universität wien

# DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

"From Childhood to Adulthood

in the Novels of Pamela Jooste"

Verfasserin

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angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, September 2009

| | |
|---|---|
| Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt: | A 190 344 445 |
| Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt: | UF Englisch, UF Biologie und Umweltkunde |
| Betreuer: | Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ewald Mengel |

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## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Univ. Prof. Dr. Ewald Mengel, for his time, expert support and encouragement. Without his guidance and persistent help this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my family for giving me the opportunity to study and for their invaluable support and infinite patience. Special thanks go to Christian for his understanding and encouragement during those times when there was no light at the end of anything.

Thank you

Nicole Pettau
University of Vienna
September 2009

# Table of Contents


1. Introduction ..... 1
2. Socio- Historical Background ..... 3
2.1. Racial Discrimination and Apartheid ..... 3
2.2. Apartheid Ideology and Legislation ..... 4
2.3. Apartheid Ideology and Religion ..... 8
2.4. Resistance to Apartheid and its Violent Suppression ..... 9
2.4.1. Organised Black Resistance to Apartheid ..... 9
2.4.2. International Resistance to Apartheid ..... 15
2.5. The Fall of Apartheid and the Transition towards Democracy ..... 15
2.6. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission ..... 19
2.6.1. TRC - Objectives ..... 19
2.6.2. TRC- Approaching Truth and Reconciliation ..... 19
2.6.3. TRC- Criticism ..... 21
3. South African Narratives of Childhood ..... 23
4. The Novels of Pamela Jooste: An Introduction ..... 28
4.1. Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter (DWAPMD) ..... 28
4.2. Frieda and Min (FAM) ..... 31
4.3. Like Water in Wild Places (LWIWP) ..... 34
4.4. People Like Ourselves (PLO) ..... 37
4.5. Star of the Morning (SOTM) ..... 41
5. From Childhood to Adulthood ..... 46
5.1. Social Environment: Family, Friends and Guiding Spirits ..... 46
5.1.1. The Strains of an Oppressive Home Life and the Solace of Friendship ..... 46
5.1.2. Growing up Special ..... 58
5.1.3. Missing Daddy: In the Absence of Male Role Models ..... 61
5.1.4. Experiencing Parental Deprivation ..... 71
5.2. Trauma and Violence ..... 76
5.2.1. The Relation among Domestic Violence, State- Sanctioned Cruelty, and Patriarchy ..... 77
5.2.2. Fatherly Violence – the Rule of the Patriarch ..... 77
5.2.3. Institutionalised Violence ..... 81
5.2.4. Apartheid's Supporters: the Ordinariness of Unscrupulous Monsters ..... 84
5.2.5. White Trauma – The Loss of Self ..... 88
5.2.6. Angry Young Men ..... 93
5.2.7. "Old An[g]ries" – The Death of an Old Native ..... 95
5.2.8. The Double Trauma of Jews in South Africa ..... 95
5.3. Perspectives on the Past and Present – Coping Strategies and Defense Mechanisms ..... 98
5.3.1. Seizing a Distorted Image of Reality – The Role of Self- Deception ..... 100
5.3.2. Acknowledging the Past, Embracing the Future ..... 106
5.3.3. Towards Disillusionment ..... 110
5.4. The (Post) Apartheid State ..... 114
5.4.1. Looking the Biest in the Eye ..... 114
5.4.2. Aftermath: The Remaking of the Nation State ..... 121
6. Conclusion ..... 127
7. Zusammenfassung ..... 130
8. Bibliography ..... 133
9. Index ..... 139
10. Curriculum Vitae ..... 143

# 1. Introduction

Taking into account recent works of contemporary South African fiction like Mark Behr's *Embrace*, Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story*, J.M. Coetzee's *Boyhood*, or Lewis Nkosi's *Mandela's Ego*, it can be assumed that the phases of childhood and adolescence clearly constitute a key concern of post-apartheid writers. Novelists from the so-called "Rainbow Nation" are thus prominently preoccupied with the psychosocial processes and developments that eventually lead to the forging of a strong sense of self and independent identity. Set against the country's tumultuous transition towards democracy and its steady remaking after the watershed decades of racial segregation, South African authors closely investigate the tremendous impact of political turmoil on the formative years of their colourful child protagonists.

In general, puberty and early adolescence are widely recognised as turbulent and sometimes tangled phases in individual development that require constant reediting and remapping of the self and previously adopted conceptions of the realities around. Yet, as the works of Gordimer and her literary contemporaries compellingly elucidate, coming of age in apartheid torn society represents an all the more complicated and challenging, if not even fruitless endeavour. The socio-political climate is thus frequently depicted as having a strictly smothering and corrupting effect on the country's maturing youth. Whereas some of the fictitious characters eventually succeed in building up strong identities – notwithstanding extreme hardship and a burdened history – others fail miserably. However, interestingly, their inevitable downfall is due to the oppressive and harsh conditions that prevail in the nation state.

The novels of Pamela Jooste, whose literary contribution to inter-racial communication, national healing, and the country's remaking shall be acknowledged in this thesis, also focus on (post-)apartheid experiences that inexorably transform the lives and personalities of children. The author's critically acclaimed and award winning narratives thus tie in thematically and formally with the open discourse of how South Africa's socio-political setting impacts on the new generation. Hence, Jooste's novels may be read and analysed

alongside the works of prolific and internationally renowned South African literates as well as Nobel laureates like J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer.

Through the eyes of her child narrators the novelist powerfully and vividly portrays various stages in the country's turbulent transition from apartheid to democracy and elucidates the impact of the public sphere on the private one. She thereby dismantles the very ills and grievances dominating the state and social order.

However, the factors impacting on the lives of Jooste's immature and adolescent characters are manifold, ranging from history's grip on the present, family relations, friendships, and state politics to undue machismo and various forms of violence and suffering. Interestingly though, trauma obtains a crucial role in the novelist's analysis of salient and formative aspects of identity construction in maturing children as it represents a final challenge and test of character. Only by overcoming shattering experiences and painful memories the protagonists can eventually grow into maturity.

Few of Jooste's adolescent narrators- far from being symbols of pessimism and self-abandonment- eventually ward off childhood demons and extricate themselves from the stranglehold of a sordid cultural past, thereby succeeding in developing strong and independent identities. Their examples thus kindle sparks of hope for individual and cultural reconstruction. Hence, Jooste's lucid and astute portrayals of prevailing realities also explore promising possibilities for a brighter future.

# 2. Socio- Historical Background

## 2.1. Racial Discrimination and Apartheid

> Apartheid, literally 'apartness' or separateness in the Afrikaans and Dutch languages, is the name given to a policy of separating people by race, with regard to where they lived, where they went to school, where they worked, and where they died. (Clark, Worger, 3)

'*Apartheid* was a new term but an old idea' (Mandela, 111). It was implemented as an all-encompassing governmental policy of systematically enforced racial separation and discrimination after the Nationalists' coming to power in 1948.[1] However, although racist attitudes clearly prevailed in the apartheid era it is important to bear in mind that white racism has influenced South African politics ever since Jan van Riebeeck set foot on the Cape of Good Hope in the 17th century. This was clearly indicated by the unjust and degrading treatment of the country's indigenous population and the introduction of slavery.[2] Throughout the following centuries whites increasingly curtailed the rights of Africans on the grounds of economic, cultural, and historical concerns.[3]

After the formation of the *Union of South Africa* racist politics ensured the material prosperity of white South Africans while clearly discriminating against blacks.[4] The *Mines and Works Act*, for instance, which was passed in 1911, established white supremacy in the labour market by confining low-status, dangerous, or poorly-paid jobs to black, coloured, or Indian workers.[5]

Two years later the *Natives' Land Act* settled the distribution of property. 93 per cent of the country's land mass were reserved for white South Africans, while the small residual area was set aside for the black majority.[6] Soon the land was so densely populated that it could not provide for the African population anymore.[7] In 1936 the land assigned to African farmers was doubled, but still the soil was too poor to be used for farming and thus blacks had to accept menial jobs

[1] Cf. Mandela, 110-111.
[2] Cf. Worden, 75-76.
[3] Cf. Worden, 75-76; 82.
[4] Cf. Worden, 83.
[5] Cf. Clark, Worger, 21-22.
[6] Cf. Clark, Worger, 21-22.
[7] Cf. Thompson, 164.

working for their white oppressors.[8] Africans thus formed a pliable and cheap workforce, on which the South African economy was so dependent.[9]

The *Natives Urban Areas Act* of 1923 was another piece of segregationist legislation. It introduced racial separation in towns by forcing Africans to live in separate districts.[10]

The *Native Administration Act*, passed in 1927, and the *Representation of Natives Act*, which came into force in 1936, further restricted the participation of blacks in public affairs. They deprived them of their right to vote and every sphere of African life was henceforth controlled by white authorities.[11]

However, as increasing numbers of Africans joined activist groups and protested against this unjust segregationist legislation white South Africans were seriously alarmed and they sought for a system to guarantee the predominance and prosperity of whites in South Africa. [12] Malan's National Party fuelled the growing fear of the '[b]lack [p]eril' (Worden, 87) in the election campaign of 1948 and advertised apartheid as the best means of ensuring white supremacy in the country.[13] The campaign convinced the white voters and thus the Afrikaner party won the general election by a majority of almost eighty parliamentary seats. At that time, however, the concept of apartheid was by no means clearly defined. It rather developed throughout the following decades.[14]

> The often haphazard segregation of the past three hundred years was to be consolidated into a monolithic system that was diabolical in its detail, inescapable in its reach, and overwhelming in its power. The premise of apartheid was that whites were superior to Africans, Coloureds, and Indians […]. (Mandela, 111)

## 2.2. Apartheid Ideology and Legislation

The apartheid ideology was based on four central concepts. Its main idea was that all South Africans were to be assigned to 'four "racial groups"- White, Coloured, Indian, and African' (Thompson, 190). Besides, white South Africans being the only 'civilized race' (Thompson, 190) in the country were destined to

[8] Cf. Clark, Worger, 22.
[9] Cf. Clark, Worger, 17, 22.
[10] Cf. Clark, Worger, 22.
[11] Cf. Clark, Worger, 22-23.
[12] Cf. Clark, Worger, 25, 27; Worden, 90-98.
[13] Cf. Mandela, 110-111.
[14] Cf. Ross, 114-116.

guide the other ethnic groups. Another basic principle was that whites should be treated more favourably than non-whites. Furthermore, apartheid ideologues had a very specific notion of the South African nation. In their minds white South Africa was 'the largest [unified nation] in the country' (Thompson, 190), whereas black South Africa comprised various smaller fragments.[15]

In order to achieve their ideological goals the National Party passed a system of racist laws. Soon racial discrimination influenced all spheres of social and private life.[16]

One of the first pieces of apartheid legislation was the *Population Registration Act* of 1950, which classified all South Africans as ''White', 'Coloured' or 'Native' (later called 'Bantu')' (Clark, Worger, 46). First, 'Indians' (Clark, Worger, 46) were excluded from this system of racial classification. However, in 1959 they 'were […] included under the category 'Asian'' (Clark, Worger, 46).[17]

> […] [First] people [were] classified primarily on the basis of their 'community acceptability'; later amendments (1962, 1964) placed greater stress on 'appearance' in order to deal with the practice of light- coloured blacks 'passing' as whites, and also added descent (1967), again to prevent assimilation. (Clark, 46)

The *Population Registration Act* dramatically influenced the political, social, and economic life of all South Africans as belonging to one group or another entailed 'different rights and privileges' (Clark, Worger, 45). Besides, members of the same family were often categorised differently. As a consequence numerous South Africans went to the 'Classification Board' (Mandela, 151) and proposed a motion calling for the reconsideration of their racial categorisation.[18]

The *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act*, passed in 1949, and the *Immorality Act*, introduced in 1950, completely outlawed any personal relationships between people assigned to different racial categories. They thus enforced the purity of different ethnic groups.[19]

[15] Cf. Thompson, 190.
[16] Cf. Clark, Worger, 45.
[17] Cf. Clark, Worger, 45-46.
[18] Cf. Mandela, 151-152; Ross, 116.
[19] Cf. Worden, 116.

The *Group Areas Act* of 1950 was a considerable extension of the *Natives Urban Areas Act*, released in 1923, 'setting aside […] particular areas for the sole ownership or occupation […] of particular race groups' (Davenport, Saunders, 378).[20] Hereupon, the people of South Africa were regionally separated according to their ethnic status. Under the *Group Areas Act* the government freely declared that formerly African or coloured areas should henceforth be occupied by whites only.[21] The clearances of Sophiatown and Cape Town's District Six were the most infamous examples of residential relocations.[22] Coloured and black inhabitants of these areas were forced to leave their homes and move to 'separate townships' (Worden, 108). Their houses were redecorated or replaced by new ones to meet the needs of white South Africans.[23]

In 1952 the government passed the *Native Laws Amendment Act* and the *Abolition of Passes and Documents Act* in order to cope with the influx of black workers into urban areas.[24] Albeit its name, the latter act actually extended already existing pass bills. Henceforth, Africans had to carry so-called 'reference books' (Mandela, 220) with them and they were seriously charged if they could not show these documents on demand.[25] Furthermore, Africans had to leave any city or town within three days.[26] If blacks wanted to live in an urban area they

> […] had to have been born in the town or to have worked continuously for the same employer for ten years, or for different employers for fifteen. (Ross, 119)

A further step towards the complete separation of racial groups was the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* of 1953. It 'stated that all races should have separate amenities […] and that these need not be of an equal quality' (Clark, Worger, 48).[27] Then '"Europeans Only" and "Non-Europeans Only" signs' (Boddy-Evans, http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsalaws.htm) were erected throughout South Africa.[28]

[20] Cf. Davenport, Saunders, 378.
[21] Cf. Mandela, 122.
[22] Cf. Clark, 64-65.
[23] Cf. Mandela, 153-156.
[24] Cf. Ross, 119.
[25] Cf. Mandela 220.
[26] Cf. Clark, Worger, 46.
[27] Cf. Clark, Worger, 48.
[28] Cf. Boddy-Evans, http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsalaws.htm.

In the same year apartheid engineers passed the *Bantu Education Act*, thereby adapting the South African school system to segregationist ideals. However, even before the implementation of Bantu education racial discrimination was palpable in African schooling.[29]

> The government spent ten times as much per capita on white students as on African students, and African classes were more than twice as large as white ones. Moreover, most teachers in African schools were far less qualified than the teachers in white schools; African teachers were paid less than Whites even when they did have the same qualifications; and they had to teach African schoolchildren from textbooks and to prepare for examinations that expressed the government's racial views. (Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1980, 458-500 referred to in Thompson, 197)

Under the *Bantu Education Act* formerly mission-run schools were to be controlled by the 'Native Affairs Department' (Mandela, 167). This was achieved by a gradual withdrawal of financial support.[30]

Bantu education had devastating consequences for all non-white South Africans. Throughout the apartheid era the levels of education deteriorated dramatically among the African population.[31] The poor schooling they received was meant to prepare them for their inferior position in society. According to H.F. Verwoerd, former Minister of Native Affairs[32],

> education "must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life." […] Africans did not and would not have any opportunities, therefore, why educate them?" There is no place for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour […]" […]. In short, Africans should be trained to be menial workers, to be in a position of perpetual subordination to the white man. (H.F. Verwoerd quoted in Mandela, 167)

In 1959 the *University Education Act* entrenched racial segregation in universities. Under this bill non-white students were no longer allowed to study at 'white institutions of higher education, with few exceptions' (Clark, Worger, 51). Thus they could only attend tertiary educational facilities specially provided for them.[33]

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[29] Cf. Mandela, 166-167.
[30] Cf. Mandela, 166, 167.
[31] Cf. Ross, 121.
[32] Cf. Boddy-Evans, http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsalaws.htm.
[33] Cf. Clark, Worger, 51.

The *Promotion of Bantu Self- Government Act*, passed in 1959, built up on earlier residentially segregationist enactments like the *Natives' Land Act* (1913), the *Natives Urban Areas Act* (1923), and the *Group Areas Act* (1950). Under this bill African reserves, land assigned to Africans, were divided into 'eight (later extended to ten) distinct 'Bantu Homelands' […] each with a degree of self-government' (Worden, 124). Some of these 'Bantustans' (Worden, 125) were even granted 'independence' (Worden, 125). This homeland policy consolidated white political power in vast parts of the country as Africans were no longer perceived as citizens of South Africa.[34]

## 2.3. Apartheid Ideology and Religion

Religion became a vitally important cornerstone of the apartheid system, as it provided a moral justification of the social inequalities propagated by the Nationalist regime. On the basis of Christian doctrine racial superiority was interpreted as the will of God.

In the apartheid era numerous 'Christian churches' (Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm) fully adhered to segregationist politics and contributed to the consolidation of racial discrimination in South Africa by preaching party guidelines to their members.[35] Among them, the Dutch Reformed Church, whose presence in South Africa can be traced back to the beginnings of Dutch settlement in the Cape region, was the most influential religious community. It even 'came to be known as the "official religion" of the National Party' (Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm).[36] Being fully committed to the apartheid ideology, the Dutch Reformed Church openly sanctioned the implementation of racially discriminating laws claiming that it went along with God's great plan.[37]

> Their doctrines assert that God is eternal, infinite, wise, and just, and the Creator of the universe. He has planned the life and the fate of each individual on earth; the "chosen" are saved, as long as they adhere to the church's teachings. (Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm)

[34] Cf. Worden, 124-126.
[35] Cf. Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm.
[36] Cf. Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm.
[37] Cf. Mandela, 111.

Of course, God's elected people were - needless to say – white Afrikaners. Thus the congregation's concept of the '"community of the elect"' (Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm) clearly conformed to Afrikaners' notion of white predominance.

Nevertheless, religious indoctrination clearly failed to convince the masses and thus government officials and church leaders faced increasing numbers of fervent anti-apartheid activists. The religious justifications and explanations only intensified the black struggle for racial equality.[38]

Organised clerical opposition came from the 'South African Council of Churches (SACC)' (Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm). 'Under the leadership of Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the 1980s, the SACC' (Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm) started a defiance campaign against the government and launched several anti-apartheid demonstrations.[39]

## 2.4. Resistance to Apartheid and its Violent Suppression

### 2.4.1. Organised Black Resistance to Apartheid

Right from the beginning of its implementation apartheid legislation met with widespread resistance from Africans who forfeited most of their basic rights and whose social, economic and educational status was highly threatened. They united in their mutual attempt to override the apartheid regime and joined demonstrations, riots, and mass boycotts. However, every act of civil disobedience or commotion was fiercely punished and followed by the introduction of even more suppressive laws.[40]

In 1950 Nationalist officials enacted the *Suppression of Communism Act*, which officially forbade collaboration with the communist party. However, it soon 'included all opposition to apartheid' (Worden, 109).[41]

[38] Cf. Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm.
[39] Cf. Byrnes, http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm.
[40] Cf. Clark, Worger, 53.
[41] Cf. Worden, 109-110.

> According to the statutes of the Suppression of Communism Act, virtually anyone who opposed the government in any way could be defined as – and therefore convicted of - being a "statutory" Communist, even without ever having been a member of the party. (Mandela, 138)

Together with the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* of 1953 and the *Riotous Assemblies Act* of 1956 the *Suppression of Communism Act* put a provisional end to organised anti- apartheid resistance and it imposed harsh measures of censorship and draconian punishment.[42]

Under the *Public Safety Act*, enacted in 1953, and the *General Laws Amendment Act*, implemented in 1963, the apartheid regime, most notably its executive force, the police, assumed considerable power to tackle black opposition. Henceforth, the government could 'declare a state of emergency and suspend all laws if […] public safety […] or public order' (Clark, Worger, 56) were no longer ensured. Besides, resistance fighters could be arrested for three months 'without charging them and without allowing them access to a lawyer' (Clark, Worger, 58). [43]

However, despite increasingly repressive laws and severe punishment, African opposition to apartheid never weakened. In fact it grew steadily and finally it led to the ultimate downfall of apartheid and effected the transition towards majority rule in South Africa.

The origins of anti-apartheid black resistance can be traced back to the creation 'of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC, renamed the African National Congress in 1923)' (Clark, Worger, 23) in 1912. They demanded the end of racist legislation and called for public protests and strikes.[44]

> We [the ANC leaders Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela] explained that we thought the time had come for mass action along the lines of Ghandi's nonviolent protests in India and the 1946 passive resistance campaign, asserting that the ANC had become too docile in the face of oppression. (Mandela, 113-114)

[42] Cf. Clark, Worger, 57; Worden, 110.
[43] Cf. Clark, Worger, 56, 58.
[44] Cf. Clark, Worger, 23, 25.

In the beginning ANC activists followed a strategy of peaceful resistance. Therefore they initiated a '[d]efiance [c]ampaign' (Clark, Worger, 55), which called for public disobedience, non- cooperation and demonstrations and led to the arrests of vast numbers of activists.[45]

In 1953 ANC members joined the 'National Congress of the People' (Worden, 119) at Kliptown. Together with delegates of numerous other anti- apartheid organisations they set up an official document, the 'Freedom Charter' (Worden, 119), which declared their central aims and principles.[46]

> It [the Freedom Charter] affirmed that South Africa belonged to all its inhabitants, black and white. It demanded a non- racial, democratic system of government, an equal protection for all people before the law. It also urged the nationalisation of the banks, mines and heavy industry, as well as land redistribution. Finally, it sought equal work and educational opportunities, and the removal of restrictions on domestic and family life. It was avowedly non-racial. (Davenport, Saunders, 404)

During the late 1950s conflicts arose within the ANC due to a perceived lack of progress in their struggle against the apartheid regime. As a consequence more radical activists left the organisation and founded 'the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) […] in 1959' (Worden, 120).[47]

In 1960 the PAC initiated mass demonstrations against the pass laws. However, what was meant as a non-violent protest against apartheid legislation dramatically escalated in a wave of violence and became known as the Sharpeville massacre.[48]

> In the early afternoon, a crowd of several thousand surrounded the police station. The demonstrators were controlled and unarmed. The police force of seventy-five was greatly outnumbered and panicky. No one heard warning shots or an order to shoot, but suddenly, the police opened fire on the crowd and continued to shoot as the demonstrators turned and ran in fear. When the area had cleared sixty- nine Africans lay dead, most of them shot in the back as they were fleeing. (Mandela, 238)

[45] Cf. Clark, Worger, 55.
[46] Cf. Worden, 119.
[47] Cf. Clark, Worger, 57.
[48] Cf. Worden, 121.

The brutal break up of the demonstration in Sharpeville proved peaceful opposition an ineffective weapon in the struggle to end racial discrimination in South Africa. Hence, ANC and PAC leaders proposed more radical measures to overthrow the increasingly oppressive apartheid government. Nelson Mandela, proclaimed

> […] that the time for passive resistance had ended, that non-violence was a useless strategy and could never overturn a white minority regime bent on retaining its power at any costs. […] [V]iolence was the only weapon that would destroy apartheid and we [the African people] must be prepared, in the near future, to use that weapon. (Mandela, 157)

The Sharpeville shootings sparked a wave of protest over vast parts of South Africa. The government swiftly reacted by declaring a 'state of emergency' (Ross, 131) and by making any cooperation with the ANC and PAC illegal. As a result these organisations formed militant underground units, '*Umkonto we Sizwe* (the Spear of the Nation, or MK) and *Poqo* (Pure)' (Ross, 131), to pursue their political aims[49]. Whereas the former military group attacked governmental facilities, the latter was more radical and therefore engaged in murdering apartheid officials, white fellow citizens, and people who were regarded as possible collaborators of the regime.[50]

However, police forces intervened and managed to break up both underground organisations. Hence numerous ANC and PAC leaders left the country, while many of those who stayed in South Africa were taken into custody, among them, Nelson Mandela, 'leader of the ANC' (Mandela, 487), who faced a life imprisonment on Robben Island.[51]

Facing mounting black opposition the apartheid state set up special forces 'many secret – to co-ordinate security and intelligence matters' (Clark, Worger, 77- 78) in the early 1960s.[52] This intensification of governmental powers was sanctioned by Balthazar Johannes Vorster, whose strong arm tactics gained him the position as Prime Minister.[53]

[49] Cf. Ross, 131.
[50] Cf. Worden, 129-130.
[51] Cf. Ross, 131.
[52] Cf. Clark, Worger, 77-78.
[53] Cf. Ross, 139-140.

By arresting ANC and PAC leaders the government silenced these anti- apartheid organisations. However, resistance was by no means overcome as mounting opposition came from Black South African students under the leadership of Steve Biko.[54]

The massive student revolts of the late 1960s and 1970s clearly proved that Bantu Education had totally failed to educate young Africans to readily accept their inferior status in apartheid society. On the contrary, the black youth grew increasingly bitter and disillusioned with their schooling. They strongly felt barred from any improvements of their conditions and refused to accept 'that they were inferior, lesser human beings' (Clark, Worger, 74). [55] They thus united in their struggle to put an end to white dominance in South Africa and founded 'the all-black South African Students' Organisation (SASO)' (Worden, 131) and 'the University Christian Movement' (Worden, 131), which acted along the lines of 'Black Consciousness' (Worden, 131).[56]

Black Consciousness was strongly inspired by the American Civil Rights Movement.[57] It praised black self- assertion and required Africans as well as people from other ethnic categories who experienced severe hardship under apartheid to take matters into their own hands. Besides, mental liberation was a vital aspect.[58]

> […] [B]lacks must first liberate themselves from the sense of psychological inferiority bred by three centuries of white rule. Only then could the people rise up in confidence and truly liberate themselves from repression. (Mandela, 486)

The Black Consciousness Movement attracted increasing numbers of staunch supporters. The government reacted to this development by declaring 'Black Consciousness organi[s]ations' (Worden, 133) illegal and by strengthening police powers.[59] It amended the *Terrorism Act* 'enabling him [the Minister of

[54] Cf. Ross, 141.
[55] Cf. Clark, Worger, 73-74, 76.
[56] Cf. Worden, 131.
[57] Cf. Ede, http://www.nigeriansinamerica.com/articles/26/1/The-Black-Consciousness-Movement-in-South-African-Literature/Page1.html.
[58] Cf. Davenport, Saunders, 436-437.
[59] Cf. Worden, 133.

Police] to detain suspects in solitary confinement, at will, for as long as they [the security forces] deemed it necessary' (Davenport, Saunders, 448).[60]

However, despite these aggravated circumstances, thousands of young Africans marched through Soweto in 1976 protesting against 'be[ing] taught in Afrikaans' (Ross, 142).[61] Since Afrikaans was perceived as the language of the oppressors its introduction in African schooling aroused strong sentiments.[62] The police handled the crowds with unduly harshness causing the deaths of many blacks.[63] According to Kane- Berman about 700 people lost their lives in the uprisings 'between June 1976 and October 1977' (Davenport, Saunders, 453).[64]

The apartheid regime finally crushed the Black Consciousness Movement using violent measures and intensified suppression. Steve Biko, head of the resistance campaign, was arrested and died 'while under police detention in 1977' (Worden, 133). Some of his comrades were charged 'under the Terrorism Act' (Davenport, Saunders, 437) and sent to prison. [65]

> If African resistance could not be combated through separation, education or impoverishment, then the government would simply kill or imprison anyone who spoke out. (Clark, Worger, 77)

This demonstration of state power appealed to the white electorate and gained the National Party a clear majority in Parliament.[66] Nevertheless, the crushing of the Soweto risings represented a turning point in modern South African history. It provoked stiffening resistance from the subaltern races, thereby foreshadowing apartheid's final downfall.[67]

[60] Cf. Davenport, Saunders, 448.
[61] Cf. Ross, 142.
[62] Cf. Davenport, Saunders, 449.
[63] Cf. Ross, 142-143.
[64] Cf. Davenport, Saunders, 453.
[65] Cf. Davenport, Saunders, 437, 453-454.
[66] Cf. Davenport, Saunders, 454.
[67] Cf. Worden, 135.

### 2.4.2. International Resistance to Apartheid

Right from the beginning of their implementation apartheid policies were heavily criticised by many other nations. However, international opposition strongly stiffened as the world became increasingly aware of the sheer brutality this repressive government used to consolidate its power.[68]

In 1966, in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre, the United Nations '*[c]ondemn[ed]* the policies of apartheid […] as a crime against humanity' (http:// www.anc.org.za/un/undocs1b.html ) and thus set up a 'programme of action' (http:// www.anc.org.za/un/undocs1b.html) to put an end to human rights violations and racial discrimination in South Africa. Its main concern were strict trade embargoes which were generally perceived as the only effective means for achieving deracialisation.[69]

Throughout the early phases of apartheid the South African economy had greatly benefited from the ensured availability of a cheap and pliable workforce.[70] However, mounting black opposition to the repressive system increasingly unsettled international investors. They perceived their investments threatened and thus they started to draw their money out of the country, thereby weakening the South African economy.[71]

## 2.5. The Fall of Apartheid and the Transition towards Democracy

By 1978 Verwoerd's concept of apartheid had proved ineffective in maintaining white supremacy and prosperity in South Africa.[72] Facing new waves of non-white unrest and international embargoes P.W. Botha, the newly assigned Prime Minister, proposed a set of adaptations in the early 1980s. His reform programme, 'known as 'total strategy'' (Worden, 139) was a twofold approach to restore order. On the one hand, it aimed at a liberalisation of the apartheid legislation in order to please the riotous masses. Thus some segregationist laws such as the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* were repealed and political

[68] Cf. Clark, Worger, 4-5.
[69] Cf. http:// www.anc.org.za/un/undocs1b.html.
[70] Cf. Clark, Worger, 63.
[71] Cf. Clark, Worger, 72, 94-95, 100.
[72] Cf. Worden, 137.

rights were granted to coloureds and Indians. Africans, however, were still denied any participation in the public decision-making process. On the other hand, Botha's reforms, relying on state repression of anti- apartheid resistance, increased the power of the army and secret police units.[73] Hence state sanctioned violence rose dramatically throughout the late 1970s and 1980s.[74]

> Between 1979 and 1983 the South African government in the form of the South African Police and SADF [South African Defence Force] was responsible for at least 30-40 assassinations […], many more failed attempts […], dozens more abductions (many ending in the murder of the victims once in South Africa), and thousands more deaths as a result of raids and other military operations carried out deep into Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. (Clark, Worger, 81-82)

Botha's half-hearted attempt to reform the apartheid system clearly failed. Instead of quelling anti-apartheid opposition it rather provoked renewed mass demonstrations. In this period of massive upheaval the 'United Democratic Front' (Ross, 170) was formed. It was an umbrella organisation of numerous anti-apartheid groups and trade unions, the latter experiencing a huge rise in the numbers of staunch supporters in the 1980s. The UDF was based on charterism and thus it strictly opposed Botha's renewed version of apartheid.[75] It organised mass mobilisation and it launched several 'bus and rent boycotts, school protests and worker stayaways' (Worden, 146).[76]

In order to resolve the conflicts Botha even suggested freeing Nelson Mandela from Robben Island, given that he '"unconditionally rejected violence as a political instrument"' (Mandela, 521). Mandela, however, did not accept this tempting offer claiming that 'we [the Africans] were only responding to the violence done to us' (Mandela, 521). Furthermore, he emphasised that there was no freedom for Africans in apartheid society.[77]

In the mid-1980s social tensions culminated in an escalation of popular violence after officers had shot and killed about twenty people at a burial 'in the Eastern Cape' (Clark, Worger, 92).[78] Henceforth, 'necklacing[s]' (Clark, Worger, 92)

[73] Cf. Ross, 163-165; Worden, 138-139.
[74] Cf. Clark, Worger, 82.
[75] Cf. Clark, 91; Ross, 169-170.
[76] Cf. Worden, 146.
[77] Cf. Mandela, 521-523.
[78] Cf. Clark, Worger, 92.

caused the deaths of dozens over dozens of apartheid stakeholders. The government swiftly reacted to these outbursts of unleashed brutality by declaring a state of emergency which gained the security forces almost unlimited control. They were allowed to [79]

> arrest people without warrants and to detain them indefinitely without charging them or even allowing lawyers or next of kin to be notified. (Clark, Worger, 93)

Besides, under the state of emergency media censorship was tightened in order to prevent news agencies from reporting about the chaotic and unfortunate circumstances to the world. Moreover, the military was called in to deal with the township riots. Masses of suspected activists were arrested and 'tortured, with the most common methods used being beatings, electric shock and strangulation' (Clark, Worger, 93).[80] In 1987 security forces had successfully combated the riotous township youth.[81]

By the late 1980s coordinated opposition to 'total strategy' had caused Botha's reform to fail. Besides increasing demands for real reforms had been made by anti-apartheid activists and nations worldwide.[82]

International condemnation culminated in the 1980s and led to a series of embargoes. These had an utterly devastating effect on the South African economy. The apartheid state was on the verge of economic collapse.[83]

In 1989 F.W. de Klerk succeeded P.W. Botha as Prime Minister. He introduced fundamental political and social changes which had long been demanded by the masses. For instance, he unbanned leading anti- apartheid organisations like the ANC, the PAC, and many others and he freed prominent political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela from incarceration. After twenty- seven years of imprisonment Nelson Mandela was finally a free man again ready to negotiate with the authorities.[84]

[79] Cf. Clark, Worger, 92-93.
[80] Cf. Clark, Worger, 93.
[81] Cf. Worden, 149.
[82] Cf. Worden, 152.
[83] Cf. Worden, 154, 155.
[84] Cf. Ross, 182.

Besides, in 1991 de Klerk annulled numerous of apartheid's cornerstones like the *Population Registration Act* and the *Group Areas Act*. Instead he introduced the *Abolition of Racially Based Measures Act*, which formally ended racially repressive legislation in South Africa.[85]

> ON DECEMBER 20, 1991, after more than a year and a half of talks about talks, the real talks began: CODESA – the Convention for a Democratic South Africa – represented the first formal negotiations forum between the government, the ANC, and other South African parties. (Mandela, 594)

However, South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy was by no means a smooth and peaceful process. On the contrary, while the negotiations were going on levels of violence remained high.[86]

In the end representatives of the ANC and the National Party agreed that South Africa should democratically elect its new government. Thus Nationalists had finally given in to majority rule. The new 'Government of National Unity' (Ross, 190) should be formed by those political fractions which gain more than '5 per cent of the vote' (Ross, 190). '[A] two-thirds majority would be needed to write the constitution.' (Ross, 190).[87]

In April 1994 South Africans, regardless of their racial background, went to the polls and elected their first truly democratic government. Almost twenty million people cast their votes. The ANC gained '62.65 per cent of the vote, […] but not enough to allow it to write the constitution on its own' (Ross, 195). A month later Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as newly assigned president of South Africa.[88]

> We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender, and other discrimination. Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another…. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement. Let freedom reign. God bless Africa! (Mandela, 620-621)

[85] Cf. Ross, 185.
[86] Cf. Ross, 189.
[87] Cf. Ross, 190.
[88] Cf. Ross, 194-197.

## 2.6. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

### 2.6.1. TRC - Objectives

Whenever a nation undergoes the transition from a repressive totalitarian regime to a democratic state the people have to come to terms with their sordid past.[89] The new government simply cannot start afresh without pondering about how to deal with perpetrators of the former administration, how to compensate for mental and physical human suffering, and how to reconcile formerly discriminated social groups. Besides, the new society has to critically analyse the dynamics and principles of the overthrown system in order to keep human rights violations and repression from happening again.[90] Facing these difficult challenges nations have pursued different paths. South Africa, however, sought to 'look […] the beast of the past in the eye' and thus following the examples of other countries it set up a truth commission by official decree.

In 1995, following the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as democratically elected President of South Africa, the post- apartheid government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) under the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act*.[91] Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu this commission was appointed to investigate apartheid atrocities in order to advance social healing.[92]

Truth was regarded as the key to reunification and social healing. Hence the commission's 'most straightforward objective […] [was] sanctioned fact-finding' (Hayner, 24).[93] The information gathered during the investigation process was then publicly presented in a final report.[94]

### 2.6.2. TRC- Approaching Truth and Reconciliation

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission consisted of three committees, each focusing on a different objective. The *Human Rights Violations Committee,* for instance, investigated and reported about human rights abuses

[89] Cf. Hayner, 4-5.
[90] Cf. Hayner, 6, 154.
[91] Cf. Hayner, 41.
[92] Cf. Bundy, 16; Hayner, 41.
[93] Cf. Hayner, 30.
[94] Cf. Hayner, 44.

'committed between 1960 and April 1994' (Hayner, 43). More than '21,000' (Hayner, 42) people testified before the committee giving detailed accounts of their suffering. The *Amnesty Committee*, on the other hand, considered more than 'seven thousand applications for amnesty' (Hayner, 43). Under the provision of the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act* the committee was empowered to grant amnesty to apartheid perpetrators who fully revealed their cruel deeds. Of course, amnesty was only offered for politically sanctioned crimes. Thus perpetrators who failed to show credibly that their crimes committed were neither arbitrary nor merely racially motivated were not given this chance of evading 'criminal prosecution' (Davenport, Saunders, 693).[95]

> For gross violations of human rights […], the applicant was required to appear in a public hearing to answer questions from the commission, from legal counsel representing victims or their families, and directly from victims themselves. (Hayner, 43)

The *Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee* formulated a plan of action to materialise human suffering. It sought for a compensation of experienced trauma and personal losses and aimed at improving the living conditions of those who were unduly tortured or imprisoned.[96]

The testimonies of victims and perpetrators attracted public attention in South Africa and all over the world. 'Media coverage of the commission was intense […]' (Hayner, 42)[97]

> Now that people are able to tell their stories, the lid of the Pandora's box is lifted; for the first time these individual truths sound unhindered in the ears of all South Africans. (Krog, 68)

Under extreme psychological stress victims and witnesses talked about the hardship they had endured. However, albeit the horror and psychological stress stirring up painful memories caused, it finally brought emotional relief.[98]

[95] Cf. Hayner, 41-44, 99.
[96] Cf. Hayner, 41-42.
[97] Cf. Hayner, 42.
[98] Cf. Hayner, 2, 28.

### 2.6.3. TRC- Criticism

Although the TRC was generally acclaimed for giving those silenced by the apartheid regime an opportunity to air their grievances, its contribution to nation building and especially its modus operandi provoked widespread criticism.[99] According to Alexander the commission's fundamental shortcoming was its limited scope. By focussing solely on '‹‹gross human rights violations››' (Alexander, 144 'my translation') the TRC failed to investigate apartheid as an all-pervasive repressive system.[100] This victim-and-perpetrator- centred approach

> […] freed the many beneficiaries of apartheid from responsibility and obliterated the reality of structural violence of racial laws for millions of victims […]. (Adam, Adam, 34)

Hayner raises the same point arguing that the hardship caused by racist legislation, like for example the *Group Areas Act* was not acknowledged by the commission. Hence thousands of South Africans were actually excluded from the fact- finding process.[101] Besides, Hayner blames the TRC for totally underestimating crimes committed against women.[102]

> [T]he definition of gross violation of human rights adopted by the Commission resulted in a blindness to the types of abuse predominantly experienced by women. (TRC, vol.4 sec. 144 p.318 referred to in Hayner, 78)

Mamdani, too, critically addresses the TRC's narrowed scope. However, he takes a more radical stance assuming that the commission's work was still strongly influenced by apartheid principles. He states that 'the TRC considered as a gross violation only that which was a gross violation under the laws of apartheid […]' (Mamdani, 60).[103]

Another aspect which was widely debated was the cathartic effect of the commission's investigations. Critics emphasise that the majority of deponents did not gain any emotional relief in the hearings. On the contrary, they rather

[99] Cf. Hayner, 28.
[100] Cf. Alexander, 144-145.
[101] Cf. Hayner, 73.
[102] Cf. Hayner, 78.
[103] Cf. Mamdani, 60.

experienced re- traumatisation. [104] However, this harmful effect was also observed among '[s]taff and commissioners […] and sometimes journalists' (Hayner, 6). After listening to most horrid testimonies many of them suffered from enormous mental strains.[105]

> 'It is difficult to interpret victim hearings, […] because you use the first person all the time. I have no distance when I say "I" … it runs through me with I.' (Krog, 195)

Despite all its efforts towards reconciliation and social healing, the TRC failed to satisfy the expectations of many South Africans. Thousands of victims felt betrayed as they watched their victimisers evading criminal prosecution. Their frustration even increased as the announced reparations for experienced damages were not provided.[106]

[104] Cf. Daley, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res =9807E5D8173CF934A25754C0A961958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=1.
[105] Cf. Hayner, 6.
[106] Cf. Adam, Adam, 41; Hayner, 3, 12, 101.

# 3. South African Narratives of Childhood

Taking into account recent works of South African fiction like Jo-Anne Richards' *The Innocence of Roast Chicken*, Mark Behr's *Smell of Apples*, Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story*, J.M. Coetzee's autobiographical text, *Boyhood*, or the Novels of Pamela Jooste one may well argue that narratives of childhood have become a major preoccupation of post- apartheid novelists.[107] Priebe even goes a step further proclaiming the emergence of a new literary genre within the context of African fiction. He introduces the term "Childhoods" (Priebe, 41) to refer to texts like the ones mentioned above. What these narratives have in common is a shared interest in identity construction and the transition from childhood to adulthood. They

> deal with the struggle and process of negotiating and finding a sense of identity in the midst of multiple linguistic, ethnic and cultural possibilities within the protagonist's community and even his or her family. (Priebe, 44)

Priebe further elaborates on the parallelism of the protagonists' coming of age and the development of the nation state. Hence considering South African narratives of childhood we may infer that the child's growing up is meant to reflect the country's development from a racist totalitarian regime to a democratic and colour-blind society. Thus the protagonists' quest for a stable identity reflects the nation's struggle to redefine itself. [108]

However, interestingly most "Childhoods" (Priebe, 41) are written by white authors. The number of similar works by black novelists like, for instance, Mark Mathabane's *Kaffir Boy* is far smaller. Besides, most of the "Childhoods" (Priebe, 41) by white authors focus on the identity formation and the growing up of white protagonists. The novels of Pamela Jooste, however, are somewhat exceptional in this respect as they also concentrate on characters from subaltern, unprivileged and marginalised population groups. In her texts Pamela Jooste critically investigates the impact of the apartheid system on the formative years of children.

[107] Cf. Reckwitz, *Processings*, http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/britcult/DOFP3reckwitz.htm.
[108] Cf. Priebe, 41.

In general, childhood narratives, which are often written from a vantage point in time, allow authors to "show a future […] [they] imagine as well as a present and past […] [they] wish to improve" (Priebe, 41). This accounts for made- up texts as well as for autobiographical ones.[109] These narratives thus display the determined attempt to deal with South Africa's sordid past.[110]

Furthermore, in numerous "Childhoods (Priebe, 41)" the plot is revealed through the eyes of a child narrator. On the one hand, this narrative strategy allows the reader to identify more closely with the protagonist. On the other hand, however, it is frequently employed to dismantle the abhorrence of the apartheid system and to confess white complicity and responsibility for atrocities committed under apartheid. Nevertheless, white child narrators are freed from the burden of seeking forgiveness as they are generally accepted as victims of their times.[111] Richards, however, seriously doubts this readily assigned innocence. She emphasises that white children benefited from the privileges granted to white South Africans and therefore their involvement and complicity must not be denied.[112]

As for Jooste's coming-of-age novels, much of her work is written from a child's point of view. In an interview with Serge Breysse the author comments on the great narrative potential of having the plot recounted by young narrators and explains her choice of a juvenile perspective as follows:

> […] I like the perspective of the child. I specifically wanted my first book to be from a child's point of view because she was old enough to observe everything around her but she was too young to be politicised. […] She had no political point of view. She was simply a siphon through which everything came and that left the reader free to have a point of view about what was happening. (Breysse, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-337.html)

[109] Cf. Priebe, 41.
[110] Cf. Lehmann, http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/britcult/DOFP3lehmann.htm.
[111] Cf. Heyns, 50.
[112] Cf. Heyns, 52-53.

In her overall review on *Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter* Carolyn Bassett critically analyses Pamela Jooste's choice of a coloured child narrator. Yet, quite in contrast to critics like Zimitri Erasmus, she does not shed doubt on the author's good intentions and qualifies previous reviews which suggest the notion of Jooste being utterly arrogant and impertinent and which even surmise that her mode of narration reflects subtle racist tendencies.[113]

According to Bassett 'Jooste made a very risky political choice to write in a 'Coloured' voice' (Bassett, http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=3771). Being white herself, her writing from a non-white perspective may utterly lack authenticity and the author may consciously or unconsciously resort to apartheid discourses and imbue the narrative with white-washed concepts and ideas.

On the other hand, Bassett clearly qualifies the criticism expressed by Erasmus and others praising Jooste's contribution to inter-cultural understanding in South Africa. By taking on the voice of a coloured child, this '[…] white woman took it upon herself to explain to other whites what apartheid 'really' meant to the Coloured community' (Bassett, http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=3771). Bassett thus clearly suggests that Jooste's daring approach renders her account of the other truth even more compelling to her white audience. Being told by someone from the same socio-ethnic background that hardship and suffering was unjustly inflicted on others, makes it almost impossible for readers of the formerly dominant group to evade and shrug off bitter accusations.[114]

Rosamund Metcalf is far more radical and despiteous in her critique of Jooste's debut novel. According to her, *Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter* is all but an authentic and galvanising account of what it meant to live on the other end of the colour bar under apartheid. On the contrary, Metcalf regards Jooste's narrative as a 'rose-coloured […] vision of life in the coloured community' (Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html) which is intended to 'provide a positive feel-good factor for white […] [readers]' (Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html). The critic, therefore, clearly and unambiguously accuses the author of debilitating and

[113] Cf. Bassett, http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=3771.
[114] Cf. Bassett, http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=3771.

manipulating the voice of the other- her fake realistic depiction being aimed at comforting former apartheid beneficiaries.[115]

Jooste somewhat seems to have anticipated the sharp criticism her debut feature was about to provoke. In the author's note she explains that she is '[…] aware that there may be some people who feel it is the height of impertinence for a white South African to write about the suffering of so-called 'coloured' people' (DWAPMD, 11). Yet, she all the more emphasises the irresistible urge she felt to write the story down. On the one hand, Jooste claims that '[if] a writer feels strongly enough about a subject then that writer must go ahead and say what he has to say' (DWAPMD, 11) regardless of how interfering or inappropriate others may consider his attempt. On the other hand, she quite rightly states that though her narrative is purely fictitious, the events recounted in the story were experienced by real people. As a matter of fact natives were treated harshly and unjustly and the living conditions of non-whites deteriorated irrevocably in times of racist legislation. Jooste thus felt morally prompted to put their grievances down on paper.

Besides, she justifies her decision to write about the sorrow and suffering of another people foregrounding her precious childhood memories. We learn that Jooste's formative years were enriched to a large extent by the unforgettable experiences she had with individuals classified as non-whites and it is exactly these personalities she makes come alive and pays tribute to in her first novel.

> Mine was a special childhood largely because it was peopled by the same kind of characters I have tried to recreate on these pages but it was not my lot to suffer the pain of discrimination […] (DWAPMD, 13)
>
> I have done my best to tell what I felt needed to be told and to tell it with tenderness and respect for those people who endured such great suffering. (DWAPMD, 13)

Nevertheless, albeit Jooste's attempts to ward off criticism and to allay concerns about her thematic choice, in a historiographic way, her narrative can be interpreted as reflecting neo-colonialist tendencies. By writing about the pain and sorrow of non-whites, her story may inevitably be imbued with stereotypes.

[115] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.

Besides, Jooste seems to unjustly claim a stake to the truth and to deprive natives of the right to tell their own life stories.

# 4. The Novels of Pamela Jooste: An Introduction

## 4.1. Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter (DWAPMD)

In her much acclaimed, award-winning, first novel Pamela Jooste provides a vivid account of coloured life in the Cape Valley during apartheid's heyday. Taking on the voice of 11-year-old Lily Daniels, she explores how racially imbued enactments of the 1950ies such as the Group Areas Act or the Population Registration Act impacted on hundreds of families.

Central to the story are the infamous slum clearances, the forced removal and relocation of non-whites in the Cape region. Lily's family too is pressured to give up their Valley home and move to the Flats, frequently referred to as apartheid's dumping ground. However, as the novel clearly reveals, these government enforcements meet with growing opposition from the subaltern side. Women like Gloria, Lily's politically active yet otherwise absent mother, refuse to suffer silently and publicly air their grievances instead.

For instance, as more and more coloured people are bulldozed into abandoning their homes, Gloria organises a peaceful 20 miles march from the Valley to the Flats. Her plan is successful and what starts out as a walk of women carrying along Mrs Elias belongings 'so [that] people along the way […] will know what's […] being done to [them]' (DWAPMD, 247) soon attracts a growing crowd of spectators and supporters. However, the group also captures the police's meticulous attention and thus they are stopped and questioned, but may march on afterwards.

The women are well aware that they can neither stop the destruction of their Valley nor put an end to the injustice and inhumanity done to their families. But still, they take the risk of being prosecuted or punished and join this protest rally. On their way they burst into 'simple old songs […] [they] all know' (DWAPMD, 254), they dance and enjoy themselves, thereby regaining their dignity and self-respect. Besides, they seem to develop a communal sense of self. In a fictional way, Jooste thus perceptively demonstrates that 'anti-apartheid organisations and movements were important agents of identity construction' (Zegeye, 4).

Nonetheless, as the author's debut novel unfalteringly shows, the establishment ruthlessly enforced compliance with apartheid policies. Any form of non-conformity, disobedience or open protest thus incurred the regime's dangerous wrath and the lives of dissidents and their families were henceforth dominated by pain and sorrow.

Lily's personal development and coming-of-age too are strongly impacted by her mother's active involvement in the anti-apartheid movement. For instance, when the girl is still little, Gloria deserts the family and goes to Johannesburg to seek a better life. Henceforward Lily stays with Grandmother Daniels, her psychological parent, and her unmarried aunt Stella. Her mother, who is strongly missed in the beginning and later on reproached with letting her down and therefore loathed, is only present in pictures neatly kept in the family photo album.

Yet, when the bulldozers are just about to roll on and raze the Valley to the ground, Gloria returns to prevent the destruction of their home. It is quite astonishing though that Lily does not perceive the reunion with her mother as the fulfilment of her dearest, deepest wish, but is rather shocked and deeply irritated by her unexpected presence. All of a sudden moral values and dictums collide as Grandmother Daniels and Gloria hold totally opposing views on what is going on in the country. Whereas the former seems to be deeply discouraged after decades of white domination and disempowerment remaining passive and hesitant, the latter is determined to stand up to the establishment and fight injustice.

Lily is thus somewhat torn between her grandmother and her mother. She has long relied on the former's explanations and advice and finds it hard to warm to the latter's perception of reality. Yet, throughout the novel the relationship between mother and daughter improves and Lily eventually begins to understand Gloria's motives.

Another formative event in the girl's life is her taking leave of her family and home country. As the political situation exacerbates, Gloria and James, Lily's assumed father, decide to send their daughter abroad. The girl should henceforth stay with her homosexual uncle Errol in Southampton far away from socio-political unrest and enjoy a wide range of opportunities in life. However, due to

Gloria's prominent role in the Black Sash, a non-violent resistance organisation predominantly run by white women, Lily is not issued a passport. She is only allowed to travel on an 'exit permit' (DWAPMD, 319). This document, however, only entitles the girl to leave the country, but not to enter it again. Her leaving South Africa is thus permanent and marks Lily's eventual transition from childhood to adulthood.

Hence, as far as thematic patterns are concerned, Jooste already displays her central preoccupation with female resistance and subversive tactics in her very first novel. Like in her later narratives, *Like Water in Wild Places* and *Frieda and Min*, she predominantly focuses on women's efforts and contributions to the anti-apartheid struggle juxtaposing their active and fiery involvement to men's hesitation and lack of commitment. Jooste thus rightly emphasises the necessity for females to act on their unshakable beliefs. As Gloria explains quite plainly, '[i]f the men will not stand up for what's right and show that we're sick and tired of being pushed around then it's up to the women […]' (DWAPMD, 240).

Besides, the author perceptively illuminates the often devastating consequences the unflinching courage of female revolutionaries triggered for themselves and their loved ones. Recounting the events from a child's perspective makes the whole narrative particularly effective. Due to Lily's emotional and detailed yet unpoliticised depiction the lives and personalities of the people featuring the story appear particularly vivid and touching.

As for the novel's narrative structure, much of the plot is revealed through the correspondence between Lily and her 'Rosedale Primary School penfriend' (DWAPMD, 30), Carole-Amelia Lombard. The two coeval yet unlike girls get to know each other via a school project aimed at reducing reservations and prejudices among different social groups. However, whereas Lily and Carole-Amelia are prepared to share their personal experience gaining an insight into what it means to grow up on the other side of the colour bar, their parents or rather the latter's mother in particular are not all too pleased with their daughter's contact. On the contrary, Mrs Lombard is absolutely furious about the other truths her precious Carole-Amelia is confronted with and does not want her to get a wrong impression of reality- meaning the white upper-class construct of it. Thus she complains officially to the head teacher. She accuses Lily of telling lies

and requests an apology. Gloria, enraged by Mrs Lombard's impertinence, tells her daughter not to take a single word back. The parents' immediate and intolerant reactions fully dismantle entrenched views and an unreasonable opposition to open a constructive dialogue with other communities in the country. However, regardless of their mothers' disapproval, the girls stay in touch and even plan to meet up one day.

## 4.2. Frieda and Min (FAM)

In her second novel, *Frieda and Min*, Jooste clearly demonstrates her marked preference for contrastive character depiction. At the core of the narrative there are Frieda and Min, two unlike friends, who differ greatly in their basic personality traits, political convictions and aims in life, but who are bound together by the shared experience of personal loss.

Whereas the former, having a financially stricken yet otherwise intact family background, lacks a strong self-confidence and therefore tends to be easily silenced and overwhelmed by tangled situations, the latter, descending from a wealthy yet broken home, is unexpectedly self-assured and confident in her earnest striving for justice and egalitarianism. Frieda accurately describes the difference in their resoluteness when she says:

> There's one thing Min and I know about each other by now. She's the one who's never afraid of anything and I'm not. I will turn away from something and she will march towards it. Nothing frightens her. (FAM, 143)

The two glaringly different characters first meet when Min's mother, newly-wed, leaves her daughter to stay with Frieda's family henceforth. Initially, their relationship is all but close and intimate. Yet, throughout the novel the two outsiders, united in their hardship, form strong ties of friendship. Their relationship is even to sustain precarious situations and various challenges throughout the dark and dim apartheid years.

Interestingly, both girls are depicted as social outcasts, yet for different reasons. Min is raised pronouncedly pro-African by her father. She knows the indigenous language of native Africans and she learns about their spiritual way of life and mythology from her non-white teacher.

Besides, she adopts her father's utterly unbiased way of dealing with black fellow citizens. Having no reservations or prejudices against non-whites, the girl is dedicated to help and support the politically silenced and disempowered. Thus the 'white kaffir girl' (FAM, 109) in 'her old shorts and her boy's shirt and […] tyre tackies' (FAM, 63) sets out a dangerous path for herself that ultimately leads to a direct confrontation with the intolerant and hard-line apartheid regime.

As afore-mentioned, Frieda is also cast as an outsider. Born to poor Jewish parents, the young girl literally lives at the edge of society - meaning near an African township. Yet, the family's difficult financial situation is only a minor social stigma compared to their religious devotion. Thus in stark contrast to Min, whose entire life is massively influenced and complicated by her idealistic political convictions, Frieda's coming of age and personality formation are largely dominated by her spirituality.

Throughout the novel the reader is repeatedly reminded of the girl's Jewish devotion. Even though critics like Shirley Kossick may consider those insistent references unfavourably perceiving them as 'intrusive [or even] stereotyping' (Kossick, http://www.mg.co.za/articledirect.aspx?articleid=162124&area=%2farchives%2farchives__print_edition%2f), we have to acknowledge that they effectively illuminate Frieda's otherness.

Besides, the girl's Jewishness is frequently foregrounded as a formative aspect that rather retards her personal development. Suffering from the historic communal trauma of pogrom and subsequent diaspora that lead to cultural uprooting, Frieda is depicted as a generally weak and hesitant yet poignant character. Furthermore, she seems naïve and childishly ignorant. In complete contrast to Min she is blatantly apolitical. Instead of looking out for trouble trying to change the tenuous status quo, her aims are far more ordinary. All she wants is to marry a suitable husband.

Frieda eventually gets married to a Jewish man and future heir of great wealth. Yet, as the blue-eyed girl soon is to find out, her marriage is all sham and hypocrisy. Her errant husband entertains affairs and does not even bother to keep his escapades a secret. He even cheats on her on their wedding day.

As the plot unfolds, Frieda, who has long '[…] live[ed] in Cloud Cuckoo Land […] can't keep […] her head in the sand for ever […] [as things] happen to make […] [her] wake up (FAM, 185)'. First, her hopes for a happy marriage are irretrievably dashed, then Beauty, her maid, is arrested for protesting against pass laws, and thirdly, Min, the person she develops a deep emotional attachment to, finds herself in a serious predicament being imprisoned and treated harshly by apartheid stakeholders.

These incidents eventually prompt the young woman to summon up the strength to stand up for the ones that mean something to her. Thus the formerly all too easily awed and passive Frieda gets active and involved with the authorities. She helps Beauty and she uses all the influence and status she has obtained through her noble marriage to bring about Min's release.

Yet, the major turning point and most decisive event in Frieda's personal development is when she takes custody of her best friend's baby. Being denied the joy of having children of her own, she loves and cares for David as if he was her flesh and blood. In a way, motherhood gives a certain meaning to her existence or as she puts it herself: Min 'has given me a life' (FAM, 335).

In her overtly critical review on Jooste's novel Rosamund Metcalf argues that the author aims at romanticizing and allaying the grievances dominant under apartheid. Furthermore, she blames the novelist of whitewashing the country's recent and troubled past and of comforting white readers. She, therefore, reproaches Jooste with allowing former apartheid beneficiaries to abdicate their responsibility for all the hardship and suffering inflicted in the name of this racist ideology.[116]

According to Metcalf, Frieda's narrative clearly dwarfs Min's accounts. The reader is thus more likely to identify with the former protagonist as the latter character is somewhat silenced in the novel. 'Frieda is made funny and touching […], whereas Min […] is withdrawn, uncommunicative and a militant opponent of apartheid' (Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html).[117]

[116] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.
[117] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.

Metcalf's towering criticism may be well-grounded and just. Yet, taking into account Frieda's eventual metamorphosis, her reproaches seem to be somewhat weakened or even invalidated. By portraying the woman's shift in character from a passive and immature girl to a resolute and determined person who does not remain hesitant but decides to get involved with the repressive regime, Jooste takes a strong stand against any glorification and palliation of apartheid. We may further assume that Jooste's technique of character depiction and development adds to the general verisimilitude of her message.

As for the narrative structure of the novel, *Frieda and Min* consists of four major parts or books as they are called which cover decisive phases in the lives of the protagonists tracing their personal development. Starting with a short retrospective passage from the year 1998, the plot unfolds chronologically henceforth. The narrative starts in 1964 well before the two unlike girls meet for the first time and covers the years up to 1987 when the story ends with Min's eventual release and the long-sought reunion between mother and son. As for most of Jooste's novels, narrative points of view alternate throughout the storyline. Thus passages recounted by Min follow chapters narrated by Frieda.

## 4.3. Like Water in Wild Places (LWIWP)

Pamela Jooste's third novel, *Like Water in Wild Places*, is, in essence, the story of the lives and times of Beatrice Marie (Beeky) Hartmann and her brother Conrad, who are born into an old- established and noble white Afrikaner family. However, albeit living on the privileged side of apartheid's social continuum their growing up and their identity construction are by no means simple and easy processes. On the contrary, their formative years are overshadowed by socio-political changes in the nation state and their quest for a stable identity is burdened with an unresolved family conflict. Jack Hartmann, who is depicted as a brutal and oppressive father figure, dearly loves his son and openly despises his daughter. He beats his sensitive wife whom he wrongfully blames for having been unfaithful to him until she can no longer endure his violent outbursts and commits suicide. After this bereavement, having no loving mother to compensate for her father's deep- seated resentment, Beeky vigorously rejects her father and the system he is associated with. Conrad, on the other hand, constantly tries to

please his father longing for his appreciation. However, towards the very end of the novel Conrad, who has long tried to follow in his father's footsteps, eventually manages to emancipate himself from his overpowering influence.

In *Like Water in Wild Places* Pamela Jooste provides a vivid account of the fundamental changes the apartheid state faced towards the end of the twentieth century. Bearing on the strong interplay of the domestic and the political, represented in the novel, the Hartmann family is portrayed as a mirror image or microcosm of the broader macrocosm, the South African state and its society.

Conrad and Beeky's quest for identity as well as their political awakening certainly form the main plot of the novel. However, there are several narrative sub strands which tie in with the central story. On the one hand, the plot comprises numerous mythical Bushmen tales allowing the reader to get a better grasp of the indigenous cultures of South Africa. Besides, they shed doubt on entrenched beliefs of westernised communities and invite the reader to look at things from a different angle. Moreover, these mythical passages are an effective narrative tool used to anticipate subsequent events, to propose alternative ways of thinking, or simply to comfort the reader after extremely discomfiting and touching scenes. The latter aspect is particularly evident when Jack, enraged by the sight of Beeky sitting in the bathtub with her elder brother, brutally attacks his wife while the children are still listening and watching. Conrad, who is wholly overwhelmed by the situation, is extremely frightened and fears for his mother's life. This scene of tremendous anxiety is then followed by the parable of Hare and the Moon. Hence the Bushman tales seem to counterbalance the brutal atmosphere portrayed in the novel. Thus their function appears to be similar to that of Shakespeare's comic relief.

In addition to these mythical passages the novel contains chapters about Jerome's growing up which parallel and at some point even overlap with those about Conrad and Beeky's approaching maturity. Jerome repeatedly shows a certain tendency towards criminal behaviour. He starts his career stealing chewing gum in a shop and ironically this special class student aspires to a key position in the secret security branch. In the end it is his letter bomb that costs Beeky her life and thus breaks her resistance to the apartheid system.

Furthermore, chapters about the Old Madam, the ghost of a long diseased ancestor, add yet another dimension to the overall understanding of the narrative. The restless spirit of the great- granny informs about key events of the family history and thus represents a formal link to the past.

As far as narrative voice is concerned chapters about Conrad's personal development are mostly written from a first- person point of view enabling the reader to identify more closely with the protagonist. This also accounts for Beeky's letters to her brother. However, in most parts of the narrative an omniscient narrator reveals the plot. His presence is particularly palpable when he reports on the death of the Old Madam's traitorous son: 'Gone. Out of *our story* [my emphasis]. To keep company with the rest of them. The unsung, unquiet dead' (LWIWP[118], 149). The omniscient narrator gets even more prominently involved when he stands up for the Old Madam trying to absolve her from her personal responsibility[119]:

> *Allow me to plead for his mother* [my emphasis]. Boer woman that she is. A Crown subject, misplaced among strangers, she said so herself. Yearning for her home farm and her people […]. Let it be set down in her favour, considering she is destined to self- flagellate herself into becoming a guilt- ridden ghost […], that the custom of the country is not the custom of the human heart. (LWIWP, 151)

In terms of generic features Pamela Jooste's novel may be classified as a Bildungsroman. It portrays the protagonists' tedious journeys from childhood to adulthood which are overshadowed by the experience of trauma and violence. Yet, facing these challenges actually initiates the maturation process. Besides, their quest for a stable identity is marked by a constant tension between the individuals' values and the ideals of the establishment. Nevertheless, quite in contrast to genre conventions Jooste's protagonists do not fully conform to the authoritarian system as they reach maturity. On the contrary, Beeky breaks away from the constraints of apartheid society and vehemently opposes the established order.

[118] The abbreviation LWIWP stands for Like Water in Wild Places.
[119] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.

However, *Like Water in Wild Places* may also be analysed as a disenchanted adaptation of the South African farm novel. In general, this genre is marked by its determined attempt to morally legitimise the presence and predominance of whites in South Africa and their claims for power and property.[120]

*Like Water in Wild Places*, however, portraying the slow downfall of the apartheid system, refuses to fully conform to the afore-mentioned generic conventions. On the one hand, the portraits of early ancestors and the Old Madame's narrative inform about the efforts and the sacrifices accepted by previous generations to keep their possessions and to maintain their status. They thus prove the family's affinity to their land. On the other hand, though, their right to possess land which formerly belonged to the indigenous people of the country is highly criticised. The myth of the snake god reveals that a winding river keeps flowing underneath the Hartmann house 'stroking at the house's foundations, creeping up through the walls swelling the bricks' (LWIWP, 59). In an act of 'revenge' (LWIWP, 59) the water slowly, yet gradually, deconstructs the house, thereby eradicating the proof of white rootedness.

Besides, contrary to genre conventions, indigenous cultures play an important role throughout the novel. Bastiaan, the Bushman, who is entrusted with the task of helping Conrad to become a good and successful hunter, actually teaches him much more than his father might possibly expect. He introduces Conrad to the Khoisan mythology and encourages him to perceive the ways of the world differently. He thus has a profound influence on the young boy's spiritual and personal development.

## 4.4. People Like Ourselves (PLO)

In her fourth novel, *People Like Ourselves*, Pamela Jooste once again perceptively dramatises the awkward and complicated socio-economic situation of whites in the aftermath of political change in South Africa. As the old power relations crumble, apartheid's Sirs and Madams lose their previously sacrosanct privileges. Hit by this dramatic change in superior status, Jooste's protagonists face a severe identity crisis that urges them to redefine their concept of self. However, as in her previous novel, the younger generation openly embraces the

[120] Cf. Reckwitz, *Literature*, 28-29.

new times, whereas their parents, being collaborators of the old order, find it exceedingly hard to adapt to the altered conditions.

Though *Like Water in Wild Places* and *People Like Ourselves* may appear quite similar in terms of focus and general setup, the latter is pronouncedly darker in tone and social critique. It holds a mirror up to Johannesburg's upper class and challenges the reader to look behind false facades and to dismantle the true nature of a formerly glorified society. The picture Jooste draws is one of decay and incertitude. Elements of the old order rot and usher in the rise of a new spirit.

At the core of the plot are Julia, Kimmy, and Douglas Merchant as well as their friends, the Bannermans, all of them prototypical representatives of Johannesburg's social elite. However, as the novel reveals from the very beginning, there are dark clouds hanging over the protagonists' formerly idyllic lives. Just like in the outer macrocosm, which is the South African State in general and the white population in particular, things fall apart in the microcosm as well and thus the Merchants soon find themselves caught in a web of disappointed expectations and unfulfilled hopes.

Douglas, once director of a prosperous building company, is suddenly confronted with a generally tightened socio- economic situation and stiffening competition from pro-African businesses. Unable to fulfil his self-assigned role as bread-winner of the family paying for his wife and daughter's luxurious lifestyle, his ego gets seriously dented and together with the societal fall from superiority this causes a severe loss of face. Finding himself in a state of utmost despair and desperation, Douglas longs for his wife's solace and assistance, but he no longer seems to know the woman at his side. Julia has changed dramatically throughout the years of their marriage. The loving and adoring wife she used to be, who was ridiculously happy to snatch the left-overs from Rosalie's table, has somehow vanished along the way and all that is left is a nagging, demanding and inapproachable woman, who constantly reminds him of his personal failure. Thus overwhelmed by feelings of inferiority and shame, he indulges in the simple pleasures of life having several affairs with much younger and naive women, who take him as the long wished for prince charming.

Julia Merchant, on the other hand, contributes her share to the eventual break-up of her marriage. She is so deeply engaged in striving for absolute perfection in everyone and everything that she fails to realise how her vain and vigorous pursuit unsettles the ones she loves and consequently estranges herself from her family. She defines highly idealistic standards that neither her husband nor her daughter can live up to and even she herself struggles hard to meet her own demands. Her desperate attempts to adjust to the role she assigns for herself are made explicit by her repeated consultations of a plastic surgeon.

As expectations remain unfulfilled and hopes are continually disappointed, what may have seemed as a promising connection or even perfect match in the beginning soon turns out to be nothing more than a couple caught in constant fight over money and guilt. However, interestingly, this breakdown of the Merrimam and Merchant marriage is already anticipated by two unpleasant and tragic events overshadowing Julia and Douglas' wedding day. First, Lindiwe, the daughter of a maid, drowns in the pool with the Hydrangeas – an incident that fully displays the exuberant extravagance entertained by the white minority at the costs of blacks- and then a sudden storm spoils the meticulously planned garden party.

However, it is only towards the very end of the novel that the two rivalling partners stop fighting bitterly and eventually reconcile their differences. This sudden and completely unexpected turn in their relationship is particularly striking as it is brought about by a series of tragic events. Julia is diagnosed with a lump in her breast during one of her regular visits to doctor da Costa's surgery and Douglas experiences classic symptoms of a heart condition while staying at his lover's flat. Hence it once again reinforces Jooste's general perception of traumatic events as having a great potential to initiate change.

The ending of the novel, itself, may not fully satisfy the reader as it is open and does not foretell future developments. Yet, it all the more fits in with Jooste's doom- mongering. In *People Like Ourselves*, especially, she takes quite a pessimistic stand on the future situation of whites in contemporary South Africa. Their fate is depicted as being doubtful and ultimately unknown. Overwhelmed by imminent threats to their lives, Julia and Douglas decide to 'wait and see' (PLO, 335), which is anything but a determined and favourable reaction to their

declining fortunes. By not even attempting to get out of their miserable state, the couple knowingly put their fate into the hands of others. In the case of the Merchants, representing whites in modern South African society, their future success or downfall, as Jooste insinuates, greatly depends on the benevolence of their African fellow citizens and Dame Fortune's goodwill.

Kimmy, being a central puppet in her parents' charade-like marital row, suffers greatly from the tense situation at home. She is deeply unsettled and traumatised by Julia and Douglas' continuing disputes about money, lost chances and what is best for her. Yet, the couple strives so blindly to put the blame for their hard condition at the other's door step, trying to win Kimmy's affection and support, that they do not realise at all that they make their daughter's life a misery.

Being completely overwhelmed with the worsening situation, the girl starts peeing in her bed regularly and no matter how hard she tries she cannot avoid those nightly incidents. However, sadly, her reaction to the family conflict is not taken as a desperate cry for love and harmony by her perfectionist mother, but rather as an intolerable and shameful sign of personal weakness.

As a teenager, Kimmy, who is haunted by nightmares and afflicted by emotional pain, turns to drink and drugs for solace. She attends rave parties and her parents have to come and pick her up from the police station or hospital several times. Soon her crisis-ridden mother can no longer put up with her excesses and thus Kimmy eventually manages to rebel herself free from her family's oppressive and harmful influence. By leaving her parents' house, she puts an end to the ongoing drama in her life and finally develops a strong personality.

The depiction of Rosalie, Douglas' ex-wife, and her former lover and comrade in the liberation movement, Michael Rosenberg, adds to the overall interpretation of the narrative as they represent further successful counter-examples of white identity construction. Whereas Julia and Douglas Merchant seem hesitant and paralysed after the era of statutory mastery has come to an end yearning for the good old days, the couple take their chances to prosper professionally and politically.

Howbeit, as Jooste once again vividly demonstrates, success as a freedom fighter comes at an exorbitantly high price as regime critics have to sacrifice their personal happiness in order to achieve their socio-political ideals. The interests of the individual are readily subordinated to the benefit of the general public. Whether it is the bond between a mother and her daughter, the love between partners or a close friendship, the private relationships of Jooste's predominantly female resistance propagators perish or break up as the struggle gains a central position in their lives. Protagonists like Gloria, Beeky, Min, and Rosalie are so dedicated to the anti-apartheid movement and taken by their good causes that they accept getting increasingly estranged from the ones they love. These women knowingly sacrifice their individual fulfilment to achieve a change that is historic and by far greater and more important than their own fates.

Whereas Jooste's male prototypes rather function as loyal supporters of the apartheid regime or stand trembling and helpless in the face of a hard-line and authoritarian political system, women like Rosalie and the others are prepared to take the utmost measures needed to bring about the downfall of the establishment. In direct comparison to Gloria, who leaves her daughter deserted with her grandmother, and, who is scarred for life after the policeman's attack, or to Beeky, who is killed after experiencing severe trauma losing her mother and her lover at the hands of apartheid stakeholders, or Min, who endures emotional torture and long-term imprisonment being separated from her new-born son, Rosalie's suffering seems clearly dwarfed. Nevertheless, her life is seriously affected and overshadowed by the personal sacrifices she has to make. She separates from Douglas out of a clash of convictions and breaks away from Michael, her true love, to protect him against criminal prosecution taking the whole harshness of the oppressive regime onto herself. Against her innermost wish to re-unite with him she stays away from him as her prominent commitment to the resistance movement would inevitably complicate and strain his life, too.

## 4.5. Star of the Morning (SOTM)

In her fifth and latest novel Jooste portrays the growing-up and the personal development of yet another pair of unlike characters. At the centre of the plot we find two sisters, Ruby and Rose, who living on the fringes of the Cape Coloured

community, find out early in their lives that there is no place for them in a world of black and white.

However, in addition to harsh apartheid realities the girls suffer shattering blows of fate. First, their father and bread-winner of the family is killed in an accident at work, and consequently, as if their personal loss was not hard enough to bear, Kathleen, the grieving widow, and her two little children are faced with a precarious financial situation. The family receives industrial injuries benefit, yet, as the grace of charity ends at the colour divide, it only covers the costs of living to a small extent. The situation even aggravates when the mother develops stomach cancer and is henceforth unable to work. Relying on the poor financial aid provided by an utterly discriminatory system, the family struggle hard to scratch a living.

> State sickness benefits aren't very much and they're less for us because we're not white but we're in no position to complain about 'less'. We must take our lesser portion and be grateful because we need the money. (SOTM, 33)

As she refuses to consult a qualified doctor solely taking herbal remedies bought at the bazaar Kathleen's health deteriorates terribly. After suffering immense pain she is finally put out of her protracted misery. Kathleen dies of her inadequately treated illness leaving her two little girls completely unassisted and unsheltered in a world that clearly does not welcome their existence.

On her deathbed she asks Ruby to always take care and look after her little sister. The girl gives the promise and throughout her entire life – even when the two are already young adults- she strives hard to fulfil it.

Left alone in apartheid South Africa the two orphans set out to tackle the challenges the classificatory and segregationist authorities see fit for them. The first lesson they learn is that they grow up in a society that perceives them as a blemish and thus meets them with utmost hostility. Labelled as lower and inferior creatures Coloureds are fiercely pushed back into their assigned positions as servants or manual labours. Every further advancement is heavily combated.

Yet, as the crisis-ridden girls soon have to acknowledge they are not even wanted by their own kind. Aunt Olive, their next of kin, categorically denies them any financial support and familial comfort. This calculating woman swiftly relieves

herself from the burden of raising her poor nieces and dumps them at the local orphanage. As an act of affection Aunt Olive regularly invites the girls to Sunday lunches at her house – her guilty conscience being the sole reason for her kindness.

Kathleen has long tried to shelter her precious daughters from apartheid realities trying to grant them a happy childhood unencumbered with racial discrimination and repressive policies. Yet, she cannot ward off the vice-like and smothering grip the government has on their lives for ever. After her death the unwelcome and hidden truth inexorably unfolds and hits them hard. Hence, despite Kathleen's best efforts, Ruby and Rose come of age in inclement conditions.

> We lived our own life and we were happy. We didn't know that all the time the rest of the world was already out there, just waiting for the day when it could come in and claim us and give us ID papers to put us in our proper place. Our mother knew that sooner or later it was bound to happen and I know that she would have taken this cup from us if she could. (SOTM, 49)

At Sacred Heart Ruby and Rose find themselves among those people least wanted in society- the elderly, the mentally retarded, abandoned infants. The orphanage thus represents apartheid's dumping ground or hiding place of individuals who do not fit in with glorified Afrikaner ethics.

As Ruby and Rose are told from their first day at Sacred Heart, their stay at this Church institution is strictly limited. At the age of sixteen girls have to leave the orphanage. When the time comes they are provided with a job. Yet, what awaits them is all but a bright and rosy future.

> What they [former Sacred Heart girls] say is that once you leave Sacred Heart the best thing is to expect the worst, keep your eyes and ears open and learn to stand up for yourself just as fast as you can […]. After all, not all of us are English and a 'Lady' and destined to marry a prince. (SOTM, 65)

> We all knew that Sacred Heart girls usually ended up working in factories, or child-minding or cleaning or doing rough work in a kitchen. If you were lucky then you were lucky, but no one was encouraged to think higher than that because they were almost certain to be disappointed. (SOTM, 68)

Ruby, however, determined to keep the promise she has given to her dying mother, arranges to stay for two more years at the orphanage working as a childminder for the little ones. Thus she can avoid being separated from her sister.

Aged eighteen, Ruby leaves Sacred Heart and takes up employment as 'maid of all work in a hotel called the Queen's down in Dock Road' (SOTM, 70). When she leaves the child care institution Rose rightly observes that her sister 'seemed to have changed. It was as if something in her had died' (SOTM, 69).

Ruby aims high trying to exceed her limited chances in life. She hopes to receive further schooling in order to 'be a bookkeeper' (SOTM, 68) one day, but she is denied any further education. As Matron explains unapologetically, girls like Ruby must never aspire to higher things in life. Hence, her naïve and over-optimistic expectations remain clearly unrealised and so she accepts the arrangement the Reverend Mother has made for her and leaves the orphanage a broken woman.

In the second half of the novel Jooste seems to experiment with a technique referred to as "the rediscovery of the ordinary" by Njabulo Simakahle Ndebele. As typical of this literary approach the author shifts the main focus of attention from the political sphere onto private aspects of South African life. The representation of oppression exerted by the powerful regime as well as the resistance from the disempowered thus give way to a detailed depiction of how protagonists successfully transform their lives and seek personal fulfilment. Private matters and intimate accounts of individual experiences are, therefore, clearly foregrounded. The fates of single characters are thereby portrayed disregarding the social order.[121]

Though Jooste shows a general tendency to focus on the private sphere in all of her literary works it is most palpable in her recent novel. As mentioned before, her books have repeatedly provoked scathing criticism and the author was accused of diminishing the terror of apartheid. Yet, to qualify these statements we may assume that Jooste seems to have been increasingly inspired with new and less politicised forms of writing.

[121] Cf. Ibinga, http://www.thiscenturyreview.com/post_apartheid.html; Ndebele, 47-58.

Working at the hotel, Ruby gets to know Mr Silver, a regular guest, and soon starts to entertain fantasies about him and her. Yet, as she is once again made aware of, white men and coloured girls are just not made for each other. 'That wasn't the way the world was made' (SOTM, 117).

Hence, it is only after the era of imposed inferiority has come to an end that Ruby is eventually freed from the stigma of being coloured and thus finds personal fulfilment. She makes her dearest wish come true and advances professionally. Besides, she enjoys a loving relationship with Jack Julies. Though he may not be a particularly handsome man, he provides her with a sense of security she has never felt before.

Rose, by contrast, grows up relatively carefree cushioned against reality by her sister. Whereas Ruby worries about money matters and the grievances around them, her concerns are far more ordinary. She finally marries an older man, Alf, a taxi-driver, who promises to care for her.

However, tragedy strikes again when their cousin takes his own life because of a lost love. He tries to pass for white[122] and fails miserably. As relationships across the colour bar are vehemently prohibited under apartheid he chooses death over a life of lover's grief. Furthermore, Ruby is devastated after the loss of Jack. He dies a sudden death literally taking his last breath lying in her arms. Thus, despite harsh apartheid realities and numerous blows of fate the girls successfully build up strong personalities.

[122] In apartheid torn South Africa "passing for white" or "playing white" implied the successful assimilation and integration of people of mixed ethnicity into the dominant group of whites. Light skinned coloureds took the chance and deserted their families to start afresh in a bigger town. Pale women could get married to a white husband, thereby utterly outwitting the segregationist system. Passing for white, therefore, meant an extraordinary possibility to look into a brighter future.

# 5. From Childhood to Adulthood

## 5.1. Social Environment: Family, Friends and Guiding Spirits

### 5.1.1. The Strains of an Oppressive Home Life and the Solace of Friendship

Ideally, the family provides a stable and intimate social setting in which children may experience sympathy and security and develop a sense of belonging. It thus has a highly formative influence on a child's personal growth and identity formation.

However, in the case of Conrad and Beeky Hartmann, their family life is irredeemably spoiled by the girl's arrival. Jack Hartmann has confidently expected a boy on whom he could impose his set of traditional male Afrikaner values and beliefs, but his hopes are dashed when Beeky is born.

> His father is disappointed because it's not a boy and it's a boy he's been waiting for. […] Beeky arriving late, pulled from a Caesarean section, covered with slime and blood, screeching in protest comes instead and Conrad is the only one who's ready. He's the only one who's truly happy. (LWIWP, 29)

Beeky's birth already anticipates the bitter conflict which is about to arise between the girl and her father. Her physical appearance clearly sets her apart from anyone else of the Hartmann family and thus Jack immediately rejects her as a bastard.

> He says she's [his wife] done a terrible thing and Beeky with her beautiful hair and her angel kiss is the thing. Some other man's thing and nothing to do with him. (LWIWP, 39)

The feelings of antipathy, however, seem to be mutual. Beeky has to be 'pulled into the world' (LWIWP, 31) where she is neither awaited nor truly wanted. Her protest begins as soon as she comes out of her mother's womb.

Jack cannot cope with Beeky's alterity, which he perceives as a threat and as a blemish, and thus he thoroughly despises her. His inability to accept '"otherness […] [as] a categorical fact of life"' (Corbey, Leerssen xviii quoted in Petzold, 14) clearly epitomises the discriminating practices promoted under apartheid.

> Beeky isn't perfect and *his* [my emphasis] father doesn't like it. Beeky has a mark on her and no Hartmann has ever had such a mark before. *His* [my emphasis] father says it must come from *his* [my emphasis] mother's side of the family and be some other not very nice secret she's kept from him. (LWIWP, 29-30)

On a formal level, Jack's intense resentment towards his daughter is clearly reflected by the excessive use of the personal pronoun *his*. In the quotation given above again *his* is employed instead of *their* or *her*. Yet, this cunning narrative device also emphasises the deep affection Jack has for his son.

Besides, the passage reveals that according to her father Beeky represents a danger from within, which is graver and far more imminent than any menace from outside. In the novel her dismantling quality is apparently related to the destructive power of the river that runs underneath the Hartmanns' house. While the water keeps soaking through the walls, the girl constantly undermines the foundation of white South Africa.

Beeky's alterity is visibly indicated by her red hair and her red birthmark. The colour red usually connotes qualities like passion, love, aggression, and danger, all of which may well apply to Beeky's personality. In the course of the novel, however, she is associated with yet another red element, with fire.

Conrad compares his sister to the mythical figure of the Ostrich. '[W]hen he lifted his wings fire was let loose on the world' (LWIWP, 166). Eventually, though, the Ostrich was cheated and deceived by Man. So, on the one hand, this mythical tale conveys a terrible foreboding of Beeky's fatal end. On the other hand, however, it seems to relate the girl's attempts to weaken the establishment to the destructive force of bushfires.[123] Similar to the Ostrich's unfolding his wings Beeky's political commitment fuels the fire of social unrest. Hence waves of protest equal roaring infernos, both, 'signif[ying] a new start' (LWIWP, 245). Bushfires burn down decaying plants and thus encourage new growth and similarly social revolts annihilate the established order and allow for the creation of a new society.

[123] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.

> I know how it is with the land after fire. It remakes itself. Land needs fire. Fire helps it clear itself of dead vegetation that threatens to smother everything and leaves the way free for new growth. (LWIWP, 247)

Beeky's entire life is overshadowed by the unresolved tension between herself and her domineering father. When she is still very young she is already aware that '[h]e hates [her]' (LWIWP, 95), but she does not want to let it get to her personally. At least she refuses to display her innermost sadness about lacking a loving and caring father. Instead, she explains: 'I don't care. I hate him right back' (LWIWP, 95).

'[E]very day she looks more like herself and less like anyone else and […]' (LWIWP, 31) thus the rift even deepens. Interestingly, though, this split with Jack is vitally important for Beeky's identity formation. Thus both children strongly identify with their father figure, yet in different ways. Whereas Conrad, striving to be like Jack, constantly tries to please him, Beeky openly opposes him and the system he personifies. He thus rather represents a deterrent role model.

> Of all the things she's against, she's most against men like her father who look on and do nothing while people make laws that say human beings are somehow less than human. She thinks of her brother and how men like this will send boys like him out to kill those who have the courage to stand up and say it is not right, it is not so and it must be changed. (LWIWP, 165)

As a teenager she faces her father's repugnance and scorn with unprecedented strength and self-esteem. She deliberately provokes Jack's anger by her choice of clothes, the exhibition of her birthmark and the expression of her unconventional political views. Besides, she constantly contradicts and ridicules her father's suggestions and remarks.

> 'You might have made some effort,' her father says.
> 'You could at least have worn something decent.'
> 'I don't have much call for decent things,' Beeky says.
> (LWIWP, 206)

Beeky loathes her father for the humiliation and hardship she has to endure, she abhors his devotion to the political system, she 'hates him for what he did to her mother' (Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html) and she deprecates him imposing his set of values on her brother. For instance,

she is absolutely enraged when Conrad decides to join the troops in order to gain his father's pride by safeguarding white predominance. She displays her deep contempt for her brother's participation in the military interventions by saying: 'If you have to go to the Army just so we can go on using "whites only" toilets I'd rather pee in the street […]' (LWIWP, 165).

However, the hatred Beeky feels for her father is, in fact, the driving force that encourages her commitment to the resistance movement.[124] The paternal harshness she experiences turns her into a powerful, self- determined and vibrant personality. As Conrad rightly observes

> [o]ne thing Pappa has done by hating her the way he does is make her free. There's no-one to disgrace and no-one to stop her. She can do as she pleases and she's happy among strangers. She goes to forbidden rallies and risks being taken or held for questioning by the police. She walks up in protests and holds up banners to end the call-up. She talks to natives on the street and sits with coloureds on the bus. (LWIWP, 166)

Throughout her life Jack vainly tries to make his daughter conform to his rules and expectations. Nevertheless, neither his outright hostility nor his intimidating authority can shake her innermost opposition towards him and her confidence in political change. He even sends her to a specialist school, '[w]here they have some experience with girls who are "different"' (LWIWP, 146). Yet, his pronounced attempt to turn Beeky into a conformist fails miserably. On the contrary, the school rather affirms her ideas and beliefs, thus strengthening her assertiveness.

At college Beeky falls in love with Tom Webber, a leading figure in the student protests. They both have strong views on politics and together they organise protest rallies in order to stop 'conscription' (LWIWP, 214).

Beeky has long observed her mother's suffering being caught in an unhappy and brutal marriage and throughout her formative years she has struggled against a tyrannical and gratuitously overbearing father. These traumatic experiences might have reduced the girl to an emotional wreck - unable to stand getting close to a man -, but all the same, Beeky is able to build up an intimate relationship with Tom Webber.

[124] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.

> She's greedy for Webber. For the solidness of him, because he's a big man and strong.
> She's hungry for the way his eyes crinkle up when he smiles; for the slow way he says things and most especially for the way he always has time for her and is soft with her and careful and the dark brown tone of his voice.
> (LWIWP, 222)

In some way Beeky's choice of a boyfriend may be interpreted as an obviously unintended, yet all the more mocking form of resistance against her father. Jack's new wife tries to draw the girl's attention to ordinary and - more importantly - less political aspects of life. However, by enjoying a close relationship with an equally fervent supporter of the anti-apartheid movement she overtly ridicules her stepmother's advice.

In her critical analysis of Jooste's literary works Rosamund Metcalf deprecates the causal relationship between personal shortcomings and political activism the author seems to establish. According to the critic, it is farcical and utterly delusive to present spirited resistance against the apartheid regime as stemming directly from a perceived deficiency. The reasoning behind Jooste's depiction can, therefore, only be interpreted as a vain attempt to draw the reader's attention off from political issues and to personal matters instead. Furthermore, Metcalf concludes that the outstanding achievements of protagonists like Min and Beeky are greatly belittled by the author's representation.[125]

As far as the heroines in Jooste's second and third novel are concerned, Metcalf seems quite right to claim that a perceived lack of love and tender care generates the initial motivation for the girl's political involvement. Beeky suffers greatly from the unresolved conflict with her father and Min's childhood is overshadowed by the problematic relationship with her mother. In defiance of their parents' overbearing influence the girls eventually turn against the establishment Mr Hartmann and Mrs Delaney personify. Moral convictions are, therefore, only of secondary importance. Facing solitary confinement, Min comments on the causal link between her past home life and her present situation as a convicted dissident:

[125] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.

> Some people can't stand it [cellular imprisonment] but I don't mind. I'm used to it. My mother sent me here long before they [the apartheid regime] even knew I existed. By the time they […] decided solitary was to be my fate they were offering nothing I hadn't savoured before and found to my liking.
> All they got were my mother's leavings. (FAM, 294)

Yet, though Metcalf has a point in interrelating personal shortcomings and political activism, her concerns about the intentions behind this causality remain a moot point. Hence, instead of backing her radical claim that Jooste aims at 'trivializing apartheid' (Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html), readers may interpret *Frieda and Min* and *Like Water in Wild Places* as disenchanted and forthright accounts of the far-reaching effects segregationist politics had on people's lives. By shifting the focus to the private sphere the author compellingly dismantles the injustice caused in the name of an ideology.

Besides, Jooste illuminates the unflinching courage and growing inner strength of her protagonists. Young women like Min and Beeky do not only struggle against their mother or father as the ostensible agents of their hardship. On the contrary, inferring that their parents are merely the product of corruptive apartheid practices, they rise against the political system.

Although Beeky's opposition to her father is finally broken, Jack's triumph over his recalcitrant daughter is short- lived. In the end it is his beloved son who follows in his daughter's footsteps and successfully rebels against his authority. Besides, Beeky's discreditable and disgraceful behaviour stains his excellent reputation. It is '[a]s if having a lunatic daughter has left some kind of mark on him' (LWIWP, 217).

Analysing the conflict between Jack and Beeky in the context of the broader macrocosm, we may infer that the constant struggle between father and daughter seems to represent the clash of the new and the old order. Taking a step further in this discussion, we may even assume that the family tensions represent the fight of non-white South Africans against their white oppressors.[126]

[126] Cf. Heyns, 56. (Heyns invites a similar reading of Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*.)

In contrast to her husband, Sylvia Hartmann only plays a minor role in her daughter's life. She is depicted as a loving and warm, yet weak and vulnerable personality, who abdicates her parental responsibilities by committing suicide in order to escape from her desperate and hopeless marital situation. She thus clearly fails as a positive role model. Consequently, Beeky has to rely on her intuitive judgements and experiences in order to construct a strong female identity in a male-oriented world.

Nevertheless, Sylvia does have a lasting influence on her children's lives. On the one hand, Beeky seems to learn from her mother's personal failure. Inferring that her suffering stemmed from her passiveness and obedience to her brutal husband, her daughter is determined to challenge male dominance and to fight for her innermost beliefs. On the other hand, Sylvia strongly promotes the intense relationship between the siblings. When she is pregnant she allows Conrad to touch her womb and to feel the new baby.

> His sister swims up and down towards him and away and then back again, kicking and retreating, then coming back so he can feel her and he lies in the scented dark of his mother's big bed and loves his new sister […]. (LWIWP, 28)

In fact, Conrad remains the most important person in Beeky's life. It is actually him who gives her the name "Beeky", thus acknowledging her existence and contributing to her self- perception.

In complete contrast to his father, Conrad accepts Beeky just the way she is and he does not at all regard her otherness as a threat. Instead, he is rather fascinated by her striking looks.

> Conrad loves his sister's hartebeest hair and her funny fish eyes. He loves the livid birthmark on her shoulder. No-one has a mark like Beeky. (LWIWP, 31)

Conrad soon realises that 'Beeky is braver than he is' (LWIWP, 95). Besides, '[s]he knows more about everything and everyone than he does […]' (LWIWP, 104). Nevertheless, he tries to keep the promise to look after his sister and so he does his best to compensate for the loss of a caring mother and the burden of a hostile father.

Yet, he cannot help doing almost everything to gain Jack's respect. This also means leaving Beeky behind when he goes on a hunting trip or joins the army. However, although he is miles away at the Namibian border experiencing the most abhorrent and shocking situations of his life, he keeps his fears and desperation to himself and tries to comfort and to support her. It is his love and appreciation which give Beeky the strength to live up to her ideals.

Although her life is tragically put to an end, Beeky's struggle for socio-political change and for the end of parental dominance is not in vain. The oppressive and unjust apartheid system is finally abandoned and her brother eventually frees himself from the overpowering influence of his father. Beeky's identity construction ends prematurely with her violent death, but Conrad's quest for his own true personality just begins. Hence it is the loss of his beloved sister that finally initiates his development of a strong and self- determined character.

As far a Jack Hartmann is concerned, his stubbornness and ignorance prevail until the very end of the novel. He never reflects on his rigid attitudes and he does not bother to think about Beeky's motives. This is particularly evident when he talks to Conrad about his daughter's life-long opposition towards him. The swift answer to his own question fully displays his disregard.

> 'You know what I can never work out,' he says. 'All her life in everything she did, right to the end, your sister opposed me. If I spoke out for something, she was against it. Everything I stood for, she rejected. Can you understand it? I certainly can't.' (LWIWP, 279)

Conrad's identity formation, too, is depicted as a burdensome and tedious process, which is complicated by the restraining influence of an overbearing patriarch. Unlike his sister, who instantaneously negates and undermines Jack's authority, thus freeing herself to construct an identity of her own, Conrad finds it very hard to emancipate himself from his procreator. He greatly admires his father, who is 'tougher than nails and harder than a rock' (LWIWP, 12). Yearning for his affection and respect he tries above all to meet his expectations.

> ‘I can’t tell Pappa that,’ he says.
> ‘That’s because you only tell Pappa what he wants to hear. You do it so that he won’t stop liking you but I don’t mind,’ she says. (LWIWP, 47)

Conrad frantically tries to please his father. He thus does not speak against him and instead he becomes a passive observer of the humiliations and the pain his beloved sister and mother have to endure. Hence he initially adopts the position his father wants him to take, namely that of his immature accomplice. Conrad, however, feels increasingly uneasy about his inability to stand up for his beloved ones and shield them from Jack’s brutalities and so his bad conscience keeps troubling him.

The time Conrad spends with Bastiaan is a highly formative experience. When the boy meets his Bushman tracker he is already traumatised by the emotional coldness and the violence he experiences at home. Bastiaan, however, makes Conrad feel calmer and less anxious and in the bush he finds inner peace and relief. Moreover, the young boy learns to ‘read the land’ (LWIWP, 16) and to perceive the world differently. The Khoisan myths offer an alternative to his father’s firm concept of reality and his convenient explanations and thus Conrad becomes aware of the choices he has to make about his future. Besides, he soon realises that ‘his father doesn’t know everything’ (LWIWP, 101).

Nevertheless, he is still obsessed with making his father proud. In his second season the group of hunters gets caught in a heavy rain. Conrad is terribly frightened by a thunderstorm and so he sobs. His father cannot stand such a childlike behaviour and so he hits him hard in the face and forces him to climb up to the top of a thorn tree and to stay there until the storm is over. When he comes down his father is proud of him again. ‘‘[…] [He] sent a baboon up a tree […] [b]ut […] [he] got back a man.’ He puts his arm around the boy’s shoulders and offers him brandy’ (LWIWP, 77). Later, in his fourth season, when Conrad takes down an eland with a single shot, his father takes him into his arms and says: ‘‘Well done.’ […] ‘Nice shooting’’ (LWIWP, 137).

Even after his mother’s suicide, which may be regarded as an extremely traumatic incident for a child, Conrad cannot gather the strength to free himself from the overpowering influence of his father. ‘He’s sad beyond words […], but

even that doesn't make him strong enough, and he can't speak against his father' (LWIWP, 145).

Yet, the reader can detect a slight shift in Conrad's loyalty to Jack. For instance, when Beeky drives her father mad by decorating her mother's grave with flowers made of tins Conrad does not dare to contradict him. However, '[i]n silence he says Beeky's flowers are magic and beautiful' (LWIWP, 145) and when they are alone he tells her that '[he] liked them' (LWIWP, 145). Thus he seems to know his mind, but still he is all too dependent on Jack's affection and so he is unable to voice his opinion.

When Conrad enlists as a soldier of the Special Forces unit '[h]is father is proud of him because he didn't ask for the Navy' (LWIWP, 153). Whereas many young men try to postpone or even to evade military service, Conrad sets his mind on a notoriously dangerous task force. He readily puts his life at stake in order to impress his father and to win his respect and affection.

After his sister's death Conrad returns to his father's house finding that Jack has not changed at all, whereas he himself has become a more mature person. His father, though, still is the narrow minded and emotionally cold Nationalist, who beats his second wife just as he once used to hurt the mother of his children.

> This is a bad house. In this house there are the terrible thuds in the night and the silences in between. You have to keep on saying it'll be all right. That's what I promised Beeky. I gave her my word but it wasn't true. It was a lie. It wasn't going to be all right at all. The blood mouth is the giveaway. (LWIWP, 275)

Besides, Beeky's death somewhat seems to be a relief to Jack rather than a bereavement. Now her disruptive behaviour does no longer threaten his career advancement nor does the blemished girl challenge his authority and that of the political system.

Conrad, however, feels empty and alienated due to the loss of his much-loved sister and the experiences he had during the military intervention in Namibia. He has got a 'bushmark' (LWIWP, 276) which he can neither hide nor remove.

The final section of the novel stands in stark contrast to its beginning. The apartheid era comes to an end and the governments of Namibia and South Africa are changing. Conrad is working for the army as interpreter telling the bush

people, why they have to leave their arid land for a former military camp. His father has always wanted him to pursue a military career, yet he might have had a different kind of job in mind.

Moreover, due to the dry season and the military interventions the living conditions of bush people have deteriorated quite seriously. Some are forced to give up their nomadic life and work for whites in order to provide their families with food and clothes. Thus they become more and 'more estranged from their own people and customs' (LWIWP, 287).

Tsoe is one of these alienated Bushmen. He spends much time with Conrad, who striving to fill the emptiness in his heart, starts an ambitious project: He decides to write down the stories of the Bushmen, thus passing them on to future generations.

> I write down what fragments I can as I remember them. I write with great honesty such detail as I recall because these stories are not mine alone and must be passed on. (LWIWP, 289)

> I tell him how the going of his people grieves me. That I am writing down their stories as they were given to me so other people might one day know them and remember.
> It's not the proper way. It's not how it ought to be done but I am doing it anyway, in the only way I know. (LWIWP, 290)

Story telling is vitally important to Conrad. He passes the mythical tales and the history of the Bushmen as they were told to him on to Tsoe, thereby taking Bastiaan's role. Thus we find the relationship between storyteller and boy somewhat reversed. It is no longer Conrad, who being alienated by the traumatic experiences he has at home, takes comfort in the mythical world of the Bushmen. In contrast, it is Tsoe, who has become estranged from his culture and thus needs to rediscover the traditions and the collected wisdom of his people.[127]

However, Conrad also passes parts of his personal history on to posterity. He goes to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and gives a full account of the military interventions in Namibia. Thus Conrad's memories are summarised in the Commission's final report making them accessible for future generations.

[127] Cf. Lehmann, http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/britcult/DOFP3lehmann.htm.

Besides, he contributes substantially to the development of a new collective memory.[128]

Nevertheless, Conrad's appearance before the TRC is rather depicted as a decisive step in the separation process from his domineering father.[129] When Jack gets to know that his son is about to testify before the Truth Commission he is 'beside himself with anger' (LWIWP, 306). He even tries to intimidate Conrad into abandoning his plan, but his attempt is in vain. '[H]is power over […] [Conrad] is vanished. It is gone forever' (LWIWP, 308). Beeky's brother has finally managed to free himself from the repressive influence of his father.

Jack is the epitome of the apartheid system and similar to the ideology itself he is finally denied any authority over the younger generation. Like Chronos in Greek mythology Conrad symbolically castrates his father by testifying before the TRC betraying his ideals. Thus he eventually preserves his sister's moral heritage.

As he reflects about Jack's reaction to his decision he realises that his father simply cannot change. Noteworthily, the quotation below clearly relates to a passage given at the very beginning of the novel.

> My father is my father. He won't change. […] I see it now and I see something else also. Something I feared but did not know […].
> I know now that my father is in me and I am in him and although we both must fight for mastery one over the other, I am not my father. (LWIWP, 294)

> They [Jack and the other hunters] had gone too far and were in too deep for anything to change them. For them it was too late. (LWIWP, 12)

Conrad's uncle, Oom Faan, for whom the boy has always had a deep affection, offers to 'go to the Commission with […] [him]' (LWIWP, 309). Albeit his age Jack's brother is ready to change.

Throughout the novel Oom Faan is depicted as the more amiable of the two Hartmann men. He tells Conrad about the stars and he tries to protect him against his father's harshness. For example, when Jack is furious about his son's sobbing Oom Faan tries to stop his brother by reminding him that '[h]e's only a boy' (LWIWP, 75), a child, who may show his fear. Furthermore, it is Oom Faan, who

[128] Cf. Brink, 30.
[129] Cf. Lehmann, www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/britcult/DOFP3lehmann.htm.

informs the children about the tragic death of their mother. He tries to explain things to them and to comfort them, whereas Jack only worries about the disgrace this incident brings about his family.

### 5.1.2. Growing up Special

As far as Jerome is concerned, his family life is not spoiled by an oppressive atmosphere. Yet, his social setting is not at all less complicated. Jerome's family, composed of father, mother, and Aunt Doris, live on the fringes of society due to their poor material conditions. Besides, his being a social outcast is even exacerbated by his weak cognitive capacities which confine him to special school.

At an early age Jerome already displays his criminal and malevolent tendencies. He commits regular shopliftings and he takes great delight in watching people getting frightened by horror films. As far as the former is concerned, Jerome does not seem to steal things because he simply cannot afford buying them. He rather does it for the mere fun of it. Concerning the latter, watching frightened people while not being scared at all seems to put the social underdog into a position of enormous power. This experience of control later encourages the boy to inflict fear and terror on others.

Interestingly, Jooste depicts Jerome's personal development as the result of his inferior social status and his upbringing. He behaves improperly due to an obvious lack of positive parental role models. When his father steals seats from a burnt down cinema Jerome is afraid that all of them might be prosecuted by the police. However, his mother explains to him that there is nothing wrong with taking things that belong to somebody else. Hence she influences Jerome's behaviour in quite a negative way by not instilling good morals into him. When her thievish son is caught stealing sweets in a shop she scolds him. Yet, her reaction may cause great surprise and bewilderment in the reader.

> 'Your dad's right,' his mum says. 'You should have tried bigger. If you're going to be insulted by a bloody curry-muncher you should have made it worth your while. It shouldn't be about a few cents of bubblegum.' (LWIWP, 68)

However, feelings of inferiority may be regarded as equally important motives for Jerome's unlawful conduct. Although his mother constantly tries to convince him that he is an exceptionally gifted child facing a rosy future, the boy knows that being

> '[s]pecial doesn't mean what she makes it out to mean. He isn't 'special' because he's God's own gift. He's 'special' because he can't get his reading right and so he can't write properly' (LWIWP, 70).

Jerome gets to know Beeky on a school trip to the Hartmanns' house. He withdraws from the group under a false pretext and roams the private property. Jerome finds a girl's watch and steals it without noticing that Beeky is watching him. In this situation we find the power relations somewhat reversed. This time it is not Jerome, who exerts influence on others by staring at them. Instead, he is the one who is being watched, thus being controlled by another person. When he realises that he has been caught he tries to make Beeky feel uneasy by turning a deaf ear and by staring at her fixedly. However, she is not at all intimidated by his peculiar behaviour.

> Most people mind someone looking at them the way he's looking at her. After a few seconds they get frightened and look away, but she doesn't. She […] [stares] straight back. (LWIWP, 91-92)

Beeky looks him sternly into the eye and addresses him directly, thereby warding off his potential power over her. No matter how hard he tries Jerome cannot fool her with his make-believe stupidity as she can properly assess his character.

Besides, Beeky denies him any sense of triumph by allowing him to keep her watch as a present. Thus the stolen item is no longer a trophy, but a worthless thing which is readily given- away and so Jerome's ego gets seriously bruised.

Right from their first encounter Jerome is absolutely obsessed with Beeky. Her personal strength and self- confidence attract his rapt attention and he can never forget about the incident at the pool house.

When he is older he attaches himself to a teenage gang. Together they steal cars and blow things up. By that time Jerome has already fulfilled his criminal potential. He is a specialist in electrics and ballistics and no one is able to hold a candle to him. The other boys regularly test him by leaving the riskiest jobs to

him, but he does not bother at all and accepts the challenges readily, thereby gaining the group's respect.

By doing things nobody else dares to do, the former special class student eventually manages to increase his chances in life and to overcome his feelings of inferiority. His strive for social recognition is finally fruitful as he is admired by his peer.

However, his criminal conduct soon puts Jerome in quite a difficult situation. He is brought to trial and has to serve a prison sentence. Yet, when the juvenile delinquent is released from jail his extraordinary talents qualify him to pursue a career in the special security branch.

Working at Spin Street Jerome has easy access to Beeky's files. Now he can find out anything about her – no matter how confidential or personal the information might be, thereby being very close to her.

> Things are different now and her name and her picture and all that it says in the newspaper about her are in the files down at Spin Street. So he can look at her any time he likes and if there's something he wants to know about her, all he has to do is ask. (LWIWP, 228)

He further intrudes into her private life by raiding her room on the campus. He touches her things, he takes a smell of her clothes, and he even keeps one of her earrings and a wisp of her hair to remember her by. For the first time in his life Jerome experiences feelings of intimacy.

> There isn't a drawer or cupboard he hasn't opened. He's touched all her dresses as if they were shop dresses hanging on a rail wanting to be touched […]. He's taken her jerseys out and put them side by side on her bed and looked at them and touched them and wool's nice and better than summer things because you can still smell the person on wool. (LWIWP, 229)

Like the 'black backed jackal' (LWIWP, 161) Jerome stalks his prey patiently until it is his chance to take it down. As the constructor of the letter bomb which eventually kills Beeky he gains absolute control over the girl's life, thereby 'taking vengeance' (LWIWP, 162) for her mockery.

> She's his now. It's as if she came to him. As if, even though she doesn't know it, she's the one who's come to his house looking for favours and he's the one who can give or hold back, just as the mood takes him. (LWIWP; 228-229)

Like Evert Brink in *Frieda and Min* Jerome wants Beeky to 'remember him the same way he's remembered her and know he was the one' (LWIWP, 261). This is why he uses her watch as a detonator.

### 5.1.3. Missing Daddy: In the Absence of Male Role Models

As mentioned earlier, family ties play a decisive and prominent role in ego identity development as children strongly identify with their next of kin, thereby feeling a sense of belonging and building an initial awareness of their individual personality. An infant's social environment thus constitutes a highly formative aspect.

Yet, quite to our surprise, in *Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter*, Lily first and foremost identifies with the place she grows up in. When she introduces herself to her pen friend she writes: 'I live at No. 48 Constitution Street. It is in the Valley and no white people really live here any more […]' (DWAPMD, 17).

As we carry on analysing the novel we find that people from the Cape Valley generally have strong feelings about their neighbourhood. Place thus seems to be crucial to ego formation among people of mixed ethnicity from that particular area of South Africa. In her treatise on past and present concepts of coloured character construction Zimitri Erasmus clearly backs this assumption claiming that 'coloured identity can be created and celebrated through a sense of place' (Erasmus, 23).

However, right after proudly demonstrating her belonging to the Cape coloured community Lily goes on telling Carole-Amelia about her somewhat special family structure. Men, as we learn, are conspicuous by their absence. Lily, who lives with her grandmother and aunt only, thus clearly lacks positive male role models. As the girl reveals herself 'men in […] [her] family are not worth much' (DWAPMD, 18). Young Lily acknowledges that '[p]erhaps you shouldn't say that about your own relations but in […] [her] case it happens to be true and no-one around here can call […] [her] a liar for saying it' (DWAPMD, 18).

Generally speaking, men in the girl's life are depicted as confirmed drunkards, gangsters, gamblers or otherwise unfortunate souls. As Lily explains '[T]hey're the cross we [the females in the family] have to bear' (DWAPMD, 18).

First we learn about Stella's late husband, uncle Maxie, who was a criminal and obviously died in a gang fight. With irreverent humour Lily explains that her aunt's choice of a partner was not at all to anyone else's liking.

> 'We got Maxie through a marriage mistake and he died with a knife in his ribs. Good riddance is what we said when that happened because he was good for nothing and broke my aunty's heart.' (DWAPMD, 18)

Royston, Stella and Maxie's only son, somewhat follows in his father's footsteps and engages in criminal conduct. Yet, though he represents another blemish on the family honour, his premature and violent death is deeply mourned.

Furthermore, there is Lily's rapscallion of an uncle, Gus-Seep, another burden to the Daniels clan. He takes to drink and gambling. Horse races are his favourite hobby.

Interestingly enough, though Gus-Seep represents yet another example of failed male identity formation having countless flaws, Lily feels great affection for her blemished uncle. She regularly accompanies him to the stables and race courses and the two have their own secret kind of ritual. The young girl is said to bring her uncle good luck and so the two choose a name of a horse to put Gus-Seep's money on. Though her uncle may be a silly fool, Lily repeatedly emphasises his kind-heartedness. With great tenderness she explains:

> He can't help it. It's because there was a time she [Flora Dora, Gus-Seep's favourite racehorse] was very good to him. Good in the way you feel in your back pocket and anyone will tell you Gus-Seep is not a man to forget a favour. (DWAPMD, 19)

Lily's other uncle, Errol, used to work as a dance instructor before he hastily deserted the family to 'look out for greener grass' (DWAPMD, 25) in Southampton. As we discover later on as the plot unfolds, he is obviously homosexual and therein may lie the reason for his sudden departure.

Errol's decision to live abroad means a great loss for his mother. Lily recounts that he 'was the apple of […] [her] grandmother's eye because he was her eldest and the one who always looked on the bright side' (DWAPMD, 23-24). The girl, however, does not really feel close to her uncle Errol- probably because he left the family when she was still little. All she seems to know about him are the stories her grandmother tells her and the snaps in Stella's picture book.

Errol stays in contact with his relatives and even contributes to the family income by sending money regularly. In the end he invites his expelled niece to stay with him and his friend. He provides a new and stable home for the girl, a safe place to start over again where they cherish the same moral values Lily's family back in South Africa holds onto.

> My uncle Errol makes a big fuss of me. He and his friend, Tony, cannot do enough. They treat me like a queen. (DWAPMD, 335)

> There's a framed picture on the wall. […] It's of a small house with lots of flowers in the garden […]. […] Underneath it says 'Home Is Where The Heart Is' and that's part true.
> 'I hope you like it,' Errol says. 'Because it's yours, just like everything else in this house is because this is your home now and it's share and share here just like it was in Constitution Street.' (DWAPMD, 336)

Thus Errol eventually manages to develop a strong identity. Yet, it is obligatory for him to leave his home country behind in order to find personal fulfilment and build up a new existence. South Africa is, therefore, once again clearly and unambiguously defined as a place of lost opportunities for non-whites.

Quite cunningly, Lily only refers to "unfortunate events" in her uncles' lives that changed everything for the worse and rendered an ultimately positive development difficult or even impossible. Yet, she is not particularly precise about the nature of those formative incidents. As for Gus-Seep, for instance, we are informed that he cherished hopes of becoming a jockey, but for some unexplained reason they did not materialise. Hence, it is entirely up to the reader to draw the right conclusions. In a way, this instance clearly reflects Lily's child-likely naïve and limited understanding of things. Due to her young age and little experience of life she lacks a deeper insight.

As men fail in their role as positive examples of adult character formation Lily has to rely on the female side of her family. Contrary to their male counterparts, the women of the Daniels clan are generally depicted as strong-willed and resolute individuals who express their unshakable convictions.

Gloria is the revolutionary in the family. Unwilling to put up with the hindrance and humiliation suffered at the hands of a discriminatory government, this sharp-witted and self-assured woman leaves her family behind to 'tr[y] for a better life'

(DWAPMD, 343). With unflinching courage she strives to improve the living conditions and chances of herself and her people and she willingly accepts the sacrifices her laudable attempt requires. After her death James says the following about the path Gloria set out for herself:

> ‘She was hindered in every possible way. Everywhere she turned her path was blocked because of her colour so that in the end she became angry and disheartened and went in another direction.’ (DWAPMD, 343)

However, needless to say, life as a political dissident and motherhood are mutually incompatible. Thus, driven by her idealistic convictions and the unshakeable belief in a colour-blind world, Gloria abandons her daughter, entrusting grandmother Daniels with the care and custody of the child. Though it may seem to be quite a drastic decision to leave the young girl behind, in Linda Richter’s treatise on South African family life under apartheid we find that it was common practise to put the responsibility for a baby born to an unmarried woman into the hands of her mother. In Jooste’s narrative Gloria is henceforth only present in the pictures aunt Stella keeps in her snap album and in the stories people tell the little girl.

The recounts of her mother’s whereabouts, however, differ greatly. Some people assume that due to her good looks and light skin Gloria may have tried to pass for white attracting the affectionate attention of an affluent man in Johannesburg. Others, however, report that the young woman

> ‘[…] works in a gangster shop in Sophiatown and sings jazz songs to the Natives to keep them sweet while she’s taking their money and selling them liquor, as much as they like, even though it’s against the law […].’ (DWAPMD, 51)

Gus-Seep, however, quashes the rumours circulating around Gloria’s taking leave of her family. He knows the real motives behind his sister’s decision.

> He says God gives you one life just like my grandmother always says but the Government have taken it on themselves to give us another one specially made for us and this other one is the one that isn't always to everyone's liking.
> It's good enough for some people […] but this wasn't the way my mother felt about things.
> She had other ideas. […] [I]f you wanted to make what any normal person would call a life you'd have to do it someplace else and in some other way that cut the Government right out of the picture. So this is what she did. (DWAPMD, 26)

Young Lily greatly mourns her mother's absence and in the beginning she longs for the day when her mother comes to pick her up. Nevertheless, as the years go by the dear wish to unite with the long missed parent gives way to feelings of indifference and scorn. Thus when Gloria eventually rejoins the family Lily reacts coolly and angrily giving her mother the cold shoulder, especially because she senses that she is not the reason for her unexpected return. Political matters account for Gloria's presence instead. With a tone that is openly defiant Lily declares: 'It isn't me she's come to see and I don't see why I should do anything for her. She's never done anything for me.' (DWAPMD, 114)

The scene when they all meet again is particularly emblematic of the troubled relationship between mother and daughter. Gloria returns after years of being separated from her own flesh and blood and much to our surprise she does not instantaneously fling her arms around her child's neck cuddling and kissing her. Instead, she greets and hugs her mother and sister and does not really seem to notice Lily's presence. The little girl, however, is utterly disappointed by this faintly emotional reunion and, in turn, responds quite dismissively and repudiates all offers of reconciliation. Fraught and openly defiant she remarks:

> She just keeps looking and not saying anything and after a while I realize it's because she has nothing to say to me. All she's going to do is look and that's all right too. I don't want her there. As far as I am concerned, she can go right back where she came from and she can't go fast enough to suit me. (DWAPMD, 116)

Throughout years shattered hopes for a happy reunion with her mother and feelings of disappointment and guilt have created a barrier between Lily and Gloria that seems somewhat insurmountable. Grandmother Daniels is well aware of her granddaughter's repugnance and tries to break down hardened fronts.

> ‘Your mother brought you into this world,’ she says. ‘[…] It may not be big in your book but believe me, it’s the biggest thing anyone will do for you in all of your life and there’s nothing you can ever do to make up to her for it. So you can put your lip back and stop acting like a baby. As far as your mother’s concerned, that’s all you need to know and all you ever have to worry about.’ (DWAPMD, 115)

Grandmother Daniels plays a decisive role in Lily’s life as the two are linked by strong emotional bonds of mutual respect and affection. Thus in the absence of a loving and caring father and mother she functions as the child’s psychological parent.

Besides, Grandmother Daniels represents the moral authority in the family and a reliable source of truth. Whatever Lily knows about the world around her she has been told by her grandma. Thus her own perception of the realities around her is strongly affected by her grandmother’s convictions which are, in turn, imbued with religious belief and Christian values. Throughout the novel the young girl repeatedly parrots her grandma’s explanations.

> *My grandmother says* [my emphasis] life’s like that. You can pick your friends but you can’t choose your family and it’s no good complaining about it. (DWAPMD, 18)

> *My grandmother says* [my emphasis] if Mr Asher chases children away from outside his house I must remember that someone started it and it wasn’t Mr Asher. (DWAPMD, 61)

However, with the return of the truant mother previously unshakable views are challenged and Lily’s initially adopted perception of reality crumbles as traditional and modern positions collide. Gloria, utterly determined to overturn entrenched positions, openly undermines Grandmother Daniels’ authority. Thus a serious clash of generations breaks out.

Political issues and family matters form the subjects of heated debates between mother and daughter. Whereas Grandmother Daniels, worn down by decades of apartheid discrimination, lacks the courage to improve her declining fortunes and thus seeks solace in Christian faith twiddling her thumbs and accepting every hardship she has to suffer as part of God’s great plan, Gloria resolutely bears against misfortunes. She strictly distances herself from religious doctrine and is absolutely certain that the responsibility for a change of their deplorable situation rests squarely with the individual. Taking her heart from that, she vehemently

fights for justice and struggles to ward off the harm caused by government decisions.

> ‘We’re about to give thanks, Gloria,’ my grandmother says.
> ‘I’m not standing in your way,’ my mother says as if she’s surprised we should be waiting for her at all […].
> [I]f what I hear is true I don’t think anyone in this house has anything very much to give thanks for. That’s my opinion and I think it’s better for everyone if I just […] keep what I would like to say to God to myself.’ (DWAPMD, 120)

> I would have thought anyone who knows what the Government and Group Areas are going to do with them wouldn’t be sitting here with their hands together thanking God for what they’re about to receive. If they really knew what they’re about to receive they’d be out there, trying to do something to stop it.’ (DWAPMD, 121)

Lily observes the intra-familial discussions with great interest. Yet, the girl does not know which side to take. However, as the relationship with her mother does not deepen a certain reticence prevails and thus Lily feels even more inclined to take her grandma’s stance. Besides, the fact that Grandmother Daniels’ position has long been the only truth the girl has known accounts for the child’s favouring her psychological parent over her mother. Lily seems to sense that it should be different, but all the same she just cannot help feeling the way she does.

> I wonder how big a sin it is to love my grandmother so much more than I love my mother and whether or not my mother knows this. (DWAPMD, 149)

Gloria is completely absorbed by her struggle against government enforcements and thus there is hardly any time and energy left to foster the relationship with her daughter. On the one hand, it clearly seems as if she willingly sacrifices all the joys of motherhood for the sake of her good causes. On the other hand, however, her keeping a relative emotional distance to her own flesh and blood may well represent a psychological mechanism aimed at protecting the ego. Realising the price she pays for her political commitment, could utterly devastate the young woman and put the overall goal of her ambitions at risk. Hence, only by repressing maternal feelings, she can retain the strength to live up to her convictions. Lily, however, cannot understand her mother’s emotional detachment. All she perceives is that political matters are by far more important to Gloria than her own child.

> But when my mother's there and we do our nonsense and are hugging and laughing with each other in front of her, she doesn't join in. She doesn't even try. She just sits there with the biscuit tin open on the table and my grandmother's house papers in her hands and looks at us with small eyes as if we're wasting her time and are the biggest fools in the history of the world. (DWAPMD, 128)

Yet, even though their relationship remains somewhat reserved and is far from being a normal mother-daughter bond, gradually a slight intimacy develops between Lily and Gloria. The young girl may not fully grasp the latter's decisions and incentives, but she cannot help feeling some faint admiration for her parent who zealously pursues her aims no matter what obstacles are in her path.

Besides, the child gradually realises that she somehow takes after her mother. When they go to watch the Coon parade she concludes:

> I'm a funny girl and getting just like my mother because although I'm having the best time anyone could ever have I'm clapping in a different time to everyone else, and the beat of the music changes and Domingo dances on in the procession and he's gone towards Roeland Street with the others. (DWAPMD, 196)

Interestingly, the relationship between Lily and her mother undergoes a sea change when the bulldozers roll on to erase their precious Valley home. Gloria, still refusing to resign, dresses up to show those enforcing Group Areas that the Cape coloureds do not sneak away like cowards, but stand firm even in the face of imminent danger. When she asks Lily to come with her the girl intuitively decides to accompany her, though she knows that her grandmother would not appreciate it.

> I don't know what she's going to do when she gets there but when she gets up from the table and says do I want to come with her, I jump up and say I don't mind. (DWAPMD, 224)

The whole scene is particularly revealing of the bonds that link Gloria and her daughter. Though Lily does not know what her mother is up to, she takes sides with her and thus we may assume that the girl has built up implicit trust in her parent.

Besides, the passage clearly and unambiguously shows a child's break-away from traditional values and a marked turn towards modern positions. Grandmother Daniels, who has too much of the old South Africa in her, finally loses her authority as Lily decides in favour of Gloria's perception of reality.

James, a close friend to the family and Lily's assumed father, too, plays a prominent role in the girl's life. Throughout the novel he acts as a mediator between Gloria and her daughter trying to bridge the gulf that has developed throughout years.

Like Gus-Seep, James squashes the ugly rumours swirling around Gloria's sudden departure and he encourages Lily to believe in her mother's noble nature. In a way that is appropriate for a child he explains:

> 'Your mother is a very fine woman and it isn't for us to judge her,' he says. 'She's got her head screwed on the right way. Smart as paint and bright as a button, just like you are and you must never let anyone tell you anything different.' (DWAPMD, 37)

Generally speaking, the relationship between James and Lily can be described as being close and based on mutual trust and sympathy. He truly cares for the girl – with almost fatherly affection- and unlike other adults peopling her life he always finds the right words.

> James doesn't have his own children but it doesn't matter. He has more time for children than a lot of other grown-ups I could mention and a nice way of talking. He always has a hug and a kiss for me when he comes in our front door and something nice in his pockets like a pink Star sweet or some licorice boilings. (DWAPMD, 37)

Hence, taking into account the fondness and deep bonds Lily feels for James as well as the fact that the relationship with her mother remains generally uneasy and encumbered with incomprehension and disappointment until the very end of the novel, it is all but a big surprise that he is the one who informs the girl about her being sent into exile. Whereas Gloria, still being far too alienated from her daughter, lacks appropriate words to break the sad news to her, he takes it upon himself to explain their decision they have made on the child's future. With utmost tenderness and sensitivity he states:

> ‘We’ve talked about it a lot [and] […][w]e don’t think what’s happening here should be your battle. Once upon a time your mother thought it should be, but she changed her mind […]. You’re not responsible for what grown-ups have made of the world, Lily, and you shouldn’t be made to pay a price for it.
> He says I am the most precious thing in all the world to each and every one of them and when a person’s house is burning down, it’s always the most precious thing you want to save. (DWAPMD, 309)

The house that is burning down, quite obviously, is symbolic of Cape Town’s District Six that is gradually bulldozed. Gloria and James eventually realise that the destruction of their neighbourhood is unavoidable and they acknowledge that apartheid-torn South Africa is not a safe place to raise a child. Determined to go on fighting against Group Areas, they intend to send young Lily abroad to spare her the sorrow and hardship their political commitment will inevitably bring about.

The girl initially reacts with consternation and indignation when presented with a fait accompli. She is deeply unsettled and feels abandoned and betrayed by her entire family.

> My grandmother and Stella have always said when trouble comes knocking at the front door a family must stick together. They’ve said that at least a million times and now trouble has come and is right here inside our house and looking at us with its teeth bared, they’ve decided to send me away. (DWAPMD, 311)

Despite her angry response, Lily seems to gradually understand that her family does not want to rid themselves of her, but merely want her to be able to look into a brighter future. She further realises that though her home may be lost and she will never be allowed to return to South Africa and reunite with her beloved ones as the exit permit only entitles her to leave the country but not to come back again, the Valley and its people will continue to exist deep inside her in the precious memories she takes along with her.

> Our old Valley is exactly the same as my mother is. Its face is broken but not its heart and not its spirit. […] [T]hose are the things we carry inside us and the only things that really count. (DWAPMD, 321-322)

As already mentioned in the general introduction to the novel, Lily’s leaving the country of her origin marks a turning point in the girl’s character development. She is no longer cast as an infantile personality who only parrots what others

keep telling her and lacks a profound understanding of what is going on around her. Quite in contrast, her entire reasoning as well as the inner strength with which she accepts her fate show her maturity. The sad events have eventually made the girl grow up. As with uncle Errol, going into exile is a highly formative experience that has a great potential to instigate intrapersonal change.

### 5.1.4. Experiencing Parental Deprivation

In her fifth and last work Jooste confronts the reader with a family constellation that is glaringly different from the concepts presented in her earlier novels. Initially, Ruby and Rose grow up in an impoverished yet all the more loving and tender home. Their mother, regardless of any socio-economic decline, has chosen true love over material matters and is happily married to a simple but soft-hearted man. Living among the poorest of Cape Town's coloured community, the two girls at the centre of the plot enjoy an otherwise idyllic home life that is marked by mutual respect and tender care for one another.

However, as fortunes decline dramatically the children suddenly find themselves deprived of either parent. Abandoned by their remaining relatives, the fate-ridden girls can only rely on the nuns at the orphanage as positive female role models. However, needless to emphasise, the bonds between the women from the convent and their fosterlings are all but affectionate and close. The children at the orphanage are fed, cared for and spiritually educated- this basic treatment is what human kindness at Sacred Heart comes up to. As an adult Ruby reflects on the lack of hearty warmth at the orphanage:

> It [Sacred Heart] was a place for us to be until we were old enough to take care of ourselves. It was never a home to us but it was never meant to be. That was the understanding and I understood it very well. (SOTM, 149)

Growing up in a setting that renders them prone to hospitalism, the two girls derive comfort from one another and keep each other grounded. As for their ego formation, lacking positive female role models, the sisters have to rely on their own intuitions as well as on the set of moral values they have already adopted from their late parents.

Interestingly, however, Ruby takes it upon herself to fill the void the tragic loss of mother and father has left. Honouring the promise she has given to her dying mother, Ruby tries to compensate for the sad bereavement. She thus strongly identifies with the parent role and acts accordingly.

Whereas Rose is generally depicted as having a child-like, naïve and happy-go-lucky nature rather bothering about the pleasurable things in life such as dressing up, friends and going shopping, Ruby's concerns are by far more down to earth and serious. She worries about earning enough money to provide for the needs and little luxuries she and her sister, in particular, may possibly have. Ruby thus sacrifices her dear hopes for her own personal future and takes on menial jobs.

Even when Mrs Margolis, a lady she used to care for dies bequeathing her a tiny fortune, the first thought that strikes her is that Rose's future will be financially secure. To Ruby, sharing her life and earthly possessions with her sister is somewhat natural and goes without saying.

> Half of this money will always be Rose's. That's the way we are and the way we've always been and it's safe with me. If I give it to her as a nice surprise one day when she needs it I'm sure she'll understand why I'm doing what I'm doing and not hold it against me. (SOTM, 204)

Due to the significant role she has been assigned with, young Ruby is urged to grow up quickly. In fact, the girl shows great maturity in her behaviour from an early age. Ridden by feelings of guilt and hopelessness after the death of her mother, young Ruby expresses her innermost wish to come of age in order to stand up and support the ones that are dearest to her.

> If I could have grown up right there and then, I would have. I would have grown up and taken care of my mother and made things better for Rose and there would have been no need for 'Thank you, Olive' every five minutes and love would have come back into our house. (SOTM, 44)

Ruby's entire life is completely absorbed by her constant striving to make up for their missing parents. She does not only provide for her sister's material needs, but also instils good manners in Rose. Ruby, furthermore, keeps a watchful eye on her trying to push every possible trouble out of her way.

> Ruby was very quick to pick me out if she spotted me in the playground with my friends or being noisy in the Sacred Heart corridors, where we were supposed to go about our business quickly and quietly with our eyes on the floor. […] [I]f I stepped out of the line I didn't have to worry about the nuns or one of Matron's staff spotting me because my sister was always one step ahead of them. (SOTM, 66)

Interestingly, due to her prominent role as surrogate mother for her little sister, Ruby strongly identifies with the parent generation and even adopts to a large extent their values and perceptions of reality. Her entire reasoning and behaviour is thus strongly infiltrated by old entrenched beliefs and assumptions of morality. Matters of race and social acceptability, therefore, fundamentally impact Ruby's construction of a stable identity and her seizing of opportunities in life.

Having learned the hard way that God and the government have reserved a "different" life for coloureds, she resigns herself to her limited chances and abandons hopes that one day things may change. No matter what humiliation or hardship comes her way she endures it with utmost perseverance- her sister being the only source of solace she can rely on.

> 'Indispensable', that's what they call the people who live here. 'Part of the family.' 'Can't imagine life without her.' All the same there must be rooms, some place close by that you're meant to vanish into when it suits, and I don't mind. I can work and I can vanish. I can do anything life asks of me as long as I can have my sister with me. (SOTM, 125)

Nevertheless, years of lost chances and dashed hopes leave their marks on the young woman. In a faint moment of nostalgia and despair Ruby elaborates how life has made her change.

> I lie in bed and listen to the sea and think that I have lost myself. […] I try and remember that long-ago girl I once was, playing out in Clive Street and singing and dancing for my family and neighbours. I try but I can't do it. (SOTM, 160)

Interestingly, Ruby's personal development reaches a crucial turning point when Rose decides to get married. Like in a real parent-child-relationship the elder sister eventually has to acknowledge that her fosterling has grown into maturity. Ruby's loving and sheltering care is thus no longer needed and Rose finally emancipates herself from her surrogate mother.

> All our lives I've looked out for my sister and this is as far as I've managed to come and I know some things and one of them is that I couldn't stand in Rose's way, not even if I wanted to. (SOTM, 187)

> Looking out for Rose is over. It will be Alf's job now. Rose will be a married woman with a husband and a complete family who have already opened their arms and their hearts to her and I should be glad for her and I am. I will have my place just as I've always had but I will have to learn how to share […]. (SOTM, 215)

As the girls have grown into maturity the world they used to know has changed fundamentally. Apartheid eventually fails and the country celebrates the release of Nelson Mandela and the beginning of a new era. Racist and repressive laws are gradually repealed, making Alf and Rose's marriage possible at all. Yet, as Ruby carefully warns her sister, though times have changed, segregationist ideals are still strongly imprinted on people's minds and thus their future together will inevitably be overshadowed by moral concepts of the past.

> I told her that there was no more Mixed Marriages Act because that suited the government. They dropped it because they hoped it would make them look better to the outside world, but anyone who actually lived here knew that it didn't really change anything. (SOTM, 210)

> She and Alf couldn't go and see a film together and they couldn't go to the beach. They couldn't hold hands in public and thank goodness he had a car because if they ever went anywhere on a bus or train together they'd have to sit in separate sections. (SOTM, 211)

Interestingly, whereas Ruby still cannot free herself from apartheid reasoning even though the dark years of segregation are over once and for all, Rose has never been all too concerned about racial matters. In complete contrast to her sister who has never been at ease with the restrictive conditions, but has accepted them nonetheless as this was the way society was made, she has always been completely unemotional about the limitations enforced on the grounds of ethnicity and has simply tried to flout the laws whenever possible.

As for the bonds between the two women, roles are allocated differently after Rose's wedding. Ruby moves in with the couple and for the first time in their lives Rose looks after her sister giving her a stable and supportive home.

> What I [Rose] was thinking about was my married life and before that the orphanage and all the long way that we'd come. I was thinking that inside my house in Observatory Estate, inside my own married life, I had somehow managed to make a safe place for us and I was grateful and I was relieved. (SOTM, 229)

Having led a relatively sheltered life, the younger woman eventually develops a strong and independent identity. In the second half of the novel she somewhat repays the kindness she has received from her sister throughout their turbulent youth, thereby proving her maturity. When Ruby is deeply devastated after the sad loss of her dear partner, Mr Julies, Rose provides solace and helps her rebuild her shattered life.

The relationship with Jack is a particularly formative phase for the elder of the two sisters. After decades of abandoned hopes and lost chances due to the colour bar and her dedicated devotion to Rose, Ruby, who has struggled against considerable odds for the two of them, eventually finds a shoulder to lean on. The young woman has long felt lonely longing for someone to share her worries and anxieties with. However, after all the hardship and challenges she has come across in life she finally finds solace and security in Jack Julies.

> It's a strange and new feeling for me to have a friend who comes to look for me because I'm a person he would want to be with. I think that as long as Jack Julies is with me no one will come near me, nothing can hurt me and I will be safe. (SOTM, 244)

Ruby's boyfriend is all but a perfect gentleman or mother-in-law's delight. He has his rough edges, but knows his flaws well. People frequently shy away from him due to his looks- his size seems daunting and his body is badly scarred giving evidence of his suffering. Secondly, he does not have a particularly kind and tender nature, also when it comes to women. On the whole, he is a man who has seen and experienced a lot in life and who can look back to a turbulent past.

However, he is kind and soft to Ruby. In a way, they are two tormented souls bound together by their crisis-ridden histories. Hence, understandably, the sudden death of her soul mate hits Ruby hard.

Jack Julies leaves her with some fair wealth. Ruby's reaction to his act of kindness and love, however, displays that her reasoning is still deeply entrenched with apartheid dictums. On the other hand, it once again juxtaposes the unlike sisters.

> My sister sees a grown woman being offered long-term security by a man who was in a position to offer it. I see a girl who was offered a fifty-rand note by a man who should have known better. (SOTM, 304)

Throughout the novel Ruby and Rose are depicted as strikingly different personalities. Jooste thus skilfully exemplifies how the roles we take on and the choices we make in life let people deviate in their identity development- even though external conditions may be exactly the same.

Besides, quite remarkably, even though Ruby, taking on the role of a parent, raises her little sister, Rose shows a completely different nature. The former later on reflects about this curious instance:

> I don't know where Rose learned to be how she is, untidy, floating along in life, easy-going like she is and never afraid of anything. She certainly never learned it from me. (SOTM, 302)

## 5.2. Trauma and Violence

Trauma and violence are recurring themes in Jooste's novels. The author carefully examines the overwhelming influence of harrowing experiences on a child's psyche and identity formation. Besides, she portrays perceptively how the protagonists deal with their - often tremendous - mental strains and how they try to rebuild their shattered lives. However, whereas some of the children succeed in developing strong personalities as they approach maturity, others fail miserably. Yet, their personal failures arise from circumstances which are well beyond their control.

Interestingly, experiencing trauma represents a decisive turning point in the children's personal development. It is depicted as a serious challenge, which puts the adolescents to a real test of character before they grow to maturity. Thus overcoming trauma marks the children's final transition from childhood to adulthood.

### 5.2.1. The Relation among Domestic Violence, State- Sanctioned Cruelty, and Patriarchy

In *Like Water in Wild Places* suffering and violence are omnipresent. However, as far as the latter is concerned, domestic brutality and state- sanctioned cruelty are presented as inextricably linked. This relation is emphasised by a striking similarity of chapter headlines. Whereas 'Music of the Night' (LWIWP, 37) deals with the appalling experience of paternal brutality, 'The Music of Life' (LWIWP, 237) concentrates on atrocities, committed during the border war with Namibia. Interestingly, though, the focus gradually shifts from paternal dominance onto state-induced cruelty as the plot unfolds and the children approach maturity. Jooste thus identifies violence as a typical symptom of the apartheid society.

Furthermore, as in *Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter* and *Frieda and Min* violent behaviour is depicted as a purely male quality. Whereas women are generally presented as victims suffering from brutalities done to them by men, masculine characters are predominantly depicted as the principal agents of sorrow and pain. First the 'terrible thuds' (LWIWP, 275) '[are] the music of his [Conrad's] life' (LWIWP, 240) and then it's '[t]he chop of helicopters and the dull thud of mortars' (LWIWP, 240). Thus Jooste seems to confirm Medalie's theory saying that in the South African context institutionalised and patriarchal terror stem from 'a pervasive masculinist ethos' (Medalie, 513).

### 5.2.2. Fatherly Violence – the Rule of the Patriarch

In *Like Water in Wild Places* Jooste gives an outright account of the shattering effects of domestic violence. Jack Hartmann, the aggressor, is depicted as a despotic patriarch, who physically and verbally abuses his wife. He calls her 'trash' (LWIWP, 38), 'rubbish' (LWIWP, 38), 'a bitch' (LWIWP, 39) and 'a whore' (LWIWP, 39) and then he hits her hard. He further puts the blame for his harsh and violent outbursts on her. He accuses Sylvia of having committed adultery, of 'trollop[ing] around' (LWIWP, 38), her blemished daughter being the irrefutable proof of her unfaithfulness, and thus in his mind she deserves being punished. 'She can't get off scot-free. Because she's been bad she must be punished. She has to pay for what she's done' (LWIWP, 39).

Moreover, he does not attack her behind shut doors. On the contrary, he takes his anger out on her while the children are watching. This even heightens Sylvia's humiliation and frightens his children to the utmost extent.

> He thinks his father will kill his mother. He doesn't know what will happen then, except that he and Beeky will be alone with no-one to look after them. […] He wants her [his mother] to do anything, so his father doesn't hit her anymore. He doesn't want her to die. (LWIWP, 42)

Conrad, being a young and naive child, cannot really grasp the circumstances. Thus, paradoxically, he does not despise his father for his violence against his mother. Instead, he believes that Sylvia needs to change – to obey eagerly and to subordinate herself to her husband - in order to improve the perilous situation. In fact, this is exactly the same strategy Conrad has chosen to 'keep on the right side of [his father]' (LWIWP, 12).

Jack's brutality seems even more threatening due to the imbalance of physical strength between the married couple. Jooste emphasises his bodily superiority indirectly by portraying Sylvia as a docile and weak wife, who cannot ward off her husband's attacks. Her physical appearance clearly reflects her inferiority and her gradually diminishing will for life.

> His mother is thin, see-through and slight with light hair and slender hands and a way of moving so she can slip in and out of places so fast and light if she didn't leave her scent on the air not even the ghost would be able to smell her. (LWIWP, 38)

> The mother eddies past on roses and fear. You have to be quick to catch her. She's so soundless she's almost more ghost than person herself. (LWIWP, 60)

However, although Sylvia is regularly beaten, she is determined to keep the 'terrible thuds' (LWIWP, 275) a secret. She thus shields her husband from any kind of criminal prosecution and negative image allowing the outbursts to go on.

> There's a secret at their house. They all know it but they don't say. His father hits his mother. It's their secret and lives in their house with all the other secrets no-one is allowed to know. (LWIWP, 37)

Sylvia even presses her son not to talk to anyone about her suffering and he readily agrees. Thus his role as victim appears somewhat dubious. On the one hand, his youth is overshadowed by the tragic experience of domestic violence.

On the other hand, however, he himself causes the situation to aggravate by his passiveness and total ignorance. The regular beatings go on and in the end Sylvia, who does not have the strength to oppose her husband, opts for 'the coward's way' (LWIWP, 102) and takes her own life.

Interestingly, though, when the children are informed about the tragic incident they react quite unexpectedly. Both of them appear rather unemotional and composed. Whereas Conrad retreats into silence finding solace in the Bushmen's explanation of death, Beeky seems to have foreseen her mother's fatal end.

> Today the girl is painting blue pictures. Blue as bruises. […] Purple as blood and mauve for half-mourning. A blue mountain and a white house, blue faces and tears and bright blue slashes that run across the page going nowhere and in the middle a terrible cry of red. (LWIWP, 58)

Besides, in an earlier conversation with her brother she makes explicit their mother's need and intention to free herself from her violent husband as well as her own opinion on that matter: ''I say she will,' says his sister. 'I say she will because I know it. I feel it. I know she's going and I want her to go'' (LWIWP, 96). Unfortunately, suicide is Sylvia's only way out of her desperate situation.

Moreover, the children already seem to understand that it is not death that binds people together but life. This becomes even more evident to Conrad when he writes down his abiding memories after his sister's death. 'Into the book goes her life and his and their mother's, painted and pasted and carefully coloured into one life that belongs to all of them […]' (LWIWP, 163).

However, lacking a tender loving mother, who used to act as a buffer between her husband and her children, Beeky and Conrad face their father's uncontrolled anger and callousness. Thus their times of severe personal hardship are indefinitely prolonged. Nevertheless, although Jack's harshness is rather directed against Beeky, she seems to put up with it more effectively than her brother. Right from the beginning the girl displays a strikingly strong personality and thus her father's humiliations do not affect her in the same way as they harm and embarrass Conrad. He is depicted as quite a sensitive boy, whose identity construction is highly dependent on external factors, his father's acknowledgement and praise in particular.

Jack Hartmann, however, follows a very strict and unduly authoritarian style of raising his children. He denies Beeky and Conrad any tender care and fatherly closeness and he perceives emotionality as a weakness which has to be eradicated. Consequently, the siblings must not behave appropriately to their age. On the contrary, they are treated as adults.

Besides, Jack is eager to keep his only son away from his blemished daughter. He, therefore, tries to destroy their close relationship by not allowing them to stay in the same room, by taking Conrad with him on his annual hunting trips while the girl has to stay at home, and by sending Beeky to a girls' college. In fact, he takes quite a few more radical measures to break their brother-sister-bond.

> He can't go to her bed even to say goodnight to her. He has to stand at the door of her room and wave. He can't go in, just in case his father comes past and finds him. His father says if he ever finds them together it isn't God who'll punish them. He'll see to it himself. He'll give each of them a hiding they'll never forget and they'll be sorry for it for the rest of their lives. (LWIWP, 56-57)

Such threats notwithstanding, the relationship between the siblings lasts and even deepens. Yet, Conrad finds it very hard to remain loyal to Jack and to show his brotherly love and affection for Beeky. Thus the boy seems to be somewhat torn between his father and his sister.

Conrad fears his father as much as he adores him. Hence he desperately tries to live up to his expectations. These, however, are hard to meet as Jack has ambitious plans for his son's future. His pronounced attempt is to turn Conrad into a respectable, tough-minded and brave Afrikaner like he himself is. Taking the boy out on a hunting trip in the bush, which may be regarded as a rite of passage, Jack intends to test his son's manliness. However, before they leave for their farm the father lays down the code of male conduct.

> 'I've decided that I'll take you and I'm taking you because I want to see what you're made of. […] I don't want to be disappointed in you. […]
> 'You'll take whatever comes your way and take it like a man,' his father says. 'And don't expect any favours from me or from any of the other men, because you're not going to get any, and remember one thing. Out at the farm I'm God and what I say is law and while we're out there it's the only law that counts.' (LWIWP, 47)

However, joining his father and the other men, Conrad's heightened expectations are disappointed and the hunting trip turns out to be a highly humiliating and painful experience. When the boy is afraid of lightening and thunder and thus starts to cry Jack scolds him and calls him a 'baby' (LWIWP, 75) and a 'girl' (LWIWP, 75), thereby causing feelings of shame and anxiety in his son. Besides, he hits him hard in the face. Later, when Conrad is allowed to fire his first shot the recoil of the gun sends him flying backwards. The other men, however, have already anticipated this failure and so they laugh at his inability to shoot properly. Conrad, on the other hand, is truly upset about this demeaning joke. 'Even when he's an old man and they're even older, they'll never forget and his humiliation is complete' (LWIWP, 77).

### 5.2.3. Institutionalised Violence

In Jooste's novels much of the violence and pain inflicted on her maturing protagonists stems from some sort of confrontation with the oppressive and authoritarian socio- political system. Whereas some of the characters join dissident groups incurring the wrath of the brutal and ruthless regime, others suffer greatly from getting actively involved in machinations geared to maintain apartheid. The latter, however, is particularly evident in *Like Water in Wild Places*:

After leaving college Conrad joins the army, thereby staunchly defending and supporting the establishment. His mission is to seek out 'so-called freedom fighters' (LWIWP, 173) in the bush and to

> knock the shit out of them and to rattle information out of their guts, out of their bones, out of their heads, into their mouths […] because information is power. (LWIWP, 173)

During his military service Conrad observes and commits terrible atrocities. His fellow soldier and close friend, Steynberg, is shot and killed in one of the first fights and he himself causes the death of two innocent girls. Conrad survives the carnage, but the appalling image of 'the children […] [being] lifted up bodily into the air like […] rag doll[s]' (LWIWP, 241) is forever imprinted on his mind.

When some of his fellow comrades coolly torture and murder Blink, a Bushman he has helped to capture, taking his gold teeth as a trophy, Conrad fully grasps the tragic consequences of his active involvement. He himself has turned a perpetrator of most terrible crimes. This insight unsettles Conrad to the utmost extent. Being unable to deal with his guilt, he repeatedly withdraws to memories of happier times in order to seek solace. However, his mental escapes into the past are somewhat short-lived as life brings him back to reality. The next traumatic event is just about to happen.

Conrad's military service ends earlier than expected. He is taken home where Jack tells him that his beloved sister is dead. Suddenly, his father's room seems to close in on him and Conrad gasps for air. He cannot stand Jack's feigned mourning and compassion and no drink or 'leg of mutton […] [w]ith […] mint sauce […]' (LWIWP, 275) can ease his pain.

What Conrad dearly wants is the numbness he felt during armed encounters. '[T]he shouting and the red burning world of half-sleep' (LWIWP, 278) now seem to offer relief from the trauma of loosing Beeky.

However, it is exactly this shock of bereavement which finally causes Conrad to discover his personal strength fully and to cut the strings his father has him on. Now Jack's anger about his plans to salve his conscience by testifying to the Truth Commission can no longer intimidate or harm him.

> The full force of his anger is directed against me and I detach myself in that way I have learned to do. I stand outside myself and this is what I see. (LWIWP, 308)

Conrad's reaction is 'typical of traumatised people and indicates a dissociation of the ego from the suffering self, in order to create a distance from the intense pain that is […] experienced' (Van der Merwe, Gobodo-Madikizela, 53). Besides, it marks the son's desperate break away from his oppressive father. By separating himself from his crippling demons Conrad is no longer affected by Jack's anger and intimidations.

'Trauma […] [being] a loss of control […] [and] a loss of identity' (Van der Merwe, Gobodo-Madikizela, 27) utterly overwhelms Conrad turning him into an immature and weak boy, who is unable to extricate himself from Jack's

influence. However, interestingly, it is again the experience of severe trauma which gives him the strength to emancipate himself from his father in order to develop an identity of his own.

Moreover, storytelling is particularly important to Conrad's mental healing process. Due to his traumatic experiences he has long been caught in a state of silence and obsequiousness. However, by testifying to the Truth Commission and by writing his life story down he is finally able to reflect on and to work through his horrid memories. Reconsidering and narrating the past, thus, is a vital means of catharsis for him.

> Experience is normally processed in the memory in the form of a narrative. […] Traumatic memories are so overwhelming that they cannot be turned into narratives; they are usually triggered by associations; and they remain unassimilated in the psyche, accompanied by intense emotions […].(Van der Merwe, Gobodo-Madikizela, 56)

Beeky suffers a personal bereavement when her boyfriend, Tom Webber, is killed by special branch hit men. The tragic incident happens on the evening of her 'candlelight rally' (LWIWP, 248). Tom is late and he is hesitant to attend the student protest. The drive with the Special unit agents has been a highly unpleasant and threatening experience. In the end, however, he shows up and when he is already within eyespot and crosses the street he is run over by a car. It is clear from the beginning that it is no accident, but a thoroughly planned job. Tom is mortally wounded and Beeky, kneeling beside his aching body, already foresees his untimely death just as she once anticipated the loss of her mother. However, this time Beeky is by no means composed or unruffled. On the contrary, she feels excruciating pain and she deeply grieves over the loss of her first love.

> Beeky's crying. She thinks she's crying. Something sad and terrible is clawing its way out of her throat and it hurts very much so you'd think when it came out it would be a cry all the world would hear but the sound when it comes isn't like that at all. (LWIWP, 255)

Two aspects might account for her strong reaction. First of all, Beeky is older now and can therefore grasp the situation fully. Secondly, after years of personal hardship she found solace and a feeling of emotional security in the relationship

with Tom. He shared her sorrows and he helped her to get on with her high aims. Thus the loss of her soul mate seems to be particularly painful. Besides, it seems to cause a re-traumatisation which considerably exceeds the shattering effect of the earlier bereavement.

In her state of tremendous shock Beeky suddenly sees some of the traumatic scenes Conrad is experiencing in the bush. '[S]tories crash in the air and collide' (LWIWP, 253). On the one hand, this narrative detail emphasises the close relationship between the siblings. On the other hand, however, it shows the range of unbearable suffering inflicted on individuals by state terror and atrocities.

### 5.2.4. Apartheid's Supporters: the Ordinariness of Unscrupulous Monsters

As far as the representation of perpetrators in Jooste's novels is concerned, they are depicted as integral elements of the social order. Similar to nature, which breeds predators and scavengers like the jackal and the hyena, society produces immoral and evil creatures like Berry and Evert.[130]

> The black-backed jackal was the last animal created. He's a scavenger and vengeful and Man marked him chasing him away with the contents of a cooking pot, burning a black mark down his back and all other creatures shun him and leave him to kill and consort with carrion because that is his place. (LWIWP, 161)

However, in *Like Water in Wild Places* Jerome and Jack are most prominently related to the mythological figure of the 'black backed jackal' (LWIWP, 161). Apart from their ruthless and brutal behaviour their names are quite telling. Whereas the former is called 'the jackal' (LWIWP, 161) by his Spin Street comrades, the latter's name might be interpreted as an abbreviation of "jackal".

As far as personal responsibility for committed atrocities is concerned, Rosamund Metcalf claims that Pamela Jooste adopts a morally dubious stance. By attributing the blame squarely to the political system she allows people to abdicate their accountability and complicity. 'Individuals can never be blamed; the human heart is always innocent; only "the custom of the country" is at fault' (Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html).[131]

[130] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.
[131] Cf. Metcalf, http://pagesperso-orange.fr/oracle974/text/74c21e88-329.html.

This widely debated tendency to portray atrocities by apartheid henchmen primarily as the disastrous result of the regime's manipulative and corruptive powers is particularly evident in *Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter*. When Issy, a comrade in the Black Sash, is publicly attacked by her authoritarian and hardliner husband during one of their protests, Gloria interferes and protects her against his uncontrolled anger. Stepping in heroically, Lily's mother gets seriously bruised. However, the situation escalates when one of the policemen who keep a watchful eye on the protesters intervenes. The law enforcement officer stops the fight with utmost brutality and tragically defaces the young woman.

Yet, much to our surprise we find that Gloria, though being the suffering victim who has experienced undue harshness, does not feel any hatred or scorn for the policeman. Quite on the contrary, she even comes to his defence explaining why he reacted the way he did, thereby allaying his outburst. She attributes the responsibility for his deed totally to the political system, thus absolving the aggressor of all blame. Lily recounts Gloria's explanation with a notable lack of understanding:

> […] my mother says what happened then was not his fault.
> He was trying to break it up and things got out of hand and he lifted up his truncheon, no-one knows why, except that's what they're trained to do and they don't know how to do anything else and he brought it down as hard as he could and he was a very big man and it landed in my mother's face because she couldn't pull her arm out in time to stop it even though she saw what was coming and she did try. (DWAPMD, 282)

Yet, on the other hand, by depicting apartheid henchmen as intrinsically ordinary people with a normal home life, Jooste sheds an even darker light on the manipulative and corruptive potential of the political system. Readers somewhat presume that regime offenders must be broken personalities who turned into vile creatures after experiencing dreadful hardship or devastating blows of fate. Seeing that quite the opposite is true- that people like you and me are lured into harming others, notably dissidents, on behalf of the establishment- brings out the full abrasiveness and force of the political system. Talking about her gaoler, Evert Brink, Min explains the following:

> It is the ordinariness of his past that unnerves me. I think he knows this. I don't want to know about the farmhouse and the coolness of the big front parlour and the silver cups polished each week and put back behind the glass of the mahogany cabinet.
> What I am prepared for are monsters. Nothing has prepared me for this unnerving assault of ordinariness. (FAM, 295)

Sadly enough, we are ready to be confronted with beasts. Yet, what upsets us the most is the ordinariness of apartheid advocators. Thus portraying them as not 'so very different from [everyone else] […]' (FAM, 295), is actually a very effective and powerful technique.

Interestingly, however, in *Star of the Morning* Pamela Jooste provides a fairly different depiction of apartheid's henchmen. Instead of representing them as mislead and fooled personalities who inevitably arouse feelings of pity in the reader, she portrays them as evil creatures that enjoy their position of power and derive great pleasure from carrying out their vile duties.

As for personal accountability, the individual is fully held responsible for their disgraceful and immoral conduct. Inhumane acts of violence and humiliation are thus not presented as ideologically motivated. Quite in contrast, apartheid only functions as a breeding ground for all sorts of atrocities. Vile characters abuse the power they're given within the political system to live out their sadistic tendencies.

At the Queen's hotel Ruby observes two police officers 'off-duty […] [and] in plain clothes' (SOTM, 91) beating up a black man. This incident utterly unsettles the young woman. Unable to detect a reason for this outbreak of violence, Ruby instantaneously deplores the men's brutal behaviour. She further doubts that the police have reasonable grounds to treat the African so harshly. Instead, she alleges that they have dishonest motives.

> [I]t isn't what the black man has done or hasn't done that makes my stomach turn over, it's the policemen. They're enjoying themselves. They put their whole heart and soul into it. You can see that and that's the terrible thing. The man has his hands up against a pole and they're beating him with a leather belt. (SOTM, 92)

Ruby is completely terrified after watching this gruesome scene. She simply cannot avert her eyes or ignore this act of mere injustice. She strongly feels and knows for sure that the black man does not deserve to be treated like that.

Furthermore, Ruby closely identifies with the helpless victim. Nobody is willing or courageous enough to jump in and stand up for him.

> As for me, I am alone and I am powerless as the black man who's being beaten. I have no one left to turn to for help, not for him and not for me, and I stand in Dock Road and I am as alone as any human being can be. (SOTM, 93)

In a way, Ruby's account of the incident strongly reminds us of the "dream girl" in van der Merwe's and Gobodo-Madikizela's analysis of narratives dealing with trauma and the remaking of the self. Like the young woman in the story, Jooste's protagonist projects all her suffering and emotional pain onto the beaten person. '[S]he is the onlooker' (Gobodo-Madikizela, van der Merwe, 53), but at the same time, as she strongly relates to his situation, the black man symbolises 'the suppressed, suffering part inside her' (Gobodo-Madikizela, van der Merwe, 53).[132]

Analysing the scene in a broader context, we may assume that the brutal and obviously unjustified lashing of the helpless victim symbolically represents the subjugation and exploitation of native South Africans by whites. The fact that the policemen use a belt to hit the arrested man and not their fists is particularly emblematic of their negrophobia. Besides, the scene is strongly reminiscent of colonial times. It thus clearly aligns the policemen with former landowners and the black man with fiercely treated slaves.

The spiteful and malicious nature of those executive branch men is even more clearly delineated when Ruby addresses the prominent issue of interracial relationships. As we are informed, miscegenation was perceived as a discreditable and immoral conduct under apartheid and thus laws were passed to ban any racial mixing between spouses of different ethnicity.

Yet, as Ruby explains quite plainly, policemen often took great delight in enforcing those enactments. Out of mere malice the executive branch men who beat up the African earlier in the novel regularly stalk and ambush mixed couples having sex. In a way, Ruby interprets this extremely dehumanising and degrading practice as a hobby from which these abominable men derive certain pleasures or even some sort of satisfaction.

[132] Cf. Gobodo-Madikizela, van der Merwe, 52-53.

> Sometimes they [policemen in plain clothes] said they went along, just for the fun of it, off duty, straight from the bar, to catch out some couple that someone had reported. They took flashlights and they'd let the couple carry on for a while and get down to business, then at a signal they'd turn all flashlights on at the same time. They said it was like blinding rabbits with car headlights and very funny to watch. […] They're men themselves so […] in their opinion there isn't a man anywhere, any colour, caught with a woman he's got no business being with, scrabbling for his pants, who manages to look dignified. (SOTM, 105-106)

Analysing this passage in terms of gaze, the scene clearly reflects an asymmetry of power between the onlookers and the people looked on. The policemen's position is one of dominance, power, and control. They may interfere and spoil an utterly intimate moment between lovers just as they please. The couple, on the other hand, is depicted as helplessly exposed to the policemen's voyeuristic gaze.

### 5.2.5. White Trauma – The Loss of Self

Noteworthily, the trauma Kimmy finds herself confronted with in *People Like Ourselves* differs greatly from the hardship Jooste's other child protagonists go through. The young girl neither suffers from an oppressive and violent home life nor from the sheer misery of losing her mother or a dear friend. Nevertheless, her suffering is equally intense and terrible.

Hence in terms of trauma classification the hardship Kimmy endures is of a purely psychological nature. We may further argue that it is somehow secondarily acquired as the suffering stems from an externally induced identity dissolution, which is passed on from the parents to the daughter.

As already mentioned in the theoretical chapter to this thesis, apartheid, being an all pervasive regulatory system, introduced 'whiteness as representing political [and racial] superiority and non-whiteness as representing political [and racial] inferiority' (Zegeye, 4). It thus strictly imposed identity from above. People's sense of self was, therefore, greatly shaped by their affiliation to 'politically constructed 'communities'' (Zegeye, 10).

However, concepts of whiteness and non-whiteness were constructed and confirmed 'through a discourse of othering' (Petzold, 37). As Reckwitz states explicitly in his essay on identity problems in white writing, the apartheid regime

entertained ethnocentric dialectics contrasting the very nature of whites and blacks.

Thus power relations were established by constantly assigning positive attributes to the group of white South Africans and negative features to the non-white majority in turns. Consequently, due to this contrastive argumentation the former were depicted as dominant and generally superior, whereas the latter 'g[o]t semantically impoverished […] through not existing in […] [their] own right […] [and through being] controlled by the white monologue of whiteness' (Reckwitz *Problems*, 2). Petzold adds to the discussion claiming that

> […] colonial discourse establishes the colonizer's identity through the creation of an alterity that is connected to negativity and whose very humanity is frequently denied. (Petzold, 39)

Yet, what seems to be remarkably relevant for the analysis and interpretation of *People Like Ourselves* is the intrinsic interdependence of the two artificially preserved identities. Analysing apartheid practices in the context of colonialism, Reckwitz concludes as follows:

> Not only is the master dependent on the practical skills of the slave, but his entire position of authority or mastery requires that the slave, through his assumed inferiority, confirm him in this position, thus forming links of mutual dependency that have far-reaching consequences. (Reckwitz, *Problems*, 1)

As the novel shows explicitly, the consequences of this juxtaposition are indeed dramatic and profound. Induced by the eventual downfall of the apartheid system and the country's transition from a totalitarian state to a democratic republic, those old established power relations are turned topsy-turvy and related models of identity are deconstructed subsequently. As Petzold puts it

> […] white South Africans are deeply affected by the dismantling of apartheid rule, not only in their loss of power, but also in their relationship to their history and their strategies of identity construction. (Petzold, 38)

Hence alongside the subversion of the hierarchical order and the end of oppositional discourse whites are deprived of any basis to ground and morally justify their claim to mastery and supremacy. Thus white South Africans, as represented by Julia and Douglas, experience a sudden and unforeseen

dissolution of their assumed self. Stemming from this loss of identity they suffer a severe personal crisis.

As Julia and Douglas are incapable of airing or processing their tantalising emotions, a process referred to as 'somatisation' (Etherington, 28) is triggered off. Thus, accordingly, their traumatic experiences are expressed via physical malfunctions. The human body, therefore, symbolically voices shattering feelings that are inaccessible to the conscious mind.[133]

Taking into account the causal link between ill health and unprocessed emotions emphasised in Etherington's elaborate treatise on the nature and healing of severe trauma, we may infer that Douglas' cardiac symptoms are merely the logical result of his repressed and denied feelings of inadequacy and shame.[134] As the Professor of Narrative and Life Story Research explains

> […] a traumatised male who may not be able to acknowledge, even to himself, feeling powerless or helpless might develop ulcers, heart disease or irritable bowel syndrome as his body seeks expression of his disallowed emotions. (Etherington, 30)

However, as Jooste's novel shows, this unprocessed trauma does not only shatter the lives of people who are directly affected. On the contrary, it has a great potential to spread and impact succeeding generations.

Hence with the parental self shattered children like Kimmy grow up in a social environment that is devoid of successful examples of identity construction. Thus due to this perceived vacuum there is little left for the new generation to build their own egos on. Unable to develop their sense of self adopting their parents' strategies, white kids wander about seeking orientation.

In the case of Kimmy Merchant this notable disorientation and inability to develop a strong and independent ego culminates in her going to rave parties, the excessive use of drugs, and minor offences such as shop lifting. Yet, after years of excesses and craving for self-recognition her quest for a stable and independent identity is eventually fruitful. By cutting ties with her next of kin, Kimmy unburdens herself from her troubled legacy and attempts a restart.

[133] Cf. Etherington, 28.
[134] Cf. Etherington, 28-30.

Besides, part of the girl's misery stems from an unresolved family conflict. Interestingly, in contrast to Conrad's situation, it is the mother- daughter bond that is overshadowed and immensely burdened by continuing accusations and heated arguments.

Seeking utter perfection in everything and everyone, yet, most notably in herself, Julia struggles hard to be a super- mum. However, contrary to her good intentions to bring out the very best in Kimmy, she rather complicates and even hinders her daughter's personal development. Thus instead of being a loving and caring mother, who allows her offspring the freedom to make their own experiences and develop their personality independently, Julia is an overpowering and all-dominant matriarch '[w]ho's in charge […] [and] […] [w]ho's right' (PLO,32). Hence without really taking her daughter's needs and very nature into consideration, she meticulously pre-plans the girl's entire life.

> Kimmy says she just wants to be 'normal' for a change, just like anyone else. She's had enough of the right schools and the right people. She wants to make her own friends and they should be people she likes, no matter who their parents are. She wants to dress her own way. (PLO, 101)

Shockingly enough, Julia is still pursuing her aim of shaping and mending Kimmy's personality when she is already on the verge of losing her daughter's love and respect forever. This carelessness fully reveals her stubbornness and the vehemence of her idealistic convictions.

> She never did learn the knack of knowing where her skin ended and Kimmy's began. […] She's intruded. She's intervened and she's interfered. Somewhere along the way she's learned to make herself immune to unhappy faces, tears, anger, curses and ultimately rejection. (PLO, 32)

As Julia is not blessed with the 'golden girl daughter' (PLO, 109) she has long pinned her hopes on, her perfectionist ego gets seriously dented. Unable to accept weakness and imperfection as a categorical feature of humaneness, 'Julia can't be proud of [Kimmy] [and] […] even worse she can't be particularly proud of herself' (PLO, 33). Douglas comments on the situation as follows:

> '[…] She's not perfect. Have you ever thought that maybe, just maybe you're the one who's the problem? Perhaps your expectations need to be adjusted. Have you ever thought about that?' (PLO, 38)

Like Jack Hartmann Douglas' wife puts in a great deal of effort to make her blemished daughter conform to her rules and high ideals. Yet, as with Beeky all her corrective measures remain utterly fruitless. Despite her overpowering and authoritarian style of parenting, Kimmy eventually develops an open and independent mind. Resenting her mother for her undue pressure and dominance, the rebellious girl constantly seeks confrontation with her parents perpetually undermining their position and fake idyllic family life.

> 'She's in a prison here and I'm her gaoler. That's what she's rebelling against. She's on a leash with me at the end of it and she resents me for that and I can't really blame her.' (PLO, 105)

Kimmy's vile and improper conduct gradually deepens the split between herself and her parents and after a while the two parties have become so estranged from each other that a full reconciliation rather seems to be a mission impossible. Being completely unwilling to forgive and forget for the sake of a new beginning, the bitter rivals keep their steady poker faces and stubbornly follow the hard-line paths they have set out for themselves.

> 'It's "Tough Love" both sides, Dad,' says Kimmy. 'Parents can sometimes be hard to love too. I wonder if she's ever thought about that?'
> 'Why don't we just pack it in then?' says Douglas.
> […] 'Because Mummy won't.' (PLO, 109)

However, sadly, the bitter conflict does not only keep Kimmy and her parents apart. On the contrary, unfulfilled hopes and expectations also put a barrier between husband and wife. As Julia puts it '[…] once you've managed with such conspicuous success to estrange yourself from your daughter any other breaking of bonds becomes easier to do' (PLO, 33).

Thus soon the family finds themselves on a downward spiral driven by hopelessness and frustration. As a result endless series of discussions and quarrels poison the vainly upheld home life idyll.

It goes without saying that the continuing family dispute puts serious strain on Kimmy's childhood and coming of age. Utterly overwhelmed with the troubled home situation and the constant clashes with her parents, the young girl starts peeing in her bed.

> For a long time now she's had to listen to the rise and fall of their voices behind the closed door of their bedroom. It made her afraid of the night, which was something she's never been. (PLO, 43)

> Kimmy tries not to sleep. Half sleep is better […] but [it] has its own problems. You can't hide in half sleep. (PLO, 45)

As for Conrad Hartmann in *Like Water in Wild Places*, the family house becomes a daunting and haunting symbol of the girl's hardship. Kimmy thus literally flees her childhood home trying to leave her traumatic memories behind as well.

> At her mother's dream house the colours are deeper and darker than anything real is. You can see that at once. At the instant the gate slides open to let you in you can see this is not a good place. It's a bad trip, the worst kind. You can tell that just by looking at the colours. (PLO, 42)

### 5.2.6. Angry Young Men

In *Dance With a Poor Man's Daughter* Jooste provides a powerful account of how non-white lives were irrefutably transformed by apartheid legislation and she explores the direct and indirect implications enforced inequality had for South Africa's coloured youth. As is exemplified by Lily, Royston and Portia, the tyranny of the white minority was far-reaching in its devastating effects.

First and foremost, Jooste delineates the dissolution of coloured families brought about by tightened socio-economic conditions. In the absence of men women had to rely solely on themselves struggling hard to make a living and raise their children.

Fathers, however, were deeply missed, especially as positive role-models for adolescent boys. Whereas Jooste does not go into further detail about the reasons for the absence and perceived weakness of her male protagonists, Ramphele and Richter claim that worsening economic conditions accounted for the breaking apart of families. As generally illustrated, the destruction of familial bonds caused mistrust and deep resentments in children. [135]

Besides, in addition to growing socio-economic inadequacies, enforced complicity with the system, most notably, incurred the wrath of the youth as they saw their parents and friends being taken in by the police or even brutally interrogated. The harsh treatment suffered at the hands of regime beneficiaries

[135] Ramphele, Richter, 74-75, 77.

was, in turn, met with violence. What emanated was a vicious circle of traumatisation and immediate infliction of trauma on others.

> These re-enactments manifest in acts of revenge, anger, and sometimes as violence against the self, and may seem unrelated and disconnected from the original trauma. (Gobodo-Madikizela, van der Merwe, 25)

Analysing "violence against the self" in a broader context - meaning in terms of "violence against people of the same ethnic background" - we find that coloured-on-coloured-violence is depicted as an unfortunate concomitant and sad expression of young people's desperation and hopelessness. In Jooste's narrative, Royston, representing South Africa's angry youth takes his '[…] anger […] straight onto the streets' (Ramphele, 121). Taking after his late father, he engages in gang fights and commits street crime.

Hence, in a vain attempt South Africa's angry youth tries to regain what apartheid has deprived them of, their dignity and self-respect. However, sadly, violence happens to be their means of choice. Gobodo-Madikizela and van der Merwe explain the adolescent propensity for crime and violence as follows:

> When people are traumatised, it is an experience of humiliation; they are powerless and they need a sense of control; the violation takes away the very core of who you are. When people repeat these traumas, it is an effort to be in a place where they are in control once more; it is the reclaiming of their power and the sense of control that was taken away from them by the perpetrators. They put themselves in the shoes of the perpetrator, thereby becoming perpetrators themselves. (Gobodo-Madikizela, van der Merwe, 35)

Unlike Lily, who displays a political naivety, Royston is well aware of the dramatic impact the Group Areas Act has on the entire Cape coloured community. In a vain attempt he tries to explain their perilous situation to his cousin. His tone is sharp with anger when he states that

> [t]he Government is going to knock them all [the houses in the Valley] down. […] 'The bulldozers will come in and push everything down flat,' he says. 'It's happened in other places. I've seen it with my own eyes and they're not going to worry about you and you aren't going to stand in their way so you better put that in your pipe and smoke it.' (DWAPMD, 72-73)

### 5.2.7. "Old An[g]ries" – The Death of an Old Native

Old Andries, a Native African, who lives in a tool shed at the local cemetery where he does maintenance work, is yet another prominent victim of apartheid enforcements. Under the Group Areas Act blacks are no longer allowed to mix with whites or coloureds and thus they are deported to remote reservations.

However, as Old Andries refuses to give up his home for a native location it takes two policemen to enforce the law and take him to the train station. Stella - among hundreds of others – witnesses the sad scene by chance.

While Lily's aunt is trying to stand up for the completely overwhelmed Native telling the enforcement officers that the old man truly belongs in the Valley, Andries, in a state of utmost despair and hopelessness, chooses death over deportation and takes his own life. At an unobserved moment the black man sneaks away from his guards and 'put[s] his head down on the railway line […] and the train […] [goes] over it (DWAPMD, 101).

Back home Stella is still deeply shocked by the gruesome incident she happened to watch accidentally. Trying to spare Lily the sadness about black Andries' death, Grandmother Daniels and her daughter come up with a lie. They tell the little girl that the old man '[…] was going back to the native location […] where all the Natives live […] so he could live with them' (DWAPMD, 102). Lily, however, cannot be fooled. She knows for sure that

> 'Old Andries would never go anywhere […]. […] He never leaves the graveyard. That's his place and that's where his things are. He keeps his things in his shed. If he wanted to go to the native location he would have gone a long time ago. He would never go now. He likes his job and he's too old.' (DWAPMD, 103)

### 5.2.8. The Double Trauma of Jews in South Africa

In *Frieda and Min* Pamela Jooste examines through the lens of a young girl the (mis)fortunes of a Jewish family and their adjustment to apartheid conditions. The novelist thus seems to align herself with a growing number of prolific South African authors – Tony Eprile, Gillian Slovo, Johnny Steinberg, Nadine Gordimer, Dan Jacobson, Joanne Fedler, Patricia Schonstein, just to name a few-

who illuminate the country's burdened historical legacy and the emergence of the rainbow nation from a Jewish angle.

As Jooste compellingly elucidates in her approach to the crippling effects of apartheid, the situation of Jews was somewhat special as the people already had a history of persecution and suffering. After the terror of the Holocaust and the cultural uprooting resulting from diaspora Jewish culture and identity was once again hit by tragedy when the socio-political climate turned hostile after the Afrikaner nationalists' coming to power. In a historical context the hardship and suffering experienced in the country of refuge may, therefore, be interpreted in terms of a re-traumatization. Hence, quite understandably, the effects of apartheid evils on Jewish ego and identity construction were all the more grave and devastating.

Throughout Jooste's narrative Frieda repeatedly refers to her people's burdened legacy. She thereby clearly relates past evils with anti-semitic or racist inclinations of the present providing an insight into Jewish assumptions of race and morality.

> I don't know what they teach a person out in the wilds but at our house we have respect for other people. We know what it's like to be pushed around. We haven't forgotten what happened to us and we never will. […] We've learnt our lesson and had our turn. Today it's them. Tomorrow it might be us again. (FAM, 52)

Besides, Frieda's recount represents a compelling portrayal of the xenophobia at the heart of the apartheid system. Interestingly, as in the quotation given above experiences of anti-semitism are prominently identified with racism. Jooste thus seems to suggest a strong interrelation between blackness and Jewishness. This contextualisation becomes even more explicit in Frieda's astute observation about blacks and Jews having their own kind of food.

> She [Beauty, the maid] has all her own things in our house and she keeps them in a separate part of the cupboard in the same place as her packet of sugar and her tea. […] Everything is always separate. It's a little bit like keeping *kosher* but different. (FAM, 82)

However, interestingly, like in Patricia Schonstein's *A Time of Angles* the question of solidarity with the revolting subaltern matrix is frequently addressed in Jooste's narrative. Whereas Min, raging with anger over politically enforced

injustice, engages in dissident movements, Frieda, obviously lacking strong feelings about her home country, perceives the social upheaval as being none of her business. On the one hand, past cultural traumas infiltrating the present may account for the girl's reluctance to get involved in the struggle. Taking into account the terrible atrocities committed against Jewish people in history, their avoidance of tenuous and conflictuous situations seems all too understandable.

> Sometimes I feel that being a Jew is like having an albatross that hangs around our necks and on days like this, hearing stories like this, I think I hear glass crashing into splinters and see yellow Stars of David floating invisible around us. I think I hear the word 'Juden' being hissed in my ear. Whether we like it or not we know about such things and we know more than other people do because they have touched us. (FAM, 193)

On the other hand, however, though feeling a general sympathy for the underprivileged side of the colour bar, doubts about her true belonging may constitute Frieda's passiveness. The girl obviously does not perceive herself as truly South African, therefore reacting relatively untouched by state politics. She thus fails to understand Min's boiling anger against the establishment.

> I hate them for what they're doing to this place, to these people, to this country I love. It fills me with white-hot rage and it's rage that keeps me going. (FAM, 235)

Interestingly, like with Beeky, hatred constitutes the driving force behind Min's political activism. Frieda, in turn, completely lacks this irresistible urge. She rather enjoys 'a nice piece of Thrupp's cake to help […] bad news go down' (FAM, 248). Her strategy is clearly one of evasion.

The reasons for her faint commitment may well lie in her Jewishness. In contrast to Min and Beeky, Frieda, who is generally depicted as a weak and self-conscious personality, is easily upset and unsettled by other people's remarks or reactions. Interestingly, she often regards her Jewish denomination as being the sole reason for their behaviour.

> It doesn't really matter what's inside her case but suddenly it's important and I'm taking it personally and thinking maybe my Jewishness has something to do with it. Maybe Min doesn't like Jews. Maybe she doesn't trust us. (FAM, 53)

> ‘Is it because I’m Jewish you won’t let me come in with you?’ I say. ‘Is that the reason why? If you’ve got something against it, you can say so if you like. I won’t mind.’ (FAM, 79)

Worn down by a crippling history and overwhelmed with apartheid conditions, Frieda is paralysed with fear and stands trembling when she or someone of her family is being bullied. For instance, when her physically impaired brother is attacked by a group of boys she simply fails to help him.

> I know I should do something but I don’t know what to do. It’s my brother who’s in trouble and the best I can do is stand there where I am with my hands over my mouth and even while I’m standing there I know I’m not very much good to anyone and no help at all. (FAM, 154)

In the end it is Min’s perilous situation that urges Frieda to free herself from the crippling demons of the past and overcome feelings of inferiority. Paradoxically, it once again requires serious circumstances to make a person regain her inner strength after years of being paralysed by the experience of trauma. Impending threats thus eventually reset and boost the formation of a strong and independent identity.

## 5.3. Perspectives on the Past and Present – Coping Strategies and Defense Mechanisms

As Jochen Petzold aptly illustrates, identity, being a highly unsteady and variable perception of the self, constantly undergoes sea changes over time according to the experiences gained. This applies to personality formation in individuals and groups alike.[136] Whereas “[i]ndividual identity is partially constituted by a person’s life-history […] [,] common history plays an important role in the establishment of group identity” (Petzold, 15).[137]

However, interestingly, this interdependence of past events and formative processes in individual and communal selves is strictly mutual. Just as the experiences we have had influence our perception of who we are, our established identity greatly shapes the way we remember bygone situations. Thus our present self renders our memorization highly selective and hardly objective.

[136] Cf. Petzold, 13.
[137] Cf. Petzold, 13, 15.

Subsequently, interpretations of historic events may vary glaringly - especially if people belong to different social strata.[138] [139]

This instance is widely observed in modern South African population. Hence, not surprisingly, former apartheid stakeholders and beneficiaries give a version of the past that is radically different from the one their black and coloured fellow countrymen hold.

In her novels Jooste elaborately explores these conflicting stances on the country's dim apartheid period and portrays a multitude of strategies for dealing with the nation's history. However, most interestingly, the author thereby focuses on former regime propagators coping with their involvement in state sanctioned machinations. By portraying their reflection and reasoning processes, Jooste clearly illustrates how apartheid propaganda operates in practice and she allows the reader to take an insider's look at protagonists' attempts to do away with their personal demerit. She thus dismantles the classificatory and manipulative socio-political system at its very core.

Although all of Jooste's novels provide a critical and encompassing analysis of attitudes toward the past ranging from great nostalgia to a clear break with what has been before, her third and fourth narrative (*Like Water in Wild Places* and *People Like Ourselves*) are particularly relevant as they cover the change in power relations the country faced in the early nineties. By contrasting conflicting mind-sets, the author skilfully portrays a nation in transition.

In *Like Water in Wild Places*, which is set in the final years of the anti- apartheid struggle and the dawn of a new era, some of the protagonists feel the need to remember by-gone events, whereas others rather opt for a complete denial of bitter and embarrassing memories. However, by focusing on the work of the TRC and the cathartic effect of storytelling, the novel clearly emphasises the necessity for individuals as well as for entire nations seeking to remake themselves to confront their sordid past in order to free themselves from history's stranglehold. Thus dealing with the past is vitally important for people's sense of self and identity formation. In this respect Jooste seems to agree fully with

[138] Cf. Petzold, 15-16.
[139] Prof. Rigby introduces the term 'remembered past' to emphasise the susceptibility to manipulation and selectivity of memory in general.

Erasmus. In her essay on the formation of post-apartheid identities the latter concludes that it is

> [t]he challenge for all South Africans […] to begin to recognize racist sentiments and practices as part of our everyday reality and the shaping of all our selves. It is to relinquish the desire to leave the past behind and instead, to start processing the past with due regard to the powerful emotional burden which accompanies it: feelings of anger, guilt, betrayal, shame, pain and humiliation. (Erasmus, 26)

This outright concern with an unbiased and honest uncovering of the murky past in order to achieve national healing is a typical feature of an early type of post-apartheid texts referred to as ''honeymoon literature''[140] (Ibinga, http://www.thiscenturyreview.com/post_apartheid.html). Hence we may interpret Jooste's third narrative as a classic example of this writing.

*People Like Ourselves* represents an equally stern warning against self-deception and nostalgia. It clearly holds that changes of the times cannot be ignored and that the glorified past can never be retrieved. Furthermore, the novel invariably proves that individuals who persistently evade an honest confrontation with the unpleasant truths are inevitably doomed to personal failure. Clinging to the past their personalities grow rigid and freeze and thus they become incapable of dealing with present realities.

### 5.3.1. Seizing a Distorted Image of Reality – The Role of Self- Deception

In *Like Water in Wild Places*, Jack Hartmann, being an apartheid advocate, has a highly ambivalent attitude towards reviving his memories. On the one hand, he shows great respect for his dear Afrikaner ancestors, who rendered outstanding services to white South Africa and struggled hard to maintain their superior position. His study resembles a private museum devoted to family portraits and he himself desperately seeks to emulate the success of these noble and honourable Hartmanns. He thus truly glorifies the Afrikaner version of history. On the other hand, though, Jack resolutely refuses to acknowledge the

[140] After the fall of apartheid South Africa's literary scene was markedly dominated by texts heralding a great new era. These works highly hailed what came to be known as the South African miracle, the emergence of a racially unbiased democratic society after years of oppression under a discriminatory regime. The truth seeking process, the need to come to terms with one's past in order to be freed from history's stranglehold and national healing represent central concerns. Stephane Serge Ibinga uses the terms "honeymoon literature" or "literature of celebration" to refer to this kind of writing.

unpalatable truth about the oppression and exploitation of non-white South Africans. Hence albeit being a beneficiary of the discriminatory political system, he strictly disclaims any complicity or responsibility for the injustice and violence done to blacks and coloureds. He thus does not show any sign of remorse and he is certainly not inclined to ask for forgiveness. Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela explain Jack's pronounced refusal to confess any wrongdoings as follows:

> Sometimes people belonging to the group of the oppressors [or beneficiaries] do not want to apologise because to them an apology is an admission of guilt. Hearing that they are guilty and that they benefited from the past, threatens their sense of self-respect. (Van der Merwe, Gobodo-Madikizela, 36)

Therefore it does not come as a big surprise that Jack deprecates the country's attempt to come to terms with its delicate history by setting up a Truth Commission. He even mocks the honest endeavour to dig into the past in order to find out about the long concealed truth and he ridicules the hearings of those applying for amnesty. The two passages given below fully reveal Jack's disrespect for the TRC as well as his attempt to undermine its authority.

> We are in the laundry business now and all our laundry is dirty. This is what he says about the Truth Commission. […]
> '[…] We're supposed to stand up, cap in hand, and say how sorry we are. What it is we're sorry for I really don't know.' (LWIWP, 293)

> It's like a soap opera. It's on television. Can you believe that? Half the bloody country sitting with their eyes glued to it just in case they miss something. (LWIWP, 308)

In the course of the novel Jack repeatedly suggests that people let bygones be bygones. 'He thinks what is done is done and should be put behind […].' (LWIWP, 295). This he preaches to his children. They should forget about the gloomy secrets – their father hitting their mother, Sylvia's suicide and the enormous social cost of apartheid- and seize the glorious and whitewashed Afrikaner history instead.

Jerome, being a former henchman of the apartheid system, is not all too enthusiastic about the truth seeking process either. In the course of political change his 'unit is disbanded' (LWIWP, 296), but still

> Jerome doesn't care. As far as he's concerned they can do what they like with the country. Makes no odds to him. There's always a job for a man who's good with electrics. He can find a place on the railways or with Telkom. Someone will put in a good word for him and the job will be his and that'll be the end of the story. (LWIWP, 296)

Yet, Jerome does not simply blot out his memories of his time down at Spin Street and gets on with his life, but he decides to keep it all to himself. Thereby he wishes to escape criminal prosecution.

> […] [I]f people start digging around and asking questions, he'll be just another man doing another job, complaining about the pay, saying what an arsehole the boss is and the blacks are such bloody fools anyway. Wherever they look all they'll find are men with no past and if they should ask no-one will remember anything. (LWIWP, 296-297)

In *People Like Ourselves* Douglas Merchant, being a staunch segregationist and apartheid beneficiary, has insurmountable difficulties to warm to the new conditions and to acknowledge recent socio-political changes. He thus averts his eyes from reality and fervently demonstrates and defends his innate superiority against any challenges in his spheres of influence, meaning his company and home environment. Consequently, his maid is frequently exposed to his 'white noise' (PLO, 14), being endless instructions, rebukes, and specifications.

> This is his house. He's lord and master here. He can do as he pleases. He can say what he likes and who's there to stop him? […] 'Can't you take a joke, Adelaide?' he'll say. 'Don't you want to be educated? You don't know what it costs to keep a place like this going. I know you don't know. That's why I'm telling you. […]' (PLO, 15)

Besides, when 'it's time to 'black up'' (PLO, 56) Douglas simply refuses to promote his truly obedient and loyal servant; Gladstone, to whom he owes a great deal of his commercial success. Yet, his constant refusal to provide employment for non-whites affects his business adversely as it loses its competitive edge. Nevertheless, receiving less and less orders and facing financial problems, Douglas still stubbornly sticks to his principles.

> When the Department of Labour come knocking at his door to ask why he hasn't replaced himself with a black managing director he'll deal with the matter and do it in his own way. Until then it's Merchant and Merriman. That's what it was named when the company was incorporated and that's how it'll stay. (PLO, 57)

Jack's second wife, Emmeline, obviously shares her husband's inclination to self-deception. By painting the walls and by rearranging the furniture, she symbolically erases the past.

In *People Like Ourselves* Julia Merchant pursues quite a similar strategy of dealing with unpleasant and painful memories. Her body, being a site of inscription, unfalteringly remembers the key events in her life, experiences that may conjure up bittersweet emotions.

> Her body records certain events. In her own eyes, in the eyes of a dispassionate outsider, it's clear she's known something of life. Her body will tell all the obvious things. Her appendix is gone, somewhere along the way her tonsils were removed, at some point she broke an arm and at some other point she bore a child. (PLO, 31)

Julia is too emotionally shattered and wounded in her pride that she tries to evade any confrontation with reality and thus she blots out her haunting memories simply by removing the traces life leaves on her body. She seeks the medical and emotional support of a plastic surgeon and hides her innermost feelings behind thick layers of make-up.

> Kimmy does hate [breast feeding]. […] Perhaps that's where it started. This is what Julia thinks as she slides into her clothes in Dr da Costa's examination room and checks her hair and make-up in the mirror, thoroughly provided for that purpose, and helps herself to a tissue to blot at her mouth before she slicks on more lipstick. (PLO, 259)

In general, women of Johannesburg's high society feel a frantic urge to have all sorts of plastic surgeries done to their bodies. This constant striving for rejuvenation and aesthetic beautification somewhat reflects their genuine inclination to make-believe and keeping up false fronts. Yet, as with the 'Silkie chickens'(PLO, 77) appearances are deceiving. Things are clearly not what they seem to be. Thus behind their cheerful facades women like Julia and Liane are lonely, crestfallen, and failed personalities.

> Here she stands, in the door of her good-address townhouse. Slim-hipped Liane with her apple-hard breasts and the mask of her make-up always firmly in place, smiling with that smile the Botox injection keeps from her eyes. (PLO, 69)

> They [Julia's breasts] seem to her old and sad, depleted, sucked totally dry, used up. They reflect, more clearly than she'd like what people would see if they could look past her beautifully maintained face right into her heart and she's ready for a great many things but she's not quite yet ready for that. (PLO, 243)

Rosalie, too, finds it exceedingly difficult to put her past behind her and openly embrace the present. Having given herself heart and soul to the resistance cause sacrificing personal happiness to live up to her high political ideals, she struggles hard to find her bearings in a new and democratic South Africa. With the revolutionary aims achieved there is little left for her to build her new life on.

Interestingly, due to this inability to acquaint herself with the altered conditions Rosalie's soul experiences a drastic split. The "mirror woman" (PLO, 97), her past self-assured and resolute self, and her weaker self-conscious new ego, both, dwell inside her. However, the former repeatedly takes over control as the latter is all too easily overwhelmed with everyday challenges.

> The mirror woman can always be summoned when needed. (She keeps an empty Marks & Spencer crème blusher compact, 'Bronze Shimmer', in her bag. It has a mirror in its lid, just a small rummage in her handbag away, ready for any time she needs it and Rosalie is secure.) (PLO, 93)

> [T]he woman in the glass remains perfectly still, patiently waiting as the train clatters towards Morden. In the end she has to take a taxi and it takes a long time and then she's not quite certain of her address and the mirror woman has to answer for her. (PLO, 97)

As van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela claim in their in depth analysis of recovery from trauma 'this split in two [personalities]' (Gobodo-Madikizela, van der Merwe, 53) is a common reaction frequently found in people who have experienced intense pain and suffering. By projecting haunting memories and overwhelming emotions onto a distant and detached part of the self, the surviving ego eventually manages to dissociate itself from the harmful impact of past traumas. Despite it being some sort of repression and denial, this coping strategy effectively frees the personality from its crippling burdens, thereby allowing for a complete reformation and new growth of identity.[141]

[141] Cf. Gobodo-Madikizela, van der Merwe, 53.

However, although Rosalie seems slightly ambivalent about letting bygones be bygones yearning for her years as a key figure in the liberation movement, a strong inclination for self- deception and suppression prevails. In a way that clearly resembles Emmeline Hartmann's painting the walls to blot out memories Rosalie, too, eschews any confrontation with her own past and thus vainly tries to cover up and shun any reminders of times long gone. As the mere sight of her mirror image arouses emotions too unbearable to look at it, she hides it under a cloth.

> [Rosalie] takes up her shawl and drapes it over the mirror, tucking it in tight on all sides and the girl, politely, stands where she is, waits to be offered a seat and pretends she doesn't see, but is this not the way one banishes the dead? (PLO, 121)

Yet, as Jooste's novels critically claim, such superficial measures prove ineffective in getting rid of unpleasant memories. Instead, they hold that an honest confrontation with the past – no matter how disgraceful or abhorrent it may be – is absolutely obligatory to cast out one's demons successfully.

> […] [N]o matter how roughly [Rosalie] pushes memory out of the way, her body betrays her and whether she wants it or not, her body remembers and grieves for her loss. (PLO, 94)

In a way, Michael Rosenberg, too, engages in the joint endeavour to pimp up and do away with the past. Having taken over his father's business, he rebuilds entire parts of Johannesburg 'replac[ing] the city of his youth with sanitized lifestyle packages protected by closed circuit television cameras and parking basements hidden under the cobbles' (PLO, 144). Thus by making over Johannesburg's architectural features so tightly linked to historic events, he helps the town to a radical face-lift, virtually achieving a tabula rasa. Insofar he brings about fundamental change, though it may not be the way he set out for initially.

Therefore, with the help of ambitious constructors like Michael Rosenberg settings of the country's dim past are razed to the ground and replaced with architectural features typical of Western Europe or America. Johannesburg's general appearance is thus strictly globalised.

> These days in Johannesburg […] you can find all of Buenos Aires packed in one over-detailed building or even catch a glimpse of Berlin's reconstructed Potsdamer Platz.
> Everywhere there are places that look as if they've been plucked out of some other country and put down here, […] fresh, readymade, with no dubious past to account for and it's these places that are changing the skyline. (PLO, 145)

As a desired result the country's dim and murky past is successfully hidden from the international beholder's eye, safely shut 'behind a ten-metre-high stone wall close by Gold Reef City Casino' (PLO, 146) and surrounded by an amusement park. 'If you look for it now you can go to the Apartheid Museum' (PLO, 146).

Yet, however, no matter how honest people's attempt to put their sordid history behind them and get on with their lives may be, the mind cannot be tricked or lured into forgetting apartheid evils. Memory is still fresh and unlikely to be blotted out easily. Thus the past keeps a firm grip on the present.

> There's no point looking back or even talking about it now but even after all this long time that old trickster, memory, will catch him with his guard down and give a sly display that serves to remind him just how potent those old powers once were.
> He remembers well enough then and those things that come back to him, those same things that never really left him at all, still have the power to prick at his heart. (PLO, 146-147)

### 5.3.2. Acknowledging the Past, Embracing the Future

As already mentioned in the general introduction to *Like Water in Wild Places*, the main plot line is repeatedly interspersed with the narratives of the Old Madam, who haunts the servants, informs about the family history, and has her say about what is going on in the Hartmanns' house. These passages strongly emphasise 'the recalcitrance of the past and its capacity to infiltrate the present' (Medalie, 508) warning the reader not to repress unpleasant memories or to cloak disgraceful events in secrecy.

However, Beeky's death marks the end of the Old Madam's narration. Conrad, representing a new generation of South Africans, finally decides not to avert his eyes from the awful truths any longer and reconsiders his mindset. Thus her duty is finally fulfilled and so she leaves the realm of the living in order to unite with her beloved ones in the afterlife.

In contrast to her brother and her father, Beeky does not show any inclination towards palliation or self-deception. Being a strong personality from the start the girl readily faces the sad and painful realities of her life. For example, when her mother commits suicide bringing disgrace upon her whole family Beeky does not try to 'wrap […] everything up in the smoky cellophane of shame' (LWIWP, 106). On the contrary, she wants to see her dead mother and she wishes to attend her funeral to take leave. Beeky does not bother about the advices of others who keep saying that '[i]t's not a nice thing' (LWIWP, 98) and that 'it'll make her unhappy' (LWIWP, 104). However, her asking is in vain as she is not allowed to go to the funeral. ''It isn't a place for children,' his father says' (LWIWP, 103).

Unlike Jack, Beeky is not satisfied with the simplistic and rational explanation of death being just 'the end of the story' (LWIWP, 100). She is fully convinced that their mother will always be with them, with her and with Conrad. Beeky preserves Sylvia's heritage and she illustrates and writes whatever she recalls down in the book she makes for her brother. In this way her mother's life is not 'over and […] done' (LWIWP, 103), but she lives on in the memory of her children. They 'keep her safe inside [them]' (LWIWP, 105). This fact dawns on Jack when he looks at his recalcitrant child and all he sees is 'her mother […], mocking him, safe and untouchable behind the locked gates which are her daughter's eyes' (LWIWP, 207).

When Beeky is older she does not let herself be fooled by the whitewashed and glorified image of Afrikanerdom. Instead, albeit belonging to the privileged population group, she resolutely rebels against the establishment and its staunch supporters – including her own father.

As already mentioned before, Beeky's political ambitions basically stem from the unresolved tensions with Jack. She regards her father as the source of all the evil in her life and as she realises that he is merely the product of ideological brainwashing her hatred and resistance is directed against the apartheid regime.

Nobody can stop her from attending forbidden rallies and from airing her political beliefs. When her father's new wife vainly tries to make her '[t]hink of other things. Nice things. Boys for example and dresses and parties. The kind of things […] [that] […]'ll make [her] feel better' (LWIWP, 210) she sharply

retorts: ‘I don’t want to feel better […]. ‘I want to feel what I do feel while I still can. While we’re at least allowed to do that’ (LWIWP, 210).

Beeky is definitely not interested in the pastimes girls her age usually enjoy. The above quotation makes this crystal clear. What she really cares about is socio-political change.

Beeky knows that there is something rotten in the apartheid state. Like the chosen one in Plato’s allegory of the cave she is able to look behind the false facades of Afrikanerdom – her inherent otherness being the force that sets her free. Henceforth, Beeky strives to galvanize those petrified and muzzled by apartheid indoctrination and governmental intimidation into questioning the establishment. In the end, however, Jooste’s heroine pays the highest price. She is killed by an apartheid henchman who is not at all inclined to doubt the system that grants his social advancement.

Besides, Beeky regards an honest confrontation with the past as an obligatory prerequisite for a bright future. Thus she tries to encourage her brother, who is weighed down by the burden of memory, to face the sad realities of his life and to write them into the ‘Book of Days’ (LWIWP, 163), thereby getting his sorrows off his chest.

In *People Like Ourselves* James Bannerman and Kimmy Merchant, representing a new generation of white South Africans, leave their grim historical legacy behind and openly embrace the present. The former deserts his crisis-ridden mother taking a respectable position abroad, whereas the latter gradually extracts herself out of her parents’ stranglehold and moves out to the seedy, yet vibrant, suburb of Melville. Thus by dissociating themselves physically and emotionally from their ideologically encumbered home environments, these adolescents are set free to develop strong identities and eventually find personal happiness. Caroline, of course, comments critically on the formative effects living abroad has on her beloved son.

> He doesn’t even sound like her Jimjam any more but all the kids change when they leave, like little chameleons taking on the shadings of those new places they find themselves, modifying so they can blend in, blending in till they’re finally absorbed. (PLO, 221)

Having obtained a widely unbiased perception of the past and present, James and Kimmy try hard to give their parents a reality check. They eagerly want them to break away from the constraints of Afrikanerdom and to rethink antiquated principles.

> 'You want my advice?' he says on the telephone. 'If you get a good offer, take it. Get a smaller, safer place for yourself. Pension the staff off. You don't need all those people. Change, Mum. It's all change. You've got to hook onto it.' (PLO, 167)

Kimmy's attempts to make her antecedents change are less pronounced but equally determined. She constantly challenges and undermines her parents' guidelines and rules. For instance, despite their strong disapproval, she is on all too familiar terms with the servants.

> Is the madam here, no master but Miss Kimmy's here, she's in her room. She hates it. No one talks like this, not any more, except her parents. No wonder they can't keep a maid and when the next one leaves the next one in the line is always an old woman who will still 'master' and 'madam' them. 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?' (PLO, 47)

This closeness and familiarity with the staff may also be interpreted in other terms. As Julia, who is caught up in her complicated marital situation, remains strangely distant and inapproachable, Kimmy seeks solace and distraction in the conversations with the domestic servants. The maids thus represent some sort of a substitute for the emotionally absent mother.

As far as James and Kimmy's endeavour to make their parents rethink apartheid doctrines is concerned their efforts are in vain. Their families are still strongly swayed by nationalist brainwashing and formerly dominant discourses. In this respect they are firmly held back by their past. So they keep glorying in white superiority totally ignoring the fact that they have been dethroned by the inferior majority.

Just like Conrad Hartmann in *Like Water in Wild Places* Kimmy finally has to give in and acknowledge her parents' rigidness and apparent inability to ever change at all. In a disillusioned but neutral tone she explains that

> [h]er father doesn't belong here, sitting at this table, with too much of the old world still inside him, shining out of his eyes, but he is who he is. He's not going to change. (PLO, 106)

### 5.3.3. Towards Disillusionment

It takes quite some time until Conrad Hartmann eventually sees through the political machinations of the apartheid system and his father's half-truths and romanticized image of Afrikanerdom. As Jooste aptly suggests his initial repulsion from sad realities basically stems from Jack's enormous influence. Throughout his childhood and adolescent years the boy is subjected to intense patriarchal indoctrination. He is raised to 'always remain true to [his] blood [and to] [b]e unquestioning' (LWIWP, 278). Thus his father's notion of history and Afrikanerdom greatly influence his self-perception.

However, due to the time with Bastiaan and the experiences he has in the bush Conrad gradually gets aware of the other side of truth. Nevertheless, he is too weak and too crippled with the effects of trauma to acknowledge the awful realities and thus he decides that '[h]e doesn't want to see any more' (LWIWP, 108).

Military service marks a turning point in Conrad's awakening from cherished illusions to bare facts. The dreadful experiences eventually force him to look behind the false facades of the glorified apartheid system and thus he turns away from the bitter truths he has long accepted and even risked his life for. He realises that he has been fooled and that '[o]ur history is no more than fables agreed upon and we deceive ourselves and let men die to give life-breath to it' (LWIWP, 278).

Back at his father's house Conrad is confronted with his long repressed past. The terrible memories of his childhood rekindle and cause him severe mental strains. He realises that the hopes he cherished – e.g. that Jack would eventually stop hitting his wife-were in vain and that nothing has changed at all, except from himself.

Due to the terrible atrocities Conrad experiences during the border war and because of the insights he gains his paternally imposed self crumbles and he faces a severe identity crisis. He states that his former 'life [...] has left [him] or

been taken from [him] and [his] skin is all that remains and [he] drape[s] it over [him]self to hide [his] emptiness' (LWIWP, 247).

Thus with the old self shattered there is space for new personal growth. Conrad rebuilds his life and develops an identity of his own, thereby outgrowing Jack's influence. 'Jannemann [one of the noble Hartmann ancestors] would listen to all the crap pouring out of [his] father's mouth and still keep a smile on his face (LWIWP, 275)'. Conrad, however, has utterly changed and can thus no longer live up to Jack's ideals.

Trying to get on with his life, he retreats to his father's farm in the drylands. Interestingly, though, Conrad's perception of this hunting lodge has utterly changed. Whereas it once gave rise to enthusiastic fantasies and heightened expectations, he now describes it as a 'death place and a place of bad fortune' (LWIWP, 285).

Conrad starts working as 'liaison officer' (LWIWP, 283) helping the army to move the Bushmen off the land. Being aware that once they have left they will never return to their sacred grounds, he begins to write down their stories so that they won't ever be forgotten.

> I tell him [Tsoe], in this moment of his people leaving, what it is which troubles me. I tell him I fear others, who should know, may not be told that once they were here. (LWIWP, 292)

> I tell him [Tsoe] about writing, which in its way is the same as a picture. It catches the story of a people and puts it down, not on rock but on paper.
> It uses different signs which make pictures in the minds of those who have learned how to see. I tell him that in this way too, the stories of a people can be passed on and other people can come to know them. (LWIWP, 290)

The Bushmen do not know about writing as their knowledge is passed on in oral form. Yet, Conrad obviously regards this westernised tradition as the only effective means of passing their cultural heritage on to future generations.

In his critical analysis of the novel's ending Lehmann suggests that the act of writing may represent a further step in the colonisation and subjugation process of the indigenous population at the hands of whites. Thus, accordingly, Conrad's endeavour may be interpreted as a substantial contribution to the Bushmen's

cultural estrangement. Yet, as the above quotations clearly reveal neither Conrad's motivation nor his self-revelations allow for such a reading. Hence Lehmann's second suggestion appears to be far more sensible. He claims that by safeguarding the Khoisan mythology from oblivion Conrad rewrites their cultural heritage, thereby undermining the dominant Afrikaner version of South Africa's history.[142] Within a system of half-truths and lies the young man aims to provide a historiography that is balanced and unbiased.

Having finished his ambitious project, Conrad is once again confronted by his unresolved and terrifying past. He is invited by his father to join him and 'have a look at […] [the man responsible for his sister's death] when he gives his evidence at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (LWIWP, 294). However, Conrad decides not to attend the hearing – perhaps to the surprise of his father and uncle. 'It isn't everyone who can look at the face of a killer without shrinking' (LWIWP, 292).

> I am afraid to go. I keep away because I think if I see this man who took my sister's life and look him full in the face, what shall I see if not myself? For I too am a life-taker. (LWIWP, 294)

During the border war Conrad committed most abhorrent crimes. He, too, caused the death of innocent civilians. Thus he fears a confrontation with Beeky's murderer. He is afraid that he might not be a monster either, but just an ordinary person like he is.

This mirroring scene strongly reminds us of a passage in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians.* The magistrate 'looks the Barbarian girl in the eyes […] [and] all he sees in the mirror of her pupils is "my double image cast back at me" (44)' (Reckwitz, *Problems*, 6). Thus both Jooste and Coetzee seem to suggest that the development of a sense of identity is highly contingent on recognising ourselves in others. Accordingly, the other serves as 'a "mirror" of unacknowledged, even unattainable aspects of oneself' (Goldberg referred to in Muller, http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=PI.005.0233A).

[142] Cf. Lehmann, http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/britcult/DOFP3lehmann.htm.

Hence Conrad fears to be confronted with the sad facts he has long tried to repress. Nevertheless, in the end he appears before the Truth Commission, yet not to face the man who took his sister's life, but to give evidence of the crimes and inhumanities he himself has committed.

However, albeit having salved his conscience, he still cannot write his life history in the book his sister made for him when he left for military service. Yet, in the end Tsoe's prophecy that Beeky will take her leave from her brother is finally fulfilled - she appears in the form of a 'spotted eagle owl' (LWIWP, 314).

> Since the coming of the bird I am different.
> The wind has turned and brought those that are gone closer to me and I can look at them now with tenderness and contain my pain and something in me has changed.
> […] I know now that it isn't death that ties my sister and me together; it is life. (LWIWP, 314-315)

After this last encounter with his beloved sister Conrad eventually finds the emotional relief he has been longing for. By writing down his personal history he fills the space provided for him in Beeky's 'Book of Days' (LWIWP, 163) and comes to terms with his own past. Having unburdened his mind, he is free to start a new phase of his life.

In general, members of the old established white high society like the Bannermans and Merchants in *People Like Ourselves* are depicted as blatantly out of touch with reality and notoriously self- absorbed. For instance, they stubbornly insist on being addressed as masters or madams by their black and coloured servants, though the times of white mastery have long ended. They thus simply deny acknowledging recent socio-political changes trying to keep up the all too pleasant and favourable status quo that grants their socio-economic wellbeing and prosperity. This into-your-face ignorance and self-centeredness is vividly portrayed - if not even ridiculed- throughout the novel.

> 'You can make a good life here if you set your mind to it,' she says. 'There are nice places to go, the people are charming and as Douglas' wife you wouldn't have to start from scratch. You'd never think it was Africa.' (PLO, 26-27)

> Douglas has a story he likes to tell about a landlady in Brixton who was eaten by her tenants for no better reason than having the temerity to demand the money for her rent. […] The tenants, of course, were not white people.
> This is the way these people talk. As if some divine light shines on them and makes them somehow removed from those other lives that just happen to be carried along on the same tide as their own. (PLO, 130)

Yet, as the novel impeccably shows, the old-days idyll Jooste's stereotypical characters vehemently try to maintain is utterly fallacious and short-lived. As a matter of fact, their adhering rigidly to old-established traditions and conventions can only be considered a poor, if not negligent response to the unimpeded tide of events.

However, eventually, by force of circumstances, Douglas, Julia and Caroline take off their blinkers and perceive reality as it is. A new order has inexorably overridden previous power structures doing away with white supremacy and even rendering the existence of whites in South Africa doubtful.

## 5.4. The (Post) Apartheid State

### 5.4.1. Looking the Biest in the Eye

In *Like Water in Wild Places, Frieda and Min* and *Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter* Jooste critically explores the ruthless and hypocritical machinations of the apartheid regime as well as the drastic measures taken by this Nationalist government in order to consolidate its power and to smother critical voices. Furthermore, in deconstructing the dehumanising practises of the political system she primarily focuses on the multiple effects on South Africa's younger generation. She thus carefully investigates how staunch apartheid ethics infiltrate children's upbringing and she portrays in how far the socio-political climate renders their individual development (im)possible.

Throughout his childhood and adolescence Conrad strives for the fulfilment of his male Afrikaner destiny. He takes to hunting, he does things he does not want to do solely to please others, and following in his father's footsteps he enlists as a soldier of the South African army fighting to keep apartheid alive. Thus Conrad's initial sense of identity is profoundly shaped by Afrikaner values.

However, during the border war with Namibia these dominant ethics prove to be utterly false and hypocritical. Against the background of these military interventions Jooste vividly portrays the underhand strong-arm tactics of the political regime ranging from strict censorship and intimidation to brutal killings.

Conrad fights among other brainwashed soldiers, but he gradually realises that all of them have been tricked into military service under false pretences. For the first time he fully understands that the Afrikaner system is neither heroic nor glorious, but abhorrent and relentless.

At the border Conrad receives 'regular letters from his father and because of who he is […] they come to him unopened and uncensored' (LWIWP, 186). Jack enthusiastically tells him 'what a good job they're doing' (LWIWP, 186), that 'the loony-left propagandists have been put in their proper place' (LWIWP, 186), and that he is [proud] to have a part in all this and he, Conrad, is that part' (LWIWP, 187). Conversely, Beeky's correspondence never arrives in full. She 'drive[s] the censor mad with [her] letters. Especially the drawings. [S]o in the end all [Conrad] get[s] are black blots' (LWIWP, 183).

Beeky's life is even more severely affected by the socio-political system. In contrast to her brother, who starts off developing along Nationalist lines, Beeky resolutely undermines the authority of the establishment from an early age on, thereby being confronted with social stigmatisation and hostility.

As a young adult she publicly turns against the political regime and together with her boyfriend, Tom Webber, she starts a campaign to stop 'conscription' (LWIWP, 214) and to put an end to futile fighting in the long run. They thus incur the wrath of staunch and influential apartheid supporters. Beeky and Tom are perceived as a threat to the stability of the establishment and thus special branch killers are set on them. Yet, because of whose daughter she is the secret police hit men are instructed to spare her.

> Berry says what about the girl? Two for the price of one, all the same to him but the Captain says to leave the girl out of it and when he asks why he's told 'no questions asked'. Which means someone is looking out for her. (LWIWP, 231)

Tom, however, lacking such influential connections experiences the full force of the political regime. One day he is picked up by Spin Street agents and they firmly warn him that if he does not 'stop […] shooting [his] mouth off' (LWIWP, 233) immediately, his actions will have fatal consequences. Afterwards Tom is terribly scared and so he decides to 'stay[…] away from rallies' (LWIWP, 236) for a while.

> He avoids people who ask him how it's going and what he thinks about things these days. He keeps away from any place where he can be singled out or even noticed because anywhere there's a group together, there's someone whose job it is to notice and report back. (LWIWP, 236)

Tom keeps the drive in the special branch car a secret. He does not even tell Beeky about it. Instead, he comes up with a blatant lie that she reluctantly swallows. Beeky cannot understand his unexpected change of mind. Nevertheless, no matter what he decides for himself '[she is] going to go on with it […]. [She is] not going to stop just because [he has]' (LWIWP, 236).

In the end Tom ignores the warning and attends Beeky's 'candlelight rally' (LWIWP, 248). However, this act of disobedience is not tolerated and he is killed in a 'hit and run' job (LWIWP, 255).

> [T]he car comes over the speed bumps like a fury with its headlights cutting the night and Tom with a short, sharp shove is right in front of it and there's a terrible thump and him flying up rag bag and boneless through the air. (LWIWP, 252)

Beeky's resistance against apartheid machinations is so strong and determined that the regime has to take drastic measures to break it. Regardless of her noble parentage, she is finally killed by a Spin Street letter bomb. Thus - like Min - Beeky is portrayed as an unfortunate victim of the suffocating and brutal apartheid regime. Men embodying the political system inflict hardship and severe suffering on Jooste's female protagonists.

Jerome's social and personal development is massively promoted by his close affiliation with the political regime. As 'one of the Spin Street boys' (LWIWP, 157) he finally 'earn[s] his place' (LWIWP, 161) in apartheid society. He uses his special skills to construct bombs for the political regime, thus causing the deaths of numerous government opponents.

> Sometimes they like to give him the details of a job he's been involved in but he doesn't want to hear.
> 'You did an ace job,' they say. 'You should have seen the mess.'
> He isn't interested in the mess and names don't mean anything to him. (LWIWP, 191)

Jerome grows into an obedient and cold-blooded supporter of the apartheid system. He does his jobs with great diligence and he never bothers about the consequences of his deeds. Hence he does not have any feelings of guilt or regret.

Interestingly, though, he is not at all a fervent adherer to the ideology itself. Instead, the power which he can exert over other people is his main incentive. He is the one who may deprive others of their lives.

> If you can leave someone in or take someone out and the choice is yours, then there's no doubt right that minute who the boss is and just for a change and absolutely no argument, for the minute, he's the one. (LWIWP, 114)

Thus the apartheid system provides a stimulating environment for ignorant and compliant individuals like Jerome. It allows the unprivileged and unintelligent special class student to exceed his limited chances and to achieve social acknowledgement and advancement.

> It's nice to do his work at Spin Street and be someone the boys look up to and then come home to his mum and to count for something there too. (LWIWP, 228)

After the fall of apartheid Jerome has to adapt to the altered socio-political climate. However, in complete contrast to Douglas and Julia in *People Like Ourselves*, he does not go through an identity crisis. Instead, similarly to a chameleon Jerome's self changes according to the new circumstances. Sheltered by the apartheid system Conrad remedies his personal deficiencies and eventually develops a strong and dynamic character that can fully adapt to post-apartheid conditions.

Towards the end of the novel Jooste addresses the problem of growing alienation and cultural uprooting among the indigenous people of South Africa caused by the apartheid regime. Racially biased, discriminatory and repressive legislation forces the Bushmen to live under almost unbearable conditions of extreme poverty and deprivation. The border war with Namibia even caused the situation

to deteriorate. Working for the army, Conrad realises the dilemma and the hopelessness felt by the Khoisan people. ‘There is nowhere for them to go.’ (LWIWP, 287)

> Those who took tracker jobs are sell-outs to the new order. Their own people don’t want them because they’ve gone half white and we don’t want them because there’s too much bush in them. Poor little buggers. It’s a big bloody mess. […] (LWIWP, 284)

Their fate is sealed. The Bushmen are loaded onto trucks and deported to some remote reservations. Conrad knows about the rich culture of the Khoisans and thus he sadly watches its decline.

Besides, Jooste strongly focuses on national and individual rebirth after South Africa’s dark years. Racist legislation is repealed and a commission is set up to investigate the past. Whereas staunch supporters like Jack Hartmann perceive the socio-political changes as the beginning of ‘Caliban’s kingdom […] [where] [e]verything decent go[es] down the drain’ (LWIWP, 295), Conrad gets involved in the truth seeking and healing process finding solace and confidence in a new start.

In *Frieda and Min* Jooste provides a particularly daunting and gloomy portrayal of apartheid-torn South Africa. In contrast to *Dance with a Poor Man’s Daughter* and *Star of the Morning*, which mainly deal with the issue of how repressive and racist legislation impacted non-white lives, the author’s second narrative primarily elucidates the vile practices adopted by the apartheid regime to silence and eventually defeat political enemies. Jooste thus thematically builds on her previous novel and confronts the reader with yet another female heroine whose existence is irrevocably transformed and threatened because of her determined opposition to the government.

Like Beeky, Min cannot ignore the desperate plight of Africans for whom she feels a strong solidarity and love. Hence, albeit growing up on the privileged side of the colour bar, she forgets about her noble descent and following in her father’s footsteps she dedicates her life to the marginalised and suppressed.

As an adult Min works ‘at the Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto Township where she’s an intern’ (FAM, 189). After repeatedly disregarding and breaking official rules set up by the authoritarian and oppressive regime, Min is kept under

constant surveillance by the establishment. Her letters are being opened and censored and her freedom of movement is greatly restricted.

> The truth is I'm in big trouble and under house arrest. That's what it's called. I'm not allowed to leave the magisterial district where I live and writing letters that have any meaning at all is a thing of the past. (FAM, 227)

Nevertheless, even though facing tightened conditions, Min is not at all intimidated or just slightly inclined to abandon her ambitions. On the contrary, she fervently carries on with her job providing medical help to everyone in need, regardless of whether they can produce a pass or how they got injured.

> Min […] said she couldn't care less about passes. She'd give information just whenever she had any to give and she'd give treatment to anyone who needed it. No questions asked. (FAM, 193)

The regime watchdogs know about Min's secret and subversive endeavours and keep a steady eye on her clinic. Yet, when she refuses to issue a dubious death certificate for her former teacher, Mr. Morefe, who is reported to have died a natural sudden death while being held in custody, but whose body shows obvious marks of raw violence, they lose the least patience they have and tighten the screws on the young woman.

Min is eventually imprisoned for her disobedience for an indefinitely long time and she is denied any mercy or concession. Frieda is the only person who is actually allowed to come and see her. Yet, the two women may never talk freely. There is always a policewoman supervising the conversation and interrupting when delicate matters come up. All they are allowed to talk about are '[g]eneral topics, personal news, health issues, [but] nothing pertaining to the case or the sentence' (FAM, 301).

After giving birth to her baby son under dreadful conditions, Min faces the total inhumanness of the establishment. According to prison rules, the young mother is not allowed keep her child with her. Thus after only six weeks the joy of motherhood ends for Min and her baby is henceforth raised by Frieda. Though the separation from her new-born son is certainly the hardest thing to bear for the young woman, she resolutely accepts her punishment. Enduring whatever harshness the regime brings up against her to make her finally conform becomes Min's way of protest.

Eventually, Frieda's interventions turn out to be successful and her friend is released from prison. However, even though Min is restored to freedom, the state exerts strict control over her life.

> She must stay in the magisterial district of Johannesburg. She must report to a police station once a week. She may not be a member of any political organization or party. She may not attend public meetings of any kind. She may not make public statements or allow any public statements to be made in her name. (FAM, 337)

Throughout the novel Min repeatedly witnesses and experiences terrible crimes against humanity committed in the name of a hardliner government that is determined to resort to high levels of violence and terror in order to consolidate its power and to smother dissident movements. The general atmosphere Jooste creates is utterly hostile and gloomy. Atrocities of all kinds, ranging from arbitrary deportation to cruel torture and even ruthless murder, abound, bringing out the gruesome and rotten core of an otherwise romanticised and glorified nation state.

The living conditions in African townships are depicted as poor and perilous. In addition to the pass laws, which dramatically impact on the movement and advancement of non-whites in society, nightly raids subvert black consciousness. As we are informed, army trucks intrude into black neighbourhoods and people are deported without previous notice or reason. These nightly incidents compellingly illuminate the constant threat and terror emanating from state authorities.

> 'The Casspirs come every night. You hear them like elephants. They go past and then they go away and in the morning when we open up our doors people are missing. Our friends, our neighbours, children playing in the street one day and gone the next.' (FAM, 191)

Besides, apartheid henchmen do neither hesitate to 'shoot down children with nothing more deadly than stones in their hands' (FAM, 266) nor to torture possible informants until they die of their inflicted injuries. Their undue harshness and lack of compassion reveals apartheid's dehumanising and alienating potential.

As far as state methods employed to enforce complicity with the political system are concerned, Jooste's narrative compellingly illustrates that even apartheid opponents were dealt with differently, according to the ethnic group they belonged to. Whereas black dissidents were treated with utmost harshness, white offenders were spared the disgrace of being dragged into the back of a police van in front of their neighbours' eyes.

> In the township they come in uniforms and armoured vehicles making as much noise as they like. To white houses they come in ordinary everyday clothes the same as anyone else might wear so no one seeing them is disturbed or upset. (FAM, 134)

### 5.4.2. Aftermath: The Remaking of the Nation State

As already mentioned in the general introduction to the novel Jooste gives quite a disillusioned and daunting account of the post-apartheid state in *People Like Ourselves*. Johannesburg, the secluded setting of the narrative, functioning as an exemplary pars-pro-toto of the contemporary South African nation, is all but an idyllic place. Instead, the ''City of Gold'' (PLO, 21) is clearly depicted as a paradise lost for whites. Having fallen from their supreme dominance and power, they struggle to assert their existence in the country.

Interestingly enough, certain things have not changed at all. Johannesburg is still a 'mining town [where ] […] some people live […] in appalling conditions while others […], just as they always did, take what wealth there is to be had and move on' (PLO, 144). The latter, needless to say, refers to whites, who, though being deprived of their privileged status, remain the most affluent social group further exploiting the country and its people. As money makes the world go round in South Africa too, they can still afford certain luxuries and services. However, they have lost the unduly enforced respect of blacks and coloureds once and for all. This instance is elaborately explained in the following passage:

> You have to think twice about leaving a car like Douglas' in a neighbourhood like this. […] You must have a guard. On principle he detests them, these informal workers, who watch your car for a few bob and let your tyres down if you say you won't pay. So Douglas will do what everyone else does. […]
> 'Something now on deposit and something more if it's still here and in one piece when I get back.'
> 'Yes, boss,' says the parking attendant but it's not the 'boss' as 'boss' was in the old days. That's gone for ever. (PLO, 99)

Besides, whites, no longer standing aloof from the once powerless African crowds, suffer constant intimidation from their former inferiors. Thus private acts of revenge and malevolence against landowners and business men dominate white South African life.

> Someone slips in through the security cordon that's supposed to be fail-safe and while she sleeps in her bed, in her large sleeping house, they steal her plants as if to remind her they're out there and may come and go as they please […]. (PLO, 219)

Thus notably, whites still propagate the concept of apartheid, yet in a form that is completely different from the mode that dominated South African history for decades. Their overall agenda is no longer to combat the socio-political advancement of Africans by pushing them to remote areas and treating them unfavourably, but rather to create a secure and secluded environment for their families. Thus they retreat behind electric fences and huge walls hiding from their potentially vengeful former servants. In their constant desire for protection they readily accept complete isolation as a necessary prerequisite.

> There are still people who want apartness but they want it differently now and are prepared to pay for the stage-set ghettos where they live out their lives.
> The demand is for residential estates, walled, gated precincts like Fourway Gardens where each curving street is planted with a different indigenous tree whose name it bears: Wild Pear Crescent, Paperbark Street, and Soetdoring Way. (PLO, 143)

As crime rates remain high and hate motivated offences against whites explode, children have to put up with overprotective parents. Michael Rosenberg, for instance, being a safety advisor himself, feels a particularly strong need for security.

> He would have twenty security guards; he would have a battalion if he could ensure it would keep his children from harm. If he has any private nightmare it's that something might happen to them. (PLO, 68)

> Michael likes the idea of his children, the most perfect, most beautiful children in the world. Mandy, aged ten, and Tracey, aged twelve, safely, securely asleep under his roof with the guard, muffled up against the night, at his gate and the infrared alarm system activated. (PLO, 69)

As a loving and caring father his main objective is to watch out for his kids and have them protected against all possible evils. This, however, implies constant control and surveillance which is plainly depreciated by his ex-wife and mother of his children.

> ‘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 into prison. Five-star prison perhaps, but prison is prison. (PLO, 68)

The country’s cultural make-over represents yet another relevant theme of the novel. With its turbulent and bewildering history cleansed and its culture modernised and westernised Johannesburg attracts city dwellers from all over the world. Notably, though, Americans seem to love it especially. Life in the heavily guarded residences thus is strongly influenced by American customs and traditions.

> Here the Fourth of July is celebrated with Elvis look-alikes, Cadillacs and hot dogs laid on by homeowner’s association. Hallowe’en and Thanksgiving are bigger than Youth or Freedom Day and estate flags are flown at half-mast on September 11. (PLO, 144)

Along with this assimilation and modification of cultural cornerstones South Africa experiences the rise of a new generation that shares sets of concerns radically different from what used to occupy their parents’ minds. Most notably, to the post-apartheid youth racial issues, still all too present in their ancestors’ thoughts and decisions, do not seem to be a big deal. Instead, their self-conception is ideologically emancipated, strictly anti-authoritarian, and somewhat reminiscent of the 1960s. Hence it goes without saying that parents respond with incomprehension and repudiation of their children’s conduct.

> He means the café, the street and the very bright, very ‘now’ people who’d rather shout out to each other than talk, who carry their music with them and play it too loud. Kids who seem to touch each other too freely, who share ‘take-away’ with the informal parking attendants and laugh loudly as if life is a joke. (PLO, 108)

> Kids don't care about politics these days. They walk on the street unencumbered by the past. […] The world is theirs now and there's no one among them on any side of the colour spectrum willing to pay obeisance to those people of the past who consider themselves benefactors. These kids are focused on the future, not interested in the past. They look forward optimistically, not backwards in anger. (PLO, 247-248)

Cunningly enough, this lack of understanding between different generations is also addressed on a linguistic level. Parents and children are depicted as speaking different languages. The former generally stick to white codes of speech, whereas the latter rather tend to encode structures of indigenous African tongues, not familiar to previous generations. Subsequently, individuals are confronted with an effective language barrier that renders communication difficult or almost impossible. Caroline Bannerman airs the problem as follows:

> He used to say: 'Jeez, Mum, do you know how I "gullah" Dave's mountain bike?' She wonders now at all the time she spent banishing childhood slang, insisting that he speak proper English and not be like the kids on the street who borrow words from all the languages of Africa just as they need them. She needn't have bothered. Life in a new country has succeeded where she failed and he has a new secret language of his own with a new set of keywords which, as far as she's concerned, might just as well be Swahili. (PLO, 281-282)

Furthermore, Jooste skilfully juxtaposes this steady rise of a modern and ideologically unbiased youth culture with the eventual demise of the archaic apartheid order. Thus old structures crumble and finally break down as a new way of thinking overrides long entrenched beliefs and towering discourses.

Throughout the novel the author creates an atmosphere that is heavily charged with disintegration and decay. Something is rotten in the state of South Africa. Hence, metaphorically speaking, the nation resembles a giant compost heap where a new society sprouts and prospers while an old culture perishes and fades away.

For instance, buildings, once erected as impressive monuments of the apartheid era have become dilapidated and ramshackle. Besides, stubborn and staunch regime collaborators, too, are subject to gradual decay. Julia Merchant is diagnosed with a lump gnawing at her breast and Douglas develops a cardiac insufficiency, both, serious diseases threatening the very existence of Jooste's protagonists.

> If her ‘mass’ gets too comfortable and has little ‘masses’ of its own perhaps she’ll die. If she dies, perhaps Douglas’ endless ‘financial problems’ will miraculously right themselves and his girlfriend can move into the house. (PLO, 318)

> He can feel his heart beating. He expects it to stop. It’s a peculiar feeling to be greedy for air. The air in Johannesburg, thinned down by altitude, is the easiest air in the world to inhale. It floats in and out of the lungs with no effort at all but not anymore. He doesn’t want to die here. (PLO, 256)

The picture Jooste draws of the post-apartheid state in *Star of the Morning* is one of stagnation and rigidity. Generally, the political climate has turned for the better and hopes for the emergence of a colour blind society flare up. Repressive laws which were introduced to prevent miscegenation and to enforce white supremacy are gradually repealed, thus offering equal opportunities to all the people of South Africa. Hence, the political landscape can be described as conductive to national healing and reconciliation.

However, on the other hand, as Jooste clearly illustrates, some wounds take long to heel and a society torn apart by discrimination and state terror needs time to rise as a re-united nation. Thus even though apartheid is officially abolished, its concepts and ideals persist in people’s minds – not only in the reasoning and behaviour of the formerly powerful minority. On the contrary, as Jooste clearly illuminates, coloureds are greatly influenced in their identity reformation by the old dictums. As for the conceptualisation of colouredness Erasmus adds that

> [a]lthough […] apartheid has played a key role in the formation and consolidation of these (and other) identities, coloured identities are not simply Apartheid labels imposed by whites. They are made and re-made by coloured people themselves in their attempts to give meaning to their everyday lives. (Erasmus, 16)

Erasmus thus distances herself from the idea of colouredness being purely identity from above. At the same time she clearly emphasises the difficult challenge for people of mixed ethnicity to overcome conceptualisations of the past and reform their sense of self.

This difficult process of remaking the ego and repositioning oneself in the new and colour-blind South Africa is vividly portrayed in *Star of the Morning.* Jooste's colourful characters - being held back and hindered by their own internalisation of old values and moral concepts- only hesitantly outgrow the tight corset apartheid has woven around them.

Social marginalisation and stigmatisation have effectively shattered their self-confidence and thus coloureds seem overwhelmed with their newly acquired freedom and chances in life. As Ruby explains quite plainly, even with the legal shackles removed growing up coloured under apartheid leaves a mark on you that is hard to ever get rid of.

> For a long time in my life if anyone offered me anything I always wanted to look over my shoulder to see who was standing behind me. I always thought there must be someone standing behind me and that would be the person that the offer was properly meant for. I think people who grow up the way I did are like that. Life will change; things will get better but once that is in you, you won't easily get it out again. (SOTM, 303)

# 6. Conclusion

Ever since the eventual fall of apartheid in 1994 the water shed decades following the legal implementation of racial segregation in 1948 have been revisited and re-examined from various different angles. Historians, politicians, literates, political scientists, and human rights activists - among others- have prominently engaged in the country's pronounced attempt to come to terms with its sordid past in order to foster the creation of a new and stable cultural identity and an all-embracing social order. A critical and unbiased assessment of long entrenched ethics and moral values as well as a strong draw towards truth seeking are widely assumed to be obligatory to achieve the noble aim of reconciling a split nation torn apart by ages of mutual mistrust, struggle for power and arrant racism.

Literature, however, plays a particularly crucial role in the socio-cultural remaking of modern South Africa. Over the centuries a powerful and unfaltering literary landscape has evolved whose contributions to national healing and reconstruction are manifold and internationally acknowledged. As the works of contemporary South African authors compellingly prove, literature is extremely potent at stirring up the past, thereby combating repression and keeping committed evils from sinking into oblivion. Besides, literates allow long silenced and marginalised voices to speak up and tell their life stories of suffering and pain to a broad and partially ignorant audience. At the same time, they urge people to face terrible memories and deal with their traumatic experiences. Their participation in country-wide truth seeking is thus invaluable.

On the other hand, however, the works of contemporary South African writers show a great potential to imagine and suggest future prospects and possibilities for change. Hence, they explore new paths towards an inclusive and non-racist nation state. In a way they thus provide the country's crisis ridden and worn down society with a range of new and ready-made directions they may take.

Pamela Jooste contributes substantially to South Africa's reorientation and reconstruction after apartheid by rewriting the nation's murky past and by confronting the reader with exemplary members of a strong new generation who eventually find successful strategies to come to terms with history and to

overcome their childhood traumas. The message she conveys is clearly unambiguous: South Africans must not avert their eyes from past realities as cultural reconstruction and societal makeover inevitably require an honest confrontation with the dim and dark periods of history.

Even though Jooste's choice of non-white perspectives has repeatedly sparked off considerable debates among literary critics on the moral acceptability of white authors airing the grievances of blacks and coloureds, her novels represent a deliberate attempt to challenge xenophobic discourses that have long influenced state business. The novelist thus perceptively creates alternative versions to whitewashed notions of history.

In general, Jooste explores the ways in which the South African socio-political setting and dominant apartheid ethics, in particular, impact on the growing up of a new generation. She thereby skilfully demonstrates that white and non-white lives are equally transformed and irrefutably overshadowed by deeply entrenched xenophobic attitudes. Albeit being born on the privileged side of the colour bar, Conrad, Beeky, Jerome, Frieda, Min, and Kimmy's quest for a stable identity is severely encumbered with oppressive and unhappy family backgrounds as well as pre-defined social concepts and expectations.

As Jooste compellingly elucidates, white upbringing is thus strongly infiltrated by a powerful Afrikaner ideology as immature children unquestioningly and obediently adopt moral values from their parents. Yet, except for Jerome, who benefits greatly from the otherwise smothering and hostile socio-political climate, the child narrators break away from the constraints of society and openly challenge the prevailing social order as they grow into maturity. Their eventual coming of age and development of stable adult personalities is marked by their outright shedding of imposed identities and a notable emancipation from parental role models.

In addition to the clash of the old and the new order represented by a deep rift between generations, the praising appreciation of female contributions to socio-political change constitutes yet another prominent aspect of Jooste's writing. Whereas men are generally depicted as advocates of the strict and rigid governmental system inflicting pain and hardship on their families or as timid

individuals lacking the strength to actually do something about their unfavourable situations, women are presented as strong personalities who pursue their aims with outstanding courage. The author thus clearly does away with dominant concepts of males and females, establishing the latter as the stronger sex. Women are thus beyond doubt clear symbols of hope and socio- cultural improvement.

Besides, Jooste examines the smothering and often disastrous impact racist legislation has on the personal development of non-whites. South Africa under apartheid is thus clearly depicted as a country of disappointed hopes and lost opportunities. Coloureds and blacks are unduly hindered to advance politically and economically. Therefore, growing up non-white implies insurmountable obstacles, immense suffering and intense humiliation. Lily, Ruby, and Rose, however, persevere and eventually manage to exceed their limited chances in life and build up strong personalities. Their stories thus spark off hopes for happier non-white fates. Tightened conditions notwithstanding, these girls eventually work out successful strategies to find fulfilment and prosper personally. In the case of Lily, for example, leaving South Africa eventually sets her free from her harmful environment.

However, regardless of their socio-ethnic background, the lives of Jooste's child and adolescent protagonists are shattered by the experience of various forms of trauma ranging from the absence of strong parental role models and personal loss to fatherly brutality and state terror. Interestingly, however, by dealing with their childhood demons and by warding off the terrible effects of tragic events, the teenagers in the novels discussed eventually pass a test of character and prove their moral and emotional maturity.

With a powerful and artistic language that suits the reasoning of children and adolescents Pamela Jooste reveals through the eyes of her not yet fully grown up narrators what it is like to come of age under apartheid or during the interregnum that follows. Her careful choice of perspective renders the author's accounts of realities intriguing and hard to shrug off.

# 7. Zusammenfassung

Seit dem Fall der Apartheid im Jahre 1994 wurden die dunklen Jahrzehnte der gesetzlich manifestierten Rassentrennung und –unterdrückung auf vielfältigste Art und Weise wieder aufgerollt und aus unterschiedlichen Blickwinkeln betrachtet. SchriftstellerInnen wird dabei eine besonders bedeutende Rolle beigemessen. Einerseits fördern sie mit ihren Texten eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit Südafrikas jüngster Vergangenheit, die maßgeblich von rassenfeindlichem Denken und brutalen Machtbestrebungen einer weißen Minderheit dominiert war. Gräueltaten gegen die Menschlichkeit werden entlarvt und verurteilt und bislang mundtot gemachte Bevölkerungsgruppen erhalten die Möglichkeit, ihre Schicksalsgeschichten einem breiten und internationalen Publikum darzubringen. Der Beitrag der Literatur zur Wahrheitsfindung, zu rassenübergreifender Versöhnung und zur Überwindung des alles lähmenden kollektiven Traumas ist daher von essentieller Bedeutung.

Andererseits zeigen SchriftstellerInnen neue Perspektiven und Chancen für zukünftige Entwicklungen. Auf fiktiver Ebene erschaffen sie Abbilder eines modernen und farbenblinden Südafrikas und wirken so richtungsweisend für eine ganze Nation.

Weiters tragen AutorInnen entscheidend zur Entstehung neuer südafrikanischer Identitäten bei. Traditionelle, rassenideologisch geprägte Selbst- beziehungsweise Feindbilder werden abgebaut, und es kommt zu einer Neugestaltung soziokultureller Existenzen. Ebenso werden durch das Zerschlagen rassistischer Parolen und Denkweisen soziale Barrieren niedergerissen und die einzelnen Bevölkerungsgruppen erhalten die Möglichkeit, sich im gesellschaftlichen Gefüge neu zu positionieren und zu definieren.

Die Entwicklung einer jungen Generation hat in großem Ausmaß das Interesse von Literaten geweckt. Zahlreiche südafrikanische AutorInnen wie Jo-Anne Richards, J.M. Coetzee, Mark Mathabane, Nadine Gordimer, Es'kia Mphahlele und auch Pamela Jooste befassen sich in ihren Werken mit den psychosozialen Reifungsprozessen in der Kindheit und Pubertät. Die Phase des Erwachsenwerdens wird dabei vielfach symbolisch für das Erwachen eines

neuen Südafrikas gedeutet. Gleichsam einem Kind, das der infantilen Naivität entwächst und eine starke, erwachsene Persönlichkeit entwickelt, mutiert der krisengebeutelte Staat zu einer alle miteinbeziehenden und liberalen Regenbogennation.

Die AutorInnen scheinen sich einig, dass es einer charakterstarken und in jeglicher Hinsicht unbefangenen südafrikanischen Jugend bedarf, um das Land in eine glückliche Zukunft zu führen. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der traurigen Landesgeschichte und eine vollständige Emanzipation von elterlichen und systemischen Einflüssen werden weitgehend als Schlüsselaufgaben der modernen Generation erachtet. Jedoch gelingen nicht allen ProtagonistInnen diese bedeutsamen Wagnisse. Während sich einige weitgehend von alten Dikta und Vorstellungen distanzieren und somit eine starke und unabhängige Persönlichkeit aufbauen können, schaffen es andere nicht, sich aus dem Würgegriff der jüngsten Vergangenheit zu befreien, und scheitern kläglich in ihrer persönlichen Entwicklung. In einigen Fällen obliegt es jedoch nicht dem einzelnen Individuum, sein Schicksal selbst in die Hand zu nehmen. Stattdessen bestimmen extrapersonelle Einflüsse den individuellen Werdegang.

Kindliche Realitäten und Entwicklungsschicksale sind auch Gegenstand der Romane von Pamela Jooste. Die mehrfach ausgezeichnete Autorin leistet ebenso wie andere namhafte und preisgekrönte südafrikanische SchriftstellerInnen einen entscheidenden Beitrag zur Vergangenheitsbewältigung und zur soziokulturellen Neufindung einer ganzen Nation.

In ihren Werken beschreibt sie auf einfühlsame und bezwingende Art und Weise das Erwachsenwerden von Kindern aller Bevölkerungsgruppen zur Zeit der (Post-) Apartheid. Ihre Romane, die jeweils aus der Sicht kindlicher ErzählerInnen geschildert werden, bringen so die Lebens- und Leidensgeschichten Jugendlicher unterschiedlichster Ethnizitäten einem breiten, vorwiegend weißen Publikum näher. Obwohl Joostes Wahl einer schwarzen beziehungsweise farbigen Perspektive häufig als anmaßend und verhöhnend empfunden wird, die letztendlich nur ein sehr oberflächliches Bild des Status quo erzielen kann, stellt ihr Erzählmodus doch einen Versuch dar, mit alten Diskursen zu brechen und innergesellschaftliches Verständnis zu fördern. Die andere und lange negierte Seite der Wahrheit wird prominent in den Vordergrund

gestellt. Der weißen Leserschaft werden so auf eindrückliche Art und Weise die Schattenseiten des alten Systems vorgehalten.

In ihren Romanen erörtert Pamela Jooste die vielfältigen Wirkungsweisen und Einflussnahmen der dominanten Apartheidsideologie auf die Entwicklung einer neuen Generation. Sie schildert besonders bildlich, wie das Leben von weißen, farbigen und schwarzen Kindern gleichermaßen dauerhaft durch das sozialpolitische Klima beeinflusst wird. Sie kommt dabei zum Schluss, dass die dominante Sitten- und Rassenlehre über verschiedenste Kanäle auf die heranwachsende Jugend einwirkt. Als besonders prägende Faktoren lassen sich das familiäre und soziale Umfeld, der Umgang mit der eigenen und kollektiven Geschichte, der übermächtige und alle bevormundende Staat sowie verschiedenste Formen der Traumatisierung erkennen.

Trauma, und besonders dessen Überwindung, spielen eine entscheidende Rolle im Erwachsenwerden von Joostes kindlichen ErzählerInnen. Letzteres signalisiert schlussendlich die persönliche Reife der Charaktere und einen Übergang zum Erwachsensein.

Die Hauptcharaktere in Joostes Romanen erfahren nicht nur familiären Hemmnisse, wie zum Beispiel häusliche Gewalt, zerrüttete Familienstrukturen und Verlusterlebnisse, sondern auch widrige gesellschaftliche Umstände wie eine rassistische Gesetzgebung, eine Beschneidung basaler Menschenrechte, kulturelle Entwurzelung und wiederholte Viktimisierung. Nichtsdestotrotz gelingt es den meisten, sich zu mündigen und eigenständigen Erwachsenen zu entwickeln. Ihre Erfolgsstorys machen sie zu klaren Hoffnungsträgern der so genannten Regenbogennation.

Der Glaube an soziokulturellen Umbruch wird weitgehend von Joostes weiblichen Charakteren getragen. Während Männer oftmals als eingeschüchtert und verunsichert dargestellt werden oder Anhänger der alten Ordnung repräsentieren, lehnen sich weibliche Heldinnen vehement gegen das bestehende System auf. Dabei nehmen sie oftmals enorme Risiken und Opfer auf sich, um ihr Ziel, ein barrierefreies Südafrika, zu erwirken.

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# 9. Index


Act
Abolition of Passes and Documents Act 8
Abolition of Racially Based Measures Act ..... 27
Bantu Education Act ..... 10
Criminal Law Amendment Act ..... 15
Group Areas Act ... 8, 11, 27, 32, 41, 120, 121
Immorality Act ..... 7
Mines and Works Act ..... 4
Native Administration Act ..... 5
Native Laws Amendment Act ..... 8
Natives Urban Areas Act ..... 5, 8, 11
Natives' Land Act ..... 5, 11
Population Registration Act ..... 7, 27, 41
Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act ..... 7
Promotion of Bantu Self- Government Act ..... 11
Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act ..... 29, 30
Public Safety Act ..... 15
Representation of Natives Act ..... 5
Reservation of Separate Amenities Act. 9, 24
Riotous Assemblies Act ..... 15
Suppression of Communism Act .... 14, 15
Terrorism Act ..... 21, 22
University Education Act ..... 11
adolescence ..... 1, 144
adulthood ..... 34, 43, 50, 100
Afrikaans ..... 4, 21
Afrikanerdom ..... 135, 136, 137, 138
Afrikaners ..... 13
all-black South African Students' Organisation ..... 20
American Civil Rights Movement ..... 20
amnesty ..... 30, 128
*Amnesty Committee* ..... 30
ANC ..... 16, 17, 19, 20, 26, 27
Angola ..... 24
apartheid 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 63, 67, 68, 70, 74, 75, 83, 86, 91, 96, 99, 100, 104, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 118, 119, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 134, 136, 137, 138, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 151, 152, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173
anti-apartheid ..... 13, 24
anti-apartheid movement ..... 42
anti-apartheid organisations ..... 42
apartheid ethics ..... 143
Apartheidsideologie ..... 165
apartness ..... 4, 153
Asian ..... 7
atrocities .... 29, 36, 100, 105, 108, 109, 110, 123, 139
authorities ..... 5, 26, 46, 57, 151
awakening ..... 49, 138
Bantustans ..... 11
Bassett ..... 38, 171
Behr ..... 1, 34, 167
beneficiaries ..... 32, 39, 47, 119, 125, 127
Biko ..... 20, 21
Bildungsroman ..... 50, 171
Black Consciousness ..... 20, 21, 171
Black Sash ..... 43, 109
blacks 4, 5, 7, 8, 21, 53, 113, 121, 122, 127, 128, 152, 160, 161
Boer ..... 50
Botha ..... 24, 25, 26
*Boyhood* ..... 1, 34
Breysse ..... 36, 37, 171
Bushman/ Bushmen ..... 49, 51, 72, 74, 102, 106, 139, 140, 148. 172
campaign ..... 6, 13, 16, 21, 144
Cape ..... 4, 8, 12, 25, 41, 57, 80, 88, 91, 92, 120, 168, 169, 170
Cape coloured community ..... 80, 120
Cape of Good Hope ..... 4
cathartic effect ..... 33, 126
censorship ..... 15, 25, 144
character construction ..... 80
character formation ..... 83
characters. 1, 2, 35, 39, 45, 57, 60, 100, 104, 110, 143, 158
charterism ..... 25
child narrators ..... 2, 36, 161
childhood ..... 1, 3, 34, 36, 39, 43, 50, 58, 68, 100, 117, 118, 138, 139, 144, 155, 160, 162
Childhoods ..... 34, 35, 36
children 2, 35, 36, 47, 49, 57, 62, 65, 69, 73, 76, 80, 86, 90, 92, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 115, 118, 128, 135, 143, 151, 153, 154, 155, 160, 162
Classification Board ..... 7
clearances ..... 8, 41
CODESA ..... 27
Coetzee ..... 1, 2, 34, 69, 141, 163, 168
collaboration ..... 14
colonial discourse ..... 113
colonialist ..... 40
colour bar ..... 38, 44, 61, 98, 123, 149, 160
coloureds 6, 24, 58, 61, 66, 88, 95, 121, 127, 152, 156, 158, 160, 161
comic relief ..... 49
coming of age ..... 1, 34, 45, 117, 161
communist party ..... 14

compensation.....30
complicity.....36, 109, 119, 127, 151
constitution.....27
contemporaries.....1
criticism.....32, 38, 39, 40, 47, 60
custody.....19, 46, 83, 149
*Dance with a Poor Man's Daughter*...4, 38, 41, 80, 100, 109, 143, 148, 167
de Klerk.....26, 27
defiance campaign.....13
democracy.....1, 2, 27
diaspora.....46, 122
discrimination....4, 7, 10, 11, 19, 23, 28, 40, 58, 86, 156
disobedience.....13, 17, 42, 146, 149
District Six.....8, 91
doctrines.....12, 137
downfall.....2, 15, 22, 51, 54, 56, 114
Dutch.....4, 11
Dutch Reformed Church.....11
embargoes.....23, 24, 26
*Embrace*.....1
emotional relief.....31, 33, 142
Entwicklung.....163, 164, 165
Erasmus.....38, 80, 126, 156, 157, 168
establishment...42, 50, 56, 64, 68, 104, 110, 123, 125, 135, 136, 144, 145, 149, 150
exile.....90, 92
experiences..2, 3, 39, 54, 60, 66, 67, 69, 72, 73, 74, 79, 99, 107, 114, 116, 122, 124, 125, 129, 131, 138, 139, 146, 150, 154, 159
exploitation.....111, 127
forgiveness.....36, 127
formative
  formative aspect.....46, 80
  formative event.....43
  formative years.....1, 35, 39, 48, 66
freedom25, 28, 56, 104, 116, 149, 150, 153, 158
Freedom Charter.....17
*Frieda and Min*....4, 43, 44, 47, 68, 80, 100, 121, 143, 148, 167
friendship.....45, 56
generation 2, 52, 75, 95, 115, 134, 136, 143, 154, 160
Ghandi.....16
Gobodo-Madikizela.....106, 107, 111, 119, 127, 131, 132, 169
Gordimer.....1, 2, 34, 122, 163
government 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 41, 58, 83, 87, 95, 96, 143, 147, 149, 150
Government of National Unity.....27
grievances.....2, 32, 39, 41, 47, 61, 160
groups
  activist groups.....5
  anti-apartheid groups.....24
  ethnic groups.....6, 7
  racial groups.....6, 9
  social groups.....29, 44
growing up.....34, 35, 48, 49, 149, 158, 160, 161
hardship2, 20, 31, 32, 38, 45, 47, 65, 68, 86, 91, 95, 98, 103, 108, 110, 112, 113, 118, 122, 146, 161
Hayner.....29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 168
history..2, 22, 50, 74, 75, 88, 114, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 134, 138, 139, 140, 142, 152, 153, 160, 173
Homelands.....11
human rights violations.....23
*Human Rights Violations Committee*.....30
identity...1, 2, 34, 35, 42, 48, 49, 50, 52, 55, 62, 65, 69, 70, 71, 80, 81, 82, 95, 98, 99, 103, 106, 113, 114, 115, 122, 124, 125, 126, 132, 139, 141, 144, 147, 156, 157, 159, 160
ideology.....6, 12, 47, 68, 75, 147, 160
Indians.....6, 7, 24
indoctrination.....13, 136, 138
inequalities.....11
Jewishness.....46, 122, 123, 124
Jooste...1, 4, 2, 3, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 57, 60, 67, 68, 76, 83, 92, 99, 100, 101, 104, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 115, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 132, 136, 138, 141, 143, 144, 146, 148, 150, 151, 155, 156, 158, 160, 161, 162, 164, 165, 167, 171, 172
*Kaffir Boy*.....35
Kane- Berman.....21
Khoisan.....51, 72, 140, 148
Kindheit.....164
Kliptown.....17
labour market.....4
legislation....5, 7, 13, 16, 17, 24, 27, 32, 39, 118, 148, 161
Lesotho.....24
life stories.....40, 159
*Like Water in Wild Places*.4, 43, 48, 50, 51, 52, 68, 100, 104, 108, 118, 125, 126, 127, 134, 138, 143, 167, 172
Literatur.....163, 169, 171
machismo.....2
macrocosm.....49, 52, 69
majority.....5, 6, 15, 22, 27, 33, 113, 138
Malan.....6
Mamdani.....32
Mandela.1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 96, 168
*Mandela's Ego*.....1
masculinist ethos.....100
Mathabane.....35, 163
Medalie.....100, 134, 169
memories...3, 31, 39, 75, 91, 102, 106, 107, 118, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 134, 139, 159
menial jobs.....5, 94

Metcalf .... 38, 39, 47, 50, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 108, 109, 172
microcosm ..... 49, 52
minority ..... 19, 53, 118, 156
Mozambique ..... 24
Mphahlele ..... 164, 169
*My Son's Story* ..... 1, 34
narratives ..... 2, 34, 36, 43, 107, 111, 134
nation building ..... 32
National Congress of the People ..... 17
national healing ..... 2, 126, 156, 159
National Party ..... 6, 12, 22, 27
Nationalists ..... 4, 27
Native Affairs Department ..... 10
Ndebele ..... 60, 169
Nkosi ..... 1
Nobel laureates ..... 2
non-whites ..... 6
opposition 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 41, 44, 66, 68, 70, 149
oppressors ..... 5, 21, 69, 127
PAC ..... 17, 19, 20, 26
Pan Africanist Congress ..... 17
passing for white ..... 61
past 3, 6, 29, 36, 47, 50, 68, 80, 96, 98, 101, 103, 106, 107, 110, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 148, 149, 151, 155, 157, 159, 160
patriarch ..... 71, 100
*People Like Ourselves* ..... 4, 51, 52, 54, 112, 114, 126, 127, 129, 136, 142, 147, 151, 167
perpetrators ..... 29, 30, 31, 108, 119
perspective ..... 36, 38, 43, 162
Perspektive ..... 165
Petzold ..... 62, 113, 114, 124, 125, 169
Phase des Erwachsenwerdens ..... 164
playing white ..... 61
pogrom ..... 46
police 15, 17, 19, 21, 24, 41, 54, 66, 76, 111, 119, 145, 150, 151
policy ..... 4, 11
politics ..... 2, 4, 11, 66, 68, 123, 155
population
  African population ..... 5, 10, 125
  indigenous population ..... 4, 140
*Poqo* ..... 19
post-apartheid writers ..... 1
predominance ..... 5, 13, 51, 66
present ..... 2, 36, 42, 67, 68, 78, 80, 83, 122, 123, 125, 127, 131, 134, 136, 137, 154
Priebe ..... 34, 35, 36, 169
prosperity ..... 4, 5, 24, 142
protagonists 3, 34, 35, 47, 50, 52, 60, 67, 68, 99, 104, 112, 118, 125, 126, 146, 156, 162
  child protagonists ..... 1
Pubertät ..... 164
puberty ..... 1
punishment ..... 15, 150
purity ..... 7
quest ..... 34, 48, 49, 50, 70, 115, 160
race ..... 4, 6, 8, 81, 95, 122
racial equality ..... 13
racism ..... 4, 122, 159
Rainbow Nation ..... 1, 122
Rassenlehre ..... 165
Rassentrennung ..... 163
Reckwitz ..... 34, 51, 113, 114, 141, 169, 172
reconstruction ..... 3, 159, 160
reference books ..... 8
Regenbogennation ..... 164, 166
regime 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 29, 32, 34, 42, 45, 47, 56, 60, 67, 68, 104, 109, 110, 113, 119, 125, 126, 136, 143, 144, 146, 148, 149, 150, 155
religion ..... 12
remaking ..... 1, 2, 111, 158, 159
*Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee* ..... 30
residential relocations ..... 8
resistance . 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 43, 49, 56, 60, 66, 67, 131, 136, 146
revenge ..... 51, 119, 152
Richards ..... 34, 36, 163
Riebeeck ..... 4
rights ..... 4, 7, 13, 23, 24, 29, 30, 32, 159
Robben Island ..... 19, 25
segregation ..... 1, 6, 11, 96, 159
self ... 1, 3, 11, 20, 42, 44, 50, 52, 65, 66, 69, 70, 78, 83, 106, 111, 113, 114, 115, 119, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 131, 132, 135, 138, 139, 140, 142, 147, 154, 157, 158
separateness ..... 4
Sharpeville ..... 17, 19, 23
Sisulu ..... 16
slavery ..... 4
*Smell of Apples* ..... 34, 167
social healing ..... 29, 33
social order ..... 2, 60, 108, 159, 161
society . 1, 10, 20, 25, 29, 34, 45, 49, 51, 52, 54, 57, 58, 64, 76, 96, 100, 108, 126, 130, 142, 147, 151, 155, 156, 160, 161
socio-political
  socio- political changes ..... 48
  socio-political climate ... 1, 122, 144, 147, 161
  socio-political setting ..... 2, 160
Sophiatown ..... 8, 84
South Africa .. 4, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31, 36, 38, 43, 49, 51, 52, 54, 57, 61, 64, 74, 80, 82, 90, 91, 118, 119, 121, 126, 127, 131, 140, 143, 148, 152, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173
South African
  South African authors ..... 1, 121, 159
  South African economy ..... 5, 23, 26

South African fiction .....1, 34
South African literates .....2
South African narratives of childhood..34
South African politics .....4
South African state .....49
South African Council of Churches.....13
South African Defence Force .....24
South African Native National Congress .15
South Africans ... 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 27, 31, 32, 33, 36, 69, 111, 113, 114, 126, 127, 134, 136, 160, 169
Soweto .....21, 22, 149
sphere .....2, 5, 60, 68
public sphere.....2
*Star of the Morning* .....4, 57, 110, 148, 156, 158, 167
state
nation state.....2, 34, 48, 150, 159
state of emergency.....15, 19, 25
stereotypes .....40
subjugation .....111, 140
Südafrika .....166, 167, 172
supremacy.....4, 6, 23, 114, 143, 156
system 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 17, 23, 24, 29, 32, 35, 36, 48, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57, 61, 65, 68, 70, 73, 75, 104, 109, 110, 113, 114, 119, 122, 125, 127, 128, 136, 138, 140, 143, 144, 146, 147, 151, 153, 161
Tambo.....16
test of character.....2, 99, 162
*The Innocence of Roast Chicken* .....34
total strategy .....24, 26
townships.....8, 150
trade unions .....24
transition .. 1, 2, 15, 27, 29, 34, 43, 100, 114, 126
trauma .. 2, 31, 46, 50, 56, 99, 106, 107, 111, 112, 113, 115, 119, 124, 131, 138, 162
traumatisation .....33, 108, 119
Traumatisierung.....165
TRC .....4, 29, 30, 32, 33, 75, 126, 128, 169, 172
Truth and Reconciliation Commission 4, 29, 30, 75, 140, 172
turmoil .....1
turning point .....22, 46, 92, 95, 99, 138
Tutu .....13, 29
UDF .....25
*Umkonto we Sizwe* .....19
*Union of South Africa* .....4
United Democratic Front .....24
United Nations.....23
University Christian Movement .....20
van der Merwe .....111, 119, 131, 132, 169
Vergangenheit.....163, 164
Vergangenheitsbewältigung .....164
Versöhnung.....163
Verwoerd .....10, 23
Viktimisierung.....165
violence 2, 17, 19, 24, 25, 27, 32, 50, 72, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 110, 111, 119, 127, 149, 150
Vorster .....20
voters .....6
Wahrheit .....165
Wahrheitsfindung .....163
watershed.....1
whites... 4, 6, 7, 8, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45, 51, 52, 54, 61, 66, 74, 82, 111, 113, 114, 121, 129, 140, 143, 151, 152, 153, 156, 161
workforce.....5, 23
youth 1, 20, 26, 98, 102, 118, 119, 132, 154, 155
Zambia.....24
Zimbabwe.....24

# 10. Curriculum Vitae

## Nicole Pettau

### Personal Details

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### Education

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| 1994 - 2002 | secondary education<br>BG/BRG Roseggergasse<br>in Perchtoldsdorf, Lower Austria |
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### Further Training

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| 10/2005 - 02/2007 | tutor at Vienna University, Faculty of Life Sciences, Faculty Centre Botany, Department of Systematic and Evolutionary Botany |
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