [...] because they ha[ve] nothing else” (NTLP 151). “The solution [is] not expensive western medicine, but the alleviation of poverty in Africa” (Boseley 2008). Neglecting the circumstances that AIDS is caused through a virus and not through the “collapse of the immune system” and “poverty” (Boseley 2008) is worsened when the President “appoints a Minister of Health who prescribes African potatoes and – what is it – garlic and olive oil as a cure” (NTLP 21). The Minister in charge, Tshabalala-Msimang, a medical doctor herself (Who is Who Southern Africa 2015) claims that

[...] if you do find you’ve caught the incurable clap, you just put yourself on a diet of beetroot, garlic and wild spinach – if you can find that traditional veg at the supermarket. (NTLP 133)

The Minister of Health, in line with the President, is certainly burdened with guilt and to be held fully liable for her head-in-the-sand politics. After all, “[a]bout 5.5 million people, or 18.8% of the adult population, have HIV, according to the *UN*. In 2005, there [are] about 900 deaths a day” (Boseley 2008). As a consequence,

[the Minister’s] disastrous HIV policies during nine years in office [!] ma[ke] her the most unpopular government minister in South Africa. She is ridiculed locally and internationally and nicknamed Dr Beetroot – another one of her suggested AIDS remedies – and Dr Garlic. (The Guardian 16 December 2009)

It goes without saying that Mbeki’s and his Minister’s HIV policies are heavily discussed when gathering for their Sunday morning pool parties, but understanding that there is no way out of the dilemma, for the suburbanites nothing else remains but

[...] laughing [...] at what’s become colloquially the priceless synonym of absurdity, the nature cure advised by the Minister of Health in her rejection of antiretrovirals. (NTLP 133)

In June 2005, during Mbeki’s second term in office, Jacob Zuma is charged with fraud, corruption and rape; as a consequence, he has to step down as Executive Deputy President (comp. African National Congress 2011), a move that provokes bitter criticism by Zuma’s followers. But when all charges are being dropped in 2006, Zuma returns to his office.

In early May 2006, the rape case [is] thrown out due to disbelief in the victim's story and in late September of the same year, the corruption case [is] thrown out after the prosecution made too many blunders. (University of Maryland 2004-2016)

The judgement of the court splits South Africa's society, yet family ties such as Jabu's and her father's: while Jabu adopts a critical attitude towards Zuma, her father, "headmaster at a local school for black boys [and] an Elder [of his village]" (NTLP 2), is Zuma's ardent worshipper.

[Her father Baba] hears something different.

— The papers attack [Zuma] like wild animals. They are out to tear him to pieces, that's all. It doesn't matter the court, the judges found him not guilty, the lies of that woman—

— Baba.

I'm saying what we can see, what we know.

What we know. Baba, what is it we know.

Mbeki and his people he gives the important posts, they'll do everything, anything to stop Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma from being president next time.—

— Zuma. — She says it to make it real. (NTLP 140)

In 2008, "a week after Jacob Zuma ha[s] again walked free out of court not on a charge of rape but of corruption"" (NTLP 258), Mbeki is accused by the "High Court Judge Chris Nicholson, who preside[s] over the corruption case against [...] Zuma" "of a political conspiracy to charge [him]" (Tandwa 2016). However,

Mbeki sa[ys] Nicholson [has] offered no explanation for his September 2008 judgment, in which he dismissed criminal charges against Zuma. He cite[s] a political conspiracy to influence the case by Mbeki and others.

"Neither has an explanation been offered as to why Judge Nicholson acted as he did in the matter of the so-called 'political meddling'. This [is] especially puzzling given that Nicholson [has been] an experienced judge with thirteen years of experience by 2008, having been appointed to the bench in 1995." (Tandwa 2016)

The "aftermath of a bruising leadership battle with current ANC President Jacob Zuma [...] divide[s] the party and culminate[s] in a split by Mr. Mbeki's backers to form the *Congress of People*" (Marrian 2016). In 2008, after "[Zuma] [has been]

elected President of the ANC by a majority against [the] breakaway faction as well as supporters of the country's President" (NTLP 223), and five months prior to the end of his presidency, Mbeki "agree[s] to step down as South Africa's President after the country's ruling party formally [has] requested his resignation over allegations he [has] misused his power" (Cooksey 2008).

So the vacancy's there for Zuma! (NTLP 258).

The rape case was behind; and the corruption case set aside although appeal against that judgment being proceeded; Jacob Zuma remains, he is, the African National Congress's nomination for the presidential election in the new year. (NTLP 266)

### **5.3.2.2 Jacob Zuma**

It is in May 2009 when Jabu's nightmare has come true (comp. NTL 140), because of Zuma's election to the 4<sup>th</sup> President of post-apartheid South Africa, although "Mbeki and his people [...] [have done] everything, anything to stop Jacob Zuma from being president next time" (NTLP 140). However, unlike his daughter, Jabu's father representing the majority of South African voters celebrates Zuma's election for being "the guarantee of democracy as our President" (NTLP 367).

[Zuma] was a poor boy growing up in the worst time, he knows what it means to be hungry without rights, he was a freedom fighter for what? — to make sure our people will never again be ruled by any power from outside, we'd have a government where we all have the same rights — isn't that what you mean when you say democracy? And in that government — if there are men who want power against it, quarrel with their own brothers, like Lekota, turn against the man the people want, Zuma their man no doubt about that, if those men work in government against him, is that democratic? (NTLP 368)

Jabu's worries seem to be unheard when she argues that South Africa is in need of a strong opposition, avoiding dangerous political developments like those having occurred in many other African countries such as in Zimbabwe where President Robert Mugabe has mutated from a former freedom fighter into a cruel dictator, leading a 'bling' lifestyle while oppressing his own people.

[H]ow could we know then our countries round us would turn their liberation into dirty power struggles with their own people, the Amins [Idi Amin: Dictator of Uganda 1971-1979, Biography.com Editors 2016a], the Mobutus [Mobutu Sese Seko: Dictator of the Democratic Republic of the Congo 1965-1997, Biography.com Editors 2016b], and now Mugabe

[Prime Minister of Zimbabwe since 1980, and the President since 1987, Biography.com Editors 2016c] [...]. (NTPL 399)

Baba, we need an opposition. Not those little old clubs of whites, or new black ones. [...]. You know history better than I do, you've been teaching all your life. Without real opposition you get dictators down the line. Idi Amin, Mugabe. No democracy without opposition. (NTLP 367-368)

As Jabu has foreseen, "once [Zuma is] President [he] cannot be charged. It'll all go away" (NTLP 284), and all charges against the President are finally dropped. However, they nevertheless leave a bad taste: neither the allegation about the corrupt arms deals closely intertwined with Shamin "Chippy" Shaik, then "Director of Procurement in the Defence Force" when the 'irregularities' in contracts to subcontractors [...] [are] awarded" (NTLP 125), nor the accusation of sexual abuse seem to totally vanish from the public view after the Court's decision.

Charged with having raped a comrade's daughter during an overnight stay at his house, Zuma admits to have had sexual intercourse with the young woman, however, as he asserts, consensually but – at least as far as he is concerned – not intentionally. During a cross-examination in court, he argues

that in view of the affectionate goodnight exchanges between [him, her *Malume* (Uncle)] [...] and [his] friend's daughter (her provocative scanty attire already described to the court) it [is] traditionally incumbent in Zulu culture for a Zulu man to satisfy a woman who show[s] she [is] sexually aroused. "You cannot just leave a woman if she is in that state." (NTLP 134)

However, when Zuma claims that he has only felt obliged to help this young woman out of her sexual dilemma, in fact, he as the future President of the Republic, has violated "South Africa's strong constitutional protections for human rights" (Human Rights Watch 2016), and at the same time encourages copycat criminals in a country where rape is endemic. Hence, Zuma acts in line with the archaic patriarchal understanding of women perceived as fair game, in a society where violence against women is seen as a mere peccadillo and not as a criminal act (Human Rights Watch 2016).

One *Medical Research Council* study among men from the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal show[s] a devastatingly casual familiarity with rape – more than 25% of the men questioned admit[s] to raping someone. A poll

in 1999 among 1,500 schoolboys in Soweto show[s] most [think] that "jackrolling", or gang rape, [is]"fun". (Pillay 2013)

Eventually, and probably to further humiliate his friend's daughter, Zuma argues that he "was prepared to marry the woman who accuse[s] him of rape, and that her aunts were discussing the possibility of marriage and a bride price as Zulu tradition dictates" (BBC 5 April 2006). Not very surprisingly, the young woman declines his 'proposal' although misogynistic Zuma insists to have been ready to espouse her.

"Yes, if we had reached an agreement with that, I would have had my cows ready," Mr. Zuma told the court, referring to *lobola*: the traditional donation of animals by a husband to his bride's family. (BBC 5 April 2006)

Jabu on behalf of the *Johannesburg Justice Center* observes the trial when it becomes even more delicate considering that Zuma, then heading the *Moral Regeneration Movement*, a government initiative on prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS" (NTLP 133), has had unprotected sexual intercourse with an HIV-positive woman. However, "[h]e admits he knew the woman was HIV-positive, he had no condom; he took a shower afterwards as this was, he [says], a post-coital cautionary prevention of infection" (NTLP 133). Being a "gift to the press" (NTLP 133) on the one hand, and "causing dismay among local AIDS activists" on the other hand (BBC 5 April 2006), Zuma dangerously downplays the threat of HIV/AIDS by signaling that the disease can easily be combated by washing away, "because this [as he says] 'would minimize the risk of contracting the disease'" (BBC 5 April 2006).

"The case has attracted huge publicity and court sessions have drawn demonstrations by groups both for and against Mr. Zuma" (BBC 5 April 2006). While Zuma's followers produce posters "honoring the not-guilty judgment in celebration then" (NTLP 309) and burn pictures and photographs of the 31-year old victim shouting "Burn the bitch!" (NTLP 134), Vicci Tallis from the *Gender AIDS Forum* comments the naïve testimony of Zuma who also happens to be the former head of the *National AIDS Council* as follows, "Statements like that can throw years of hard work down the drain" (Pearce 2006), jeopardizing efforts to inform and to educate South Africans to undertake all precautions possible to avoid the infection.

Who knows which among [them] is positive, aware or not; a lecturer in another faculty has made what's called his 'status' public and addressed the students in every faculty, urging them boldly, like himself, to take the test, and if it is positive start treatment immediately; if it is negative, wake up, be sure in your love-making you take every means of protecting yourself and your partner of whatever sex from infection. (NTLP 267)

Overall, Jabu's fear expressed through Gordimer's pen cannot be denied when she argues that Zuma has forgotten about his own people. "*Ubuntu* – you know what that is? Do you?" (NTLP 111). It rather seems that Zuma is in line with other formerly celebrated African freedom fighters, having then mutated into dictators (comp. NTLP 399). The new African supremacy may act as his role-model on many occasions such as when Zuma aims to design, with the help of judges of questionable integrity and independence, his own interpretation of law and order. His endeavors disappoint many South Africans, former comrades in particular, as one must not forget that before Zuma has become a mighty politician, "Brother Zulu was one of the old Freedom Fighters out there among the best, close to Mbeki, he served his years on Robben Island" (NTLP 114).

### **5.3.2.3 Jacob Zuma and the decline of Mandela's Rainbow Nation**

Eventually, it appears that neither Mbeki nor Zuma have managed to proceed with Mandela's successful way to the 'new South Africa', as both his former comrades seem to have failed to continue the politics in the spirit of their predecessor or to have pushed on with his work.

Mandela had to deal with the morning-after when we all woke up from the party, FREE-DOM FREE-DOM FREE-DOM. But the hype was there, the thrilling possibilities the — how d'you say — absolute reassurance of Mandela in person while he was leading, making the changes — the immediate ones that could be brought off. Now it's a different story... (NTLP 22-23)

"[T]he sad truth is that Nelson Mandela's [R]ainbow [N]ation has, in just 22 years, gone from hero to zero" (Hain 2016). Instead of achieving welfare and prosperity for all South Africans, signs among others of on-going discrimination, mismanagement and violence are commonplace. Neglecting the challenges of the young democratic nation, neither of Mandela's heirs has managed to implement urgently needed actions to improve the living conditions in South Africa but, quite on the contrary, they seem to be yet even deadlocked or deteriorating.

Twenty-three per cent national unemployment, and this when guys whose employment is to wave you into parking space aren't counted, up to half the children in shacks don't go to school, parents can't pay, provide more than a plate of pap a day — it's poverty, the cause of this violence. (NTLP 399)

Overall, both successors appear to be out of touch with reality and to have forgotten about their own people, for those both have once risked their lives (comp. NTLP 22-23).

Besides addressing his people with an aloof sort of language inaccessible to the average South African, Mbeki has buried his head in the sand, ignoring the threats of HIV/AIDS. Consequently, many of his former followers have turned away, bitterly disappointed and frustrated about their President, and support Jacob Zuma who, unlike Mbeki where “no irregularities could be laid at his door [...]” (NTLP 110), “[...] has [...] allowed corruption to flourish until it poses a cancerous threat” (Hain 2016). “The country’s media castigate President Jacob Zuma for “looting the country” (Hain 2016), and criticism is everywhere.

We must expect – we must be different! What are you all saying? *Ubuntu* – you know what that is? Do you? What is happening to it, why it comes to mean that because those comrades were in the [s]truggle they can drive their Mercedes and buy palaces for their wives with bribe millions from foreign crooks! Sell us out! How can you take it like that! (NTLP 111)

Corruption and bribery seems to have become commonplace among ‘the new South Africa’s’ influential politicians but also misappropriated public funds are used to finance personal amenities of the new supremacy such as to “upgrade [Zuma’s] private mansion” (Hain 2016), money which would be desperately needed for social and economic investments.

[T]here is not enough money to fund school education of a standard to pass seamlessly to universities, less than a generation after the end of hundreds of years when resources for education were spent overwhelmingly on the minority of the vast population. – Education. Funds in the exchequer are to be shared with health, housing, transport, everything that is a social need. (NTLP 68)

The Office of the President naturally sees things differently and proclaims on the official website Zuma’s outstanding performance. “Under the theme *Working*

*Together We Can Do More*” (The Presidency. Republic of South Africa 2016), manifold yet “dramatic” progress is reported, for example with regard to health care and education, to name but two (comp. The Presidency. Republic of South Africa 2016). However, according to surveys conducted by international organizations such as subsidiary organizations of the *UN (United Nations)* or the *OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)*, a different picture of the Zuma’s fundamental achievements is delivered. The 2014 *OECD Health Statistics* contradict the President’s official statement but rather depict the health care system as ailing, struggling with an insufficient number medical staff. “There is a shortage of doctors” (NTLP 106), which is particularly dramatic considering the high number of HIV/AIDS infected people. According to the statistics, South Africa only spends 28 percent of the *OECD* average “health expenditure per capita” (OECD 2014) which seems to root in the poor economic data of South Africa still suffering from the global financial crisis. Consequently, South Africa’s economy is underperforming (comp. Department of Trade and Industry *BEE* strategy document 2013: 4), in particular the export rates of goods and services are declining (Ryan 2014), and finally, in January 2016, the price inflation index has exceeded 6 percent (Global-Rates 2016). Hence, “it is not surprising that South Africa ranks below the *OECD* average” (OECD 2014). The South African economist Chris Becker concludes that

[w]orst affected are the poor because they have less capacity to absorb price increases. It also means *CPI*-linked [*Consumer Price Index*] wage increases are leaving people worse off with each passing year because these increases do not measure the actual cost-of-living increases for the poor. (cit. in Ryan 2014)

“Health spending tends to rise with incomes, and generally countries with higher *GDP* per capita also tend to spend more on health” (OECD 2014). However, many “international investors are jumping ship” (Hain 2016) due to poorly educated people, mismanagement and nepotism throughout the Government.

The Minister of Transport gets a million-rand present from transport contractors and dutifully asks the President if he should give it back. — Peter’s glass staggering its contents — Our President’s advice, no, man — keep the present after you declare according to whoever’s in charge of — who’s it — the government’s code of executive ethics. (NTLP 348-349)



Hence, necessary financial allocations for the public health sector are unavailable, whereas the average South African cannot afford adequate medical treatment as shown in the numbers of the *OECD* studies previously mentioned (2014). Consequently, while in all *OECD* countries the life expectancy at birth has increased from “74.8 in 1990 to 80.2 in 2012” (OECD 2014), in South Africa, it has decreased from “62.2 years to 56.1” (OECD 2014), a sign which sadly illustrates that the combat against child mortality, poor living conditions and, last but not least, diseases such as HIV/AIDS has not yet been successful despite Zuma’s announcement

in his victory speech at the Polokwane Conference [52<sup>nd</sup> ANC Conference 2007] he declare[s] “all structures of government should actively participate in the fight against HIV and AIDS in all facets of the national strategy — prevention, treatment, support for families affected, infected.” (NTLP 222-223)

However, successful measures have not been undertaken yet but, quite on the contrary, people suffering from the virus frequently avoid their ailment becoming public, afraid of discrimination or job loss.

At the Justice Centre she meets men and some women — out of fear of disgrace they are even more cautious about letting it be known — who are HIV-positive, on antiretrovirals, and even some who have AIDS. They are people dismissed from their employment because they are infected with the virus: she’s involved in court actions against employers illegally ignoring workers’ Constitutional rights. (NTLP 267)

Ignoring the actual status quo, the Presidential Office posts on its homepage that

[t]he fourth administration also prides itself on the success of many other programs. More impetus has been given to the program to fight the HIV and AIDS with dramatic achievements such as the halving of mother-to-child transmission of the virus and putting more than 2.5 million people on treatment and an increase in life expectancy among South Africans. (The Presidency. Republic of South Africa 2016)

Another problem child of South Africa’s society is the educational system which is, unsurprisingly, abundantly described by Zuma’s office as a considerable success, a success which is not echoed by studies conducted by the *World Economic Forum WEF* (The Global Information Technology Report 2014: 287) or the *OECD* (cit. in Business Tech 2015). Instead of the “dramatic” achievements

(The Presidency. Republic of South Africa 2016), the *WEF* delivers a damning indictment of South Africa's educational system claiming that

South Africa is ranked 146<sup>th</sup> for the overall quality of its education, below a host of other African countries including Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, Nigeria, Tanzania, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali. (WEF 2014 cit. in Wilkinson)

This report claiming that South Africa's educational system is ranked behind some of the *Least Developed Countries* in the World<sup>3</sup> is strongly contradicted by Wilkinson in her article stating that data are not sound as they are based on non-standardized tests but on polls among "unnamed business leaders" (2014). But even if the results published by the *WEF* may indeed be questionable because of their data collection, "[t]he *WEF* report does not base its research on any actual tests or assessments" (BBC 3 June 2014), an *OECD*-survey seems to identify similar deficiencies, in this case however, based on standardized testing, concluding that "basic education displays low quality and high inequality" (OECD 2013: 59)

There is much evidence, from both international and national surveys, that education remains poor overall and uneven across regions and population groups, which largely reflects the country's historical legacy. (OECD 2013: 59)

Hence, as already described in chapter 2.3.1.1, there still is an ongoing inequality among ethnicities and races. But even if, according to the Presidential homepage, "the enrolment of youth in higher education institutions has also increased tremendously due to government support" (The Presidency. Republic of South Africa 2016), this is only part of the solution to the problem. As surveys show, especially, the math and science education is lagging behind international ranking (BBC 3 June 2014), in line with Gordimer's protagonist Steve when describing his university students' skills as follows, "I have some – math is a foreign language they haven't had teaching for grasp, just enough functionally, to scrape through the final school paper" (NTLP 67). However, the President is optimistic and his office announces that "the enrolments in further education and training colleges ha[ve]

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<sup>3</sup> According to the 2016 report published by UNCTAD, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali belong to the list of the *Least Developed Countries* (LDCs). (UNCTAD 2016)

gone up by more than 90 percent” (The Presidency. Republic of South Africa 2016). It is undisputable that numbers, in particular of black students, have increased. But what is left out is that as previously addressed the quality of the system suffers.

You’re not proposing we lower university entrance standards further. Is that what a university is, not advancement of knowledge but a descent? What Steve’s question is – whether a token of coaching in hopes of bringing them up to university standards can achieve recovery from the years of hopelessly poor schooling? (NTLP 66)

Eventually, for a better future it will be crucial to improve South Africa’s public sector, to enable South Africans to participate fruitfully in the global world. Hence, good competitive education for all, plus a sustainable welfare system are good starting points to even out discrepancies. These days, however, it seems that Zuma’s presidency has not only diverted the country from this goal rather than bringing it nearer but also has prolonged “the wait for truth and accountability continues” (Shenker 2015),

## **5.4 Conclusion**

In her doctoral dissertation, the German scholar Herlitzius (2005) attests that an overall gloomy image is being drawn by contemporary South African writers and questions whether Gordimer’s perception truly mirrors South Africa’s reality of the post-apartheid era (2005:8). However, at this point it should be taken into consideration that her thesis has been published some ten years ago, and six years after the end of Mandela’s presidency while the Grey Eminence still seems to have been acting behind the scenes. It is in 2007, when Mandela eventually supports Jacob Zuma in the fraternal strife within the ANC, helping the current president to defeat his opponent Thabo Mbeki (comp. McGreal 2009), and at that time highly appreciated by the majority of ANC members (comp. du Preez 2013). Only six years later, when Mandela dies in December 2013, Mandela’s political protégé is booed during the memorial service (du Preez 2013).

For many South Africans, Zuma represents some of the nation’s least appealing qualities. They consider their deeply flawed president and faltering government and mutter dark thoughts about a failing state and a banana republic. The booing was perhaps impolite, but I suspect Mandela

would have quietly approved of South Africans making it known to the ruling *African National Congress* and the world that they expect more from their president and their government than they're getting right now [...]

Zuma's predecessor, Thabo Mbeki, got the same treatment at an ANC congress in 2007. He was booed and shouted down, with delegates making the soccer hand signal for a player to be replaced — a gesture also seen on Tuesday. He was then voted out as party leader and replaced by Zuma. The same Mbeki received huge cheers from the crowd at the Mandela memorial – as did the last apartheid president, F.W. de Klerk, the man who released Mandela from prison. (du Preez 2013)

In the light of the current political developments, Mbeki's head-in-the-sand politics appear to be the lesser evil, and fierce anger begins bubbling up among all groups of South Africa's population, independent of ideology, skin complexion or social status. In particular, many of those who have fought for freedom and equality feel betrayed, such as

Barbara Hogan, a former ANC Government Minister who was tortured in an apartheid prison. Recently she [breaks] ranks, declaring: "Zuma must go. This man is creating economic sabotage." Her remarks [are] echoed by ANC struggle stalwart Denis Goldberg's call for a "top to bottom leadership clear-out" and an end to corruption. (Hain 2016)

Hence, when Nadine Gordimer writes *No Time Like the Present*, Mandela's close confidante intends to express her harsh judgement of the 'new South Africa's' development as a legacy for future politicians. She meticulously describes the political deficiencies in the public but also in the private sector by displaying examples of South Africa's non-fictional reality. Overall, her last novel is a documentation of the country's maladministration whereas the plot as such plays only a subordinate role.

## 6. Closing remarks

The thesis "Living together in the aftermath of apartheid" starts with the light-hearted novel *Fanie Fourie's Lobola* by Nape 'a Motana, describing the realization of Mandela's Rainbow Nation when black Dimakatjo may after all marry Fanie, her white Prince Charming, illustrating the 'new South Africa's' chance of bridging the gap between black and white, of true reconciliation and finally, of overcoming the dreadful past. The analysis continues with a less optimistic work by another black

author Zakes Mda who delivers in his book *Black Diamond* a critical report on undesirable development among the uprising black middle-class. In her book *People Like Ourselves*, the white author Pamela Jooste portrays the white upper class and the 'born-free' generation for which she earns both fierce critiques and high esteem. Last but not least, in her last novel *No Time Like the Present*, Nadine Gordimer displays South Africa's decline under Mandela's heirs by referring to non-fictional events of everyday life. While Mda alters the persons' names when leveling criticism, Gordimer addresses them by their actual names, not mincing words, which shows that, despite all disapproval, South Africa enjoys freedom of speech and a press of prototypical character.

[...] South Africa has made great strides in the past generation. It is a better place to live, in many respects, than it was in 1994. It is today probably the most open society, in every sense of the word, in the developing world: Citizens are not afraid to speak their mind openly on any topic; newspapers, radio and television "speak truth to power." The government is held accountable; activists mobilize without fear of prosecution. (du Peerez 2013)

Using this right to speak up, many South African authors and veteran politicians emphasize that South Africa is "on the brink of failed statehood" (Boraine 2014: front page). Even Mandela's intimate friend Archbishop Desmond Tutu does not hesitate to express his feelings of anger and disappointment openly, in a recent speech addressing Zuma and his Cabinet.

This Government, our Government is worse than the apartheid government because at least you were expecting it with the apartheid government. Our government, we were expecting that now we would have a government that was sensitive to the sentiments of our constitution. [...] [T]he trouble - I think that one of the big troubles is that the ANC on the whole reckons that the freedom that we enjoy is due to them. That is what they reckon, that everybody else is just a side line. [...]

Mr Zuma, you and your Government do not represent me. You represent your own interests. And I am warning you, I really am warning you out of love, I am warning you like I warned the nationalists, I am warning you. One day we will start praying for the defeat of the ANC Government. You are disgraceful, I want to warn you, you are behaving in a way that is totally at variance with the things for which we stood. I am warning you, I am warning you that we will pray every prayer for the downfall of the apartheid government. We will pray for the downfall of a government that misrepresents us. You have got a huge majority. That is

nothing. The nationalists had a huge majority that was increasing. They beat the dust, watch out, ANC Government, watch out, watch out, watch out. (Tutu 2015 transcribed by the author 2016)

Eventually, Hain may be right when assuming that “Mandela must be turning in his grave” (2016), when he, South Africa’s *Tata* (Xhosa for father) realizes that his dream of the Rainbow State is finally shattering. “And then one day it changed back, and we realized the rainbow was just a temporary illusion” (Zapiro 2000).

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# Appendix

## *Abstract*

The thesis “Living together in the aftermath of apartheid” aims to analyze to what extent the transformation from the segregated into the united ‘new South Africa’ has taken place, and how this is portrayed through fictional characters of black and white South Africans living in the aftermath of apartheid. Four novels by contemporary South African authors have been selected, two of them are written by black male authors, Nape ‘a Motana and Zakes Mda, the other two by white female authors, Pamela Jooste and Nadine Gordimer. All novels reflect the relevance of South African history in everyday life following the phrase “The present is a consequence of the past” penned by Gordimer in her novel *No Time Like the Present* (2012: 411). By comparing the contents of the authors’ works with secondary literature published by scholars, veteran politicians and freedom fighters, but also in the light of media coverage through the national and international press, this thesis intends to investigate whether the transition into the ‘new South Africa’ has been completed.

Key words: apartheid, post-apartheid, South Africa, transition, transformation

## ***Deutsche Zusammenfassung***

Die Diplomarbeit “Living together in the aftermath of apartheid” hat die Aufgabenstellung zu analysieren, in wie weit die Wandlung von einem segregierten zu einem vereinigten Südafrika stattgefunden hat, und wie dies in der zeitgenössischen südafrikanischen post-Apartheid Literatur reflektiert wird. Hierfür werden vier Werke südafrikanischer AutorInnen der Gegenwart herangezogen, zwei Romane der indigenen Autoren Nape ‘a Motana und Zakes Mda, sowie zwei Werke der weißen Autorinnen, Pamela Jooste und Nadine Gordimer. Die ausgewählte Literatur spiegelt die Relevanz der südafrikanischen Geschichte im Alltag dem aus Nadine Gordimers Feder stammenden Satz folgend wider: „Die Gegenwart ist eine Folge der Vergangenheit“ (NTLP 2012: 411). Durch den Vergleich der literarischen Arbeiten mit Sekundärliteratur von WissenschaftlerInnen, Vertrauten Nelson Mandelas und ehemaligen FreiheitskämpferInnen, aber auch im Licht der Berichterstattung nationaler und internationaler Medien, soll reflektiert werden, ob der Übergang zu einem demokratischen Südafrika vollzogen ist.

Schlüsselworte: Südafrika, Apartheid, Übergangszeit von Apartheid zur Zeit danach, die Zeit nach der Ende der Apartheid