

RECONSTRUCTION OF ATROCITIES THROUGH FICTION IN NAMIBIA: AN  
EVALUATION OF MARI SEREBROV'S *MAMA NAMIBIA* AND LAURI  
KUBUITSILE'S *THE SCATTERING*

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## **Abstract**

The study explored how fiction represents atrocities and the resilient tactics devised by people who experienced trauma during the 20<sup>th</sup> century Herero Genocide as presented in the two selected Namibian novels in English. The purpose of the study was to explore how traumatic avenues are chronicled in fiction through the two selected novels and to investigate how fiction portrays trauma and resilience in a Namibian context. The study further examined the coping and resilient strategies that the victims in the novels adopted. This study can help in archiving the literary representations of the painful and traumatic impact of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Herero genocide in Namibia. The study adds to the existing knowledge on the traumatic experiences which prevailed during the Herero genocide as well as the body of knowledge on the trauma novel. The study further contributes to the field of knowledge on contemporary postcolonial studies, which will become a useful reference tool to students, politicians, the general public and academics studying Namibian and African literature in general. The study was a desktop study, which adapted the qualitative research approach. Content analysis was used as an approach to analyse the two novels. The two novels were purposively selected and analysed. The textual analysis was informed by two theoretical frameworks – the trauma theory and resilience theory. These are lenses through which the African critic can investigate and explore traumatic atrocities and resilience techniques. The findings concluded that fiction creates a new, unique, individual world through acts of imagination, through a language that feels inevitable and through commanding forms. Writers were able to fictionalise Namibian traumatic events, past and present, to conscientise the readers.

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## **Dedication**

My late mother, Anna Kandeke Haitamba and my daughter Meameno, for all that we went through.

**Declaration**

I, Anna Ndishakena Nandenga, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Anna Ndishakena Nandenga

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Date

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Orientation of the study

The study explored how fiction represented atrocities and the resilient tactics devised by people who have experienced trauma. It is based on fictional novels, one of which dwells on the Herero genocide that affected Namibia during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Strauss (2011) defines genocide as “violence that is extensive, group-selective and group-destructive” (p. 5). It is an act of brutality towards a targeted group designed to destroy groups in specific territories under the perpetrators’ control.

Since the early 1990s a plethora of literature has been written on traumatic atrocities and resilience tactics especially among women and children. Included amongst these are the works of Allport (2009); Dailey (2009); Dwyer, O’Kefe, Scott and Wilson (2012); Flaschka (2010); Heidarizadeh (2014) and Kidd (2005). Notably, there is minimal literature that has extensively looked at the Namibian experiences. Heidarizadeh (2014) asserts that trauma illustrates an episode of change which begins from trauma, suffering and pain to knowledge and understanding. Trauma does not always have a negative meaning. Trauma can be perceived as a reaction to an overwhelming event resulting in psychological damage. Mlambo (2011) defines resilience as “the capacity for strategically absorbing disturbance and challenges, and for coping with the complex uncertainties in life, so as to survive and move beyond survival” (p. 36). Literature generally emphasises the didactic purpose and fiction reflects what is happening in the natural environment, which is evident in *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016). Fiction writers recreate people’s experiences in written form, for them to analyse, understand and cope with similar events in real life situations. There are many memories and stories that need to be shared, whether immediately after the event or



in sometime after. Namibia is one of the countries which witnessed the 20<sup>th</sup> century Herero genocide. In the novel *Mama Namibia* (2013), the author presents the character Jahohora, and in *The Scattering* (2016) Tjipuka, who both narrate their stories. The focal point for this study was not on a specific age group and gender as done by researchers such as Allport (2009); Dailey (2009); Heidarizadeh (2014) and Kidd (2005), but it examined the traumatic experiences that different people go through and the mechanisms they take to cope as represented in the two novels. A victim is dependent on a voice and a community to feel safe in order to bounce back after experiencing a traumatic experience. In the two selected novels, the authors present the traumatic atrocities endured by different characters and how they devise survival strategies that enable them to reconstruct their lives and hope for a better future.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The purpose of the study was to investigate how fiction writers represent traumatic atrocities and resilience tactics in *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016). Although trauma and resilience studies are relatively new in African literature in English, a great deal of work has been done in the field by the likes of Baxter (2010), Caruth (1996) Chimamanda (2008), Finck (2006), Heidarizadeh, (2014) and Mlambo (2014). Such a new yet critically relevant field thus needs attention and there is need to do research especially in the Namibian literary context. This is because Namibia is a country that experienced a disturbing and haunting moment and the authors of the two selected novels used for the study address these traumatic and atrocious events in their novels.

Trauma has been investigated through the feminist perspectives (Allport, 2009), which isolates man as perpetrators of trauma in crime fiction (Dodd, 2015), as well as individual and cultural trauma in a postcolonial context (Njovane, 2014). However, no research of this type has been done in the Namibian context, particularly from a postcolonial perspective. This is despite the fact that Namibia witnessed a genocide whose presence in the socio-political arena is still haunting the present world. Thus, there was a need to investigate traumatic atrocities and resilient tactics as presented in the two selected novels as there is a dearth of literary criticism in this specific area. *Mama Namibia* by Serebrov (2013) and *The Scattering* by Kubuitsile (2016) are relatively new novels that articulate atrocious events, and resilient tactics that were devised, yet this phenomenon is largely uninvestigated and the study broke new ground by investigating the nature of the atrocities and the forms of resilience recorded in the selected fictional works.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The study aimed to:

- 1.3.1 Explore how traumatic avenues are presented in fiction through the two selected novels,
- 1.3.2 Investigate how fiction portrays trauma and resilience in a Namibian context, and
- 1.3.3 Examine the coping and resilient tactics that the victims in the novels devised.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Insights gained from the study are of educational significance. Literature informs not only our understanding of the literature itself, but of the world; how we construct it and all of our places in it (Brown, 2008). The study thus helped in archiving the literary representations of the painful and traumatic impact of the 20<sup>th</sup> century genocide in Namibia. This adds to the existing knowledge on the traumatic experiences of the genocide as well as the body of knowledge on the trauma novel. The study contributes to the field of knowledge on contemporary postcolonial studies, which is a

useful reference tool to students, politicians, the general public and academics studying Namibian and African literature in general.

### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

The study was limited to Namibian fiction written on the construction of atrocities in Namibia, thus, excluding all other fictional works written which do not centre on the above mentioned theme as they fall outside the scope of the proposed study. Amongst other novels that chronicle trauma and resilience, the researcher only based the study on two novels by Serebrov (2013) and Kubuitsile (2016). This allowed the researcher to do an in-depth study of the selected novels.

### **1.6 Organisation of the chapters**

This research is made up of six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and it demarcates the problem, specifies the objectives, and captures the limitations of the study.

Chapter two focuses on the literature review and the theoretical framework that informs the study, namely, the Trauma theory and Resilience theory.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology of the study. It lists the literature that will be analysed. It deals with the research approach and design, population, sample, method, data analysis as well as the ethical considerations in the study.

Chapter four deals with the discussion as well as the critical analysis of the reconstruction of atrocities in *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016) using the themes highlighted and outlined in the literature review.

Chapter five recaps the major findings of the study, the conclusion of the thesis and recommendations for further study.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

This introductory paragraph outlined the context and relevance of the study as well as its aims. It briefly explained the concepts of trauma and resilience in literary fiction and how the two concepts are applied as theories to inform this literary study. This chapter confirmed the need to examine the reconstruction of atrocities through fiction in the two selected novels for the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This section reviews the literature that is related to trauma and resilience and the theoretical framework employed in the research. It aims to highlight what is already known about the Herero genocide and its implications on the psyche of its people in various forms of literature. It also identifies the gaps in knowledge and how this study seeks to fill up these critical gaps to complement what is already known. The literature review is divided into subheadings which assist in reviewing the existing knowledge root and instituting the validation of carrying out this research, as well as providing a basis study on which this study was built.

#### 2.2 Historical Context

The novels are situated during the Scramble for Africa (19<sup>th</sup> century) period when African territories were being colonised by the European Powers. At that time, the Germans wanted to expand their territory and needed the space which was occupied by the native cattle herder tribes – Herero and Nama (Burden, 2017). The Herero Genocide occurred between 1904 - 1907 in current day Namibia. The Herero were herdsman who migrated to the region in the 17th and 18th centuries. After a German presence was established in the region in the 1800s, the Herero territory was taken as part of German South West Africa. A series of uprisings against German colonialists, from 1904–1907, led to the extermination of approximately four-fifths of the Herero population (Burden, 2017). After Herero soldiers attacked German farmers, German troops implemented a policy to eliminate all Herero people from the region, including women and children. In January 1904, the Herero people, led by Samuel Maharero, and the Nama people, led by Hendrik Witbooi, rebelled against the German

colonial occupation. Their rebellion stood no chance of success against the oppressive German occupation of the region. In response, German General Lothar von Trotha ordered that “within the German borders every Herero, with or without a gun, with or without cattle, will be shot” (Sarkin, 2011, p. 127). Many were killed in combat, including during the Battle of Waterberg while others died of dehydration in the desert. Those imprisoned in concentration camps died of disease and exhaustion. These various methods were used to respond to the failed Herero and Nama rebellion. They resulted in the annihilation of approximately 80% of the Herero people and 50% of the Nama.

Burden (2017) alluded to the fact that colonialism and Nazism are not precisely associated as they are connected by a philosophy of which its trademarks included racist pseudo-science and the devaluation of human life. The German Southwest Africa genocide should be studied both as an episode in the violent history of European colonialism, and as the forebear of the atrocities committed in the second world war which prompted the need for this study. According to Ochab (2014) eight decades after the atrocities, the UN Whitaker Report determined that the atrocities constituted an attempt to exterminate the Herero and Nama people in German South West Africa. The report named the genocide of the Herero and Nama people as one of the biggest genocides of the 20th century (it stands among: The Ottoman massacre of Armenians in 1915-1916, the Ukrainian pogrom of Jews in 1919, the Tutsi massacre of Hutu in Burundi in 1965 and 1972, the Paraguayan massacre of Ache Indians prior to 1974, the Khmer Rouge massacre in Kampuchea between 1975 and 1978, the contemporary Iranian killings of Baha'is, and the Holocaust). The above is evident enough that the Namibian story needs to be told from a Namibian perspective, the people need to be educated on issues which they are unaware of, express cultural identity, preserve their past

and address issues of racial inferiority which is a disease deeply entrenched in the hearts of most Namibians due to the apartheid scars.

In 2004, the German government formally recognised the colonial atrocities perpetrated in German South West Africa and issued an apology. However, at the time, the German government ruled out any reparations for the survivors or their families. In 2015, the German government officially recognised the atrocities to constitute genocide but again, ruled out any reparations. Even before the German government's formal recognition of the atrocities as genocide, in 2001, representatives of the Herero people filed a lawsuit in the United States. The lawsuit identified the German government and Deutsche Bank (the commercial entity that financed the German government and other companies in the German South West Africa) as the defendants. The lawsuit was unsuccessful. The lawsuit follows negotiations between the German and Namibian governments that allegedly rule out reparations for more than 100,000 victims of genocide. This means that even if Namibia is awarded reparations, they may not reach the indigenous people or the families of the victims and survivors of the atrocities committed between 1904 - 1908. The sum of the reparations sought in the lawsuit is not specified.

The difficulties encountered by Herero and Nama communities are not unusual. However, it does not mean that they will not be successful. Indeed, there are precedents for such reparation claims. For example, Germany has paid war reparations to survivors of the Holocaust; the US has paid reparations to the Japanese-American Internees; the UK has promised to pay the Mau Mau people tortured under its rule in Kenya. However, some similar reparations claims are strongly objected. The best example is that of the Poles trying to claim reparations for the Nazi atrocities committed during World War II.

While some groups have been successful in obtaining reparations, others have struggled for decades and there appears little hope. The struggles experienced by the survivors and the families of the victims in accessing reparations for mass atrocities suggest a greater need for a more uniform and universal approach to the issue, hence the need to articulate the issue through literary lenses. Most importantly, in discussion with governments about such claims for reparations, the affected communities, victims, survivors and their families must be put first and cannot be excluded.

Even though the Herero – Nama genocide has been articulated and over-trodden especially through historical lenses, there is a need for the stories to be told through literature. According to Achebe (1988) the writer has to assume the responsibility of restoring the African personality as a fundamental task for his or her community. The restoration can only be done through fiction which serves to conscientise readers. African writers are committed to the revolutionary struggle for justice and true independence, thus performing the dual function of educating his or her audience and helping them reclaim their past heritage (Nandenga, 2016). According to a review by Matundu-Tjiparuro (2013) *Mamma Namibia* is a historical-educative piece of writing on the history of the Ovaherero and Nama people which have been confined to oral transmission to only latter generations of the victims and which has for some reasons been ominously removed from the remit of other Namibians. *The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) reconstruct the atrocities that the Herero people endured during the fight for freedom through literary lenses.



## **2.4 Trauma in women and children**

After the feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s, it became clear and evident that more women than men suffered from the long-term effects of psychological trauma and that these women were traumatised in their private lives rather than in war (Rodi-Risberg, 2010). A general observation is that some fictional stories focus on women and their inner selves. Feminist criticism concentrates on how women are oppressed in their societies and also underpins their anxieties and trauma.

Moreover, there was a gap in the available literature in that writers like Heidarizadeh (2014) studied trauma in women and children from a feminist and psychoanalytic theory perspective. There is a sense of biasness because it is not only women and children who experience trauma. Heidarizadeh (2014) concentrated on Margaret Atwood's work who selects the female characters and their psyches to begin a quest with the two major approaches, namely, feminism and psychoanalysis. It is important to note that these two approaches find the way to come to literature, literary criticism as in another approach can join them (Heidarizadeh, 2014).

Female characters would be included in a traditional and modern society to gain new insights on the subject under investigation. Literature is very broad and it intersects with other fields in order to underscore some important aspects of life. Atwood (1998) portrays trauma in the life of females asserts that the traumatised female is in the centre of the novel and they are dominated by patriarchy (as cited in Heidarizadeh, 2014). Some fictional pieces trace the images of women to depict their strength and not their weaknesses (Heidarizadeh, 2014). Traumatic experiences are illustrated by the author probably in order to achieve two aims: firstly, to place women in the centre of the discussion and secondly, to show which the society traumatised her.

Njovane (2014) claims that many post-independence fictional writings incorporate “a number of female metaphors and redemptive features that can be seen to transform the otherwise disjointed and discontinuous fictional worlds” (p. 6). The fictional works underscore the subjugation of women in the post-colony and also suggest that the form of redemption required under such conditions requires a revision of cultural discourses surrounding notions of the feminine. In keeping with this motif, Njovane (2014) investigates the relationship between female characters that have been sexually violated. The women experienced hallucinations and nightmares which replicate not only their comparable experiences, but also highlight the ways in which the very existence of the female body in this instance “carries an impossible history” which none of the women can fully possess (Caruth, 1996, p. 232).

Similarly, Njovane (2014) highlights in Danticat’s novel *The Farming of Bones* (1998), the story of Amabelle, a maid who comes to terms with the survivor’s guilt after having witnessed her parents drowning in a river as a child. Njovane (2014, p. 200) interprets the detachment with which Amabelle narrates the incident as a symptom of a trauma inscribed in a narrative voice which is “the voice of an orphaned child at the stream, a child who from then on would talk to strange faces.” The perception of trauma as a revolutionary experience highlights what is arguably the diminution of both the child and the women to minimal subjectivity.

According to Rodi-Risberg (2010), as a result of Vietnam veterans’ activist campaigning – the understanding of trauma emanates from research focusing on the effects suffered by combat veterans, specifically, adult males. Such an observation highlights the critical gap in the study that not only women and children are victims of trauma but adult males also. Allport (2009) studied trauma from a feminist perspective and analysed the sources of trauma for women,

examining them through the framework concept of the triple trauma (separation, persecution and sexual abuse). The study specified the wounding of trauma, and linked women's trauma to representational practices of writing about trauma. However, trauma is not only experienced by women, but men also succumb to trauma as it is a phenomenon that does not discriminate based on gender. Men also become victims of sexual abuse, separation from family and persecution. Thus, there was a need to investigate trauma holistically instead of concentrating on women only. This study therefore critically contested the assumption that women are the only victims and this is a critical area in literary studies, which this study intends to explore, hence fill in the void.

Although not written from a literary perspective, childhood trauma can be any negative experience that causes major stress for an infant or child. Family violence is especially traumatic for children and because someone they are close to is hurt or hurts them (Bird & Burgess, 2008). The trauma of experiencing domestic violence where a parent is hurt or threatened can be as harmful as being physically or sexually abused. Children exposed to domestic violence live in fear and chaos. Life for them is like a roller coaster; not knowing what to expect next. This leads to problems as a child's brain adapts to survive. Negative experiences have the opposite effect on early brain development, much like a flower that wilts from neglect. Early trauma can leave a lasting imprint on the developing brain. The younger a child is, the more vulnerable their brain is to the effects of trauma.

Bird and Burgess (2008) further notes that children who experience trauma are more likely to have health problems such as bedwetting, stomach problems, and chronic headaches. Trauma also takes a toll on children's emotional health. Depression, anxiety disorders, and behavioural problems are very common among traumatised children. These children often start using alcohol and drugs at an early age as a coping mechanism or to numb their feelings.

## 2.5 Being the “other”

Webb (2014) asserts that the known but unappreciated presence of the devalued, denigrated other is, to borrow Toni Morrison’s term, one of the “unspeakable things unspoken,” (p. 20) as it barricades and upholds the social status quo by overshadowing minority groups to the subjective rule of the powerful group for the political and economic gains of the latter at the expense of the former. The maintenance of the structural injustice of society is made possible by the “lethal discourses of exclusion blocking access to cognition for both the excluder and the excluded” (Webb, 2014, p. 21). As a result, the poisonous discourses of barring create a distorted relationship between the self and the other, in which the discriminated, inferior minority subject, via a series of psychic instrument of internalisation and identification dictated by the dominant rules of society, is reborn as the dark and uncanny shadow of the hegemonic self (Webb, 2014).

Danticat’s short story cycle *Claire of the Sea Light* (2013) highlights the subject of parents losing their children, and children missing their dead or absent parents, of death, rape and murder; of poverty, loneliness and grief. Previous texts by Danticat have often been analysed as trauma fiction, an approach that interprets her as a witness to the traumas suffered by her people, both Haitians and Haitian-Americans and at the same time, recognises her merit in articulating narratives of recollection, resilience and hope. One of the issues related to this frequent approach to Danticat (2013) is the fact that she is generally viewed by critics as the voice of Haiti, and her work as representing the entire culture, something that the author herself is very aware of and has commented on:

It is a burden that most writers who are from smaller groups face. There is a tendency to see our work as sociology or anthropology, an ‘insight’ into a complex culture. Readers have to remember that we’re writing fiction, telling stories” (p. 190)

The burden Danticat (2013) acknowledges is also made manifest in criticism on the part of the Haitians, who have not always reacted encouragingly to her works, especially when these do not project a positive image of Haiti and Haitians. The only possible answer to the kind of accusations she occasionally faces: “That is not us. The things she writes, they are not us”, or “You are a parasite and you exploit your culture for money and what passes for fame” (pp. 32 –33) is to vindicate, once and again, her status as nothing more and nothing less than a storyteller, a fiction writer. External views have a lot to do with the way Danticat (2013) sees herself as a Haitian-American and as an immigrant artist, one who is full of self-doubt as she struggles to keep “the dangerous balance between silence and art” (Danticat, 2013, pp. 9 - 10). In both national and artistic affiliation, the author identifies as a ‘*diaspora*’, a Creole word whose multi-layered meaning she has often struggled to explain, and which defines her as a member of an ambivalent in-between space:

My country, I felt, both as an immigrant and as an artist, was something that was then (in the 1990s) being called the tenth department. Haiti then had nine geographic departments and the tenth was the floating homeland, the ideological one, which joined all Haitians living outside of Haiti, in the *diaspora*. (Danticat, 2013p. 49)

Such an affiliation highlights the intricacies of belonging and not belonging. It proves the need to de-essentialise identity, both Haitian and Haitian American, in this case and reminds us that being a person of the in-between, an inhabitant of a contact zone, is not always an easy thing.

As a writer, the way for Danticat to respond to the risk of appropriating the experience of an ‘other’, Haitians who may feel they are not faithfully or properly represented in her fiction, fundamentally is to assume that just as identity should never be claimed to be pure, through language, she is allowed to construct a reality that is not exactly Haitian but hybrid and métisse, a product of the contact zone, through what she calls “my self-created folklore, my fake-lore” (Danticat, 2013, p. 68).

Hwangbo (2004) uses Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection, and her view of the intimate relationship between the self and the other. “Abject,” Kristeva argues, “is something rejected from which one does not part,” and “abjection” “disturbs identity, system, order” for it is the “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 23). The self on the periphery is the self, to use Kristeva’s term, that suffers from abjection by society, which fails to realise that the other it persecutes and ejects to the limit of its territory and then projects its shadow of itself, just as the uncanny is actually the familiar and known that has been made into the strange and alien by repression. Since the protective wall between the self and the denigrated other is set up to prevent the return of the repressed and to ensure social stability, the other provokes anxiety, fear, and at the same time, forbidden fascination. The other, trapped within the wall of the inverted, hegemonic logic of abjection, becomes the dark shadow of the privileged member of the mainstream society. In *Mama Namibia* and *The Scattering*, the authors present the situation in which the characters felt inferior to a certain group thus evoking traumatic feelings in them.

## **2.6 Abuse, violence and persecution**

A study conducted by Garg (2014) observes that women have been marginalised in society and quotes Simon De Beauvoir from the fifties: “one is not born, but rather becomes a

woman.” Garg (2014) concludes that women have always been oppressed due to sex stereotyping, and have been considered even as ‘God’s second mistake’. This study unpacks the psychological effects that accompany such stereotypes.

If the Holocaust is a traumatic experience of disconnection, fragmentation, and stasis that traps survivors in the repetitive reliving of their painful past and hinders them from resuming their suspended self-narratives, how can the survivors overcome the gripping force of their trauma? What does it mean to struggle to survive this odd ‘survival’ that often involves ‘a paradoxical killing of the self by the self’? In the ruins of the basic ontological landscape of selfhood, is it really possible for the survivors of the Herero and Nama genocide to start all over and rebuild their lives? If it is possible to a certain extent, what tasks and daunting risks are involved? These were some of the major questions that the researcher came across. The present study highlights the above mentioned issues which were prevalent during the Herero and Nama genocide, hence the need to investigate the significant role which narratives may play in the mourning and healing process.

### **2.6.1 Sexual violence**

Representing rape in a narrative composed of both visual and written components is understandably a challenging matter, thus there is a need to emphasise the need to do more literary studies about the atrocious horror of sexual violence to create a better understanding on the issue. Njovane’s (2014) sentiments on traumatic experiences are equally insightful in a bid to position this study. Choices, such as the exchange of sex for food, were made by women to stay alive in concentration camps, ghettos or during transportation. Such choices became sources of personal shame and often community condemnation after the war. Likewise, stories of sexual abuse during the Holocaust have long been discredited, belittled and considered insignificant as compared to

other atrocities that occurred. Flaschka (2010) suggests that rape acted as a reinforcement of the feminine and female identity amongst women in concentration camps. Shorn heads and emaciated bodies left women feeling 'sub-human' and indistinguishable from one another. According to Flaschka (2010), many who survived the camps associated rape with physical attractiveness and the retention of female characteristics. Such feminine characteristics "produced" women "in an environment in which women... no longer existed" (Flaschka, 2010, p. 89) and during a moment in time no one should have ever been forced to endure.

At the root of any trauma is the violation of the fundamental boundary of the self whose intactness is mandatory for survival on both the physical and the psychological levels. To have one's identity cancelled to such an extent that one's corporeality becomes the only tangible anchoring point of the self is a highly painful and excruciatingly degrading experience (Langer, 1995). Shame and guilt, the repressed aggression turned inward, accompany this "truncated self" or "the self ... reduced to pure body and thence to certain blankness" (Langer, 1995, p. 191). Hence, for the survivors of the Holocaust, their deeply humiliating and self-fragmenting experience is basically "a story of a dirty wound," (p. 192) as Langer (1995) states in reference to former Auschwitz inmate Charlotte Delbo's wartime ordeal. Langer (1995) also argues in his research on Holocaust testimonials, that the Holocaust for survivors is inseparable from their own "anguished," "humiliated," or "tainted" (Langer, 1995, p. 193) memory that constantly haunts them. Because of the deep, long-term repercussions of the life-threatening incident, the survival of trauma comes with a high cost. Studies of numerous cases of post-traumatic stress disorder show that survival itself often depends on "a paradoxical killing of the self by the self in order to keep the self alive." One survivor of the Holocaust thus remarks, "I'm not alive. I died in Auschwitz but no one knows it" (Langer, 1995, p. 195).



It is logical and evident in our societies that ‘war children’ also sometimes referred to as ‘rape products’ especially if the mother was of a darker complexion suffer some forms of marginalisation and stigmatisation. Patriarca (2016) explicates how some of the children (mix-race children) were more often abandoned in children’s homes as their mothers’ tried to avoid the stigma that attached to “Illegitimacy” (Patriarca, 2016, p. 1), which the children’s skin colour made it impossible to ignore. Indeed in all European cases the dark skin of the children determined also a greater stigmatisation of their mostly unwed mothers guilty of having attached themselves to foreigners whether allies or enemies and non-white to boot. These children were often seen as a ‘problem’ or wrong procreation which showed the extent to which post-war German authorities tried to distance themselves from the Nazi past and its racist policies, while at the same time attempting to keep so-called ‘negro-blood’ out of Germany (Patriarca, 2016). Patriarca (2016) further explains how the United States devised plans for the children to be sent to the US for adoption – although eventually most of the children stayed in Germany. In contrast to England, Germany’s ‘brown babies’ were the children of the war enemy and not just of a war partner and thus their presence was also the constant reminder of a crushing military defeat. Along with the issue of the mass rape suffered by German women at the end of the war, the presence of coloured children contributed to configuring 1945 (German occupation by the US) in terms of national sexual humiliation (Patriarca, 2016). Needless to say, the image of women who had intimate relations with soldiers was very negative. Similarly to the German case, in Italy the biracial children were certainly a reminder of the shame and humiliation of the lost war, at least among the nationalist and anti-fascist public opinion. It has become evident that being the child of the enemy or of occupation forces has influenced the lives of the war off-springs up until today.

Families of mixed ethnicity were among the first victims of violence because they represented a threat to divisive ideologies. Rwanda's mixed-race children were persecuted, attacked or forced to flee to avoid death (Njovane, 2014). Discrimination, marginalisation as well as stigmatisation are words that represent the off-springs of the Herero and Nama rape victims. Many young people of mixed ethnicity are growing up in the shadow of the war and genocide. Their mixed background has an effect on their social identities, emotions, friendships and love relations. They are out of place in many ways: educationally, economically, socially and emotionally. The German soldiers raped so many Namibian women during the war and their children were left fatherless. These off-springs do not have an identity because they grow up not knowing their paternal family as well as rights. Their human rights have been violated by their rapist fathers who abandon and neglect their duties. The most traumatising part is the fact that the soldiers do not even know these off-springs. According to Nunuhe (2011) the Ovaherero people want to know where and in whose car the Germans left their children after the war. The aspect of 'othering' is very much present in our societies. We tend to disassociate or treat victims differently because of what they went and are going through. The above was an interest avenue in the sense that the study wanted to explore how the violence was reconstructed into fiction through *Mama Namibia* and *The Scattering*

The fear of rape is universal for especially, women and at the same time, rape is an intensely private experience. Rape is commonly used as a weapon of war to dilute the ethnic purity of the victims to humiliate its men and disgrace its men. Babies born out of war rapes become young adults of mixed ethnicity who are out of place in many ways- they will grow up without a father often unwelcomed by the maternal side of the family, and stigmatised by society.

Sexual violence, which includes, but is not limited to rape, forced abortion, molestation, amenorrhea, and forced prostitution, was also an under-discussed reality of women's experience during the Rwandan genocide (Njovane, 2014). Individual and gang rapes took place and the children born from these forced sexual encounters are now teenagers of mixed ethnicity. These young people are angry and confused, struggling to make sense of their new personal and social identity which carries stigma and shame (Njovane, 2014). They grow up thinking of themselves as genocide orphans and have to integrate the dissonant reality that they are also children of rape. A discovery that is likely to affect the ways in which they cope with love and future marriage prospects. Rape is used as a weapon to terrorise and degrade people and their communities and it is a popular weapon used to commit atrocities, hence the present study also seeks to extend this observation by Njovane (2014). Hence, the novels in question represent this generally un-explored area of academic interest.

## **2.7 Racism**

Mailu (1985) highlights comments from P W Botha's 1985 speech in which he referred to black people as the "black devil"- "black bug":

The fact that blacks look like human beings and act like human beings do not necessarily make them sensible human beings... hedgehogs are not porcupines and lizards are not crocodiles because they look alike. If God wanted us to be equal to the blacks, He would have created us all of a uniform colour and intellect. (Mailu, 1985, p. 2)

This contributes to the notion that the black race has always been marginalised to this day. The black people are forced to give up their dignity and humanity in order to continue to exist. They are constantly treated as less than human and are certainly never given the respect they deserve. These

are avenues that Kubuitsile (2016) and Serebrov (2013) explore in their novels hence the need for them to be studied critically for this study.

## **2.8 The expropriation of land and cattle**

The issue of land ownership is currently a topic of heated debate amongst the Namibians especially the youth. European traders, missionaries and settlers begin arriving in significant numbers in the mid – 1800s. Increasing the expropriations of land and cattle by German settlers led Herero and Nama communities to rebel. According to Haugh (2014) after the Herero and Nama genocide, the survivors were settled on barren reserves and forced to work in mines and on commercial farms. Since labour was short, large numbers of men from the north, a densely populated area not subject to white settlement, were brought south as contract labourers. This pattern of eviction from the land and migrant labour continued when South Africa assumed control after world war two Haugh (2014).

Land is very important as it conjures on the idea and sense of place of attachment. Okolo (2013) acknowledges that “Land is held onto as a sign of belonging to a particular community, a link to one’s roots and source” (Okolo, 2013, p. 23). Huggins (2010) also comments that, “Land is essential to most rural livelihoods, but it is also bound up very strongly with issues of identity and power” (Huggins, 2010, p. 5). Wealth of somebody is measured by materialistic possessions such as livestock. Meanwhile, the serious emphasis and great regard for money, houses, lands, livestock, economic trees, agricultural product, etc notwithstanding, it was generally believed especially in the Igbo culture that true, real and authentic wealth was the human person (Ndukaihe, 2006). This goes with the well known saying that he who has more people is greater than he who has more money. This concludes that land and livestock plays a pivotal role in the lives of many Africans as the two elements

form part of their identity. The identity and pride of the Herero and Nama people was insulted and wounded by the actions of the Germans as they were considered not worthy of the livestock and lands of rich minerals. The above scenarios are narrated in the writings of Serebrov (2013) and Kubuitsile (2016) which were selected as part of the discussion for this study. It is clear that their novels are connected to the expropriation of land and livestock and have shown how traumatic avenues are presented in fiction which was an objective for this study.

Moreover, during the Herero – Nama genocide the expropriation of land and livestock was motivated by many factors. These factors range from exploitation by traders, rinderpest, loss of cattle in exchange for manufactured goods at high prices, land alienation and the influx of German settlers (Wallenkampf, 1969). Writing from a non-literary perspective, Kössler and Melber (2012) established that Von Trotha proclaimed his infamous extermination proclamation and publicly called on his troops to ensure that the Herero would perish in the semi-desert. Kössler and Melber (2012) quote Von Trotha's proclamation that "every Herero, with or without a gun, with or without cattle, will be shot" (Kössler & Melber, 2012, p. 105). The proclamation also stressed that neither women nor children would be spared; they would be denied refuge. It becomes evident that his mission was to exterminate and take over the land and livestock by chasing the Herero people back into the waterless Omaheke to die of thirst, hunger and exhaustion. Their fickle indicator, intended to water down the extermination order and thus the intent to destroy, makes the actions an even more gruesome way of exterminating the Herero clans. This situation is demonstrated in the writings of Kubuitsile (2016) and Serebrov (2013) from a literary perspective, and not a historical point of view, thus aligning it with the objectives of this study.

## **2.9 Novelists' recreation of atrocities through fiction**

Fiction creates a new, unique, individual world through acts of imagination, through a language that feels inevitable and through commanding forms (Rodi-Risberg, 2010). It can also be achieved through responding to a world, the world the writer shares with other people but that is unknown or mis-known by a lot of people, confined in their worlds. Literature becomes the “forgotten unforgettable place of trauma” (Rodi-Risberg, 2010, p. 3) that it so urgently needs. Instead of lamenting the limits of literature to represent the un-representable as it were, trauma narratives demand what Caruth calls a “new mode of reading and of listening” (Caruth, 1996, p. 9).

The aspects of representation, memory, and witnessing hoisted by trauma advocate that the questions of referentiality must be intrinsically literary. Using the same logic, Freud as cited in Rodi-Risberg (2010) often turned to literature to explain his theories. Today theorists (re)turn to literature in trying to formulate the effects and consequences of trauma as well as to understand the phenomenon culturally. Both Caruth (1996) and Felman and Laub (1992) emphasise in their writings that literature is a nonpareil jurisdiction for representing traumatic experience. Literature becomes a site for a belated enactment and witnessing of what can be referred to as an unclaimed moment of trauma. Caruth uses the image of the wound “that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (Caruth, 1996, p. 4), to indicate that trauma can only be understood through literary or symbolical language. Caruth (1996) suggests that crisis in trauma functions as an interface between psychoanalysis and literary language: “it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet” (Caruth, 1996, p. 3). Concurring, Felman and Laub (1992), observe that the question of representing trauma or the “crisis of truth,” (Felman &

Laub, 1992, p. 3) which trauma entails, is tied to literary language and to witnessing; as trauma renders impossible a witnessing from within, a belated figurative and literary representation of traumatic experience displaces referential truth.

Pozorski (2006) (as cited in Rodi-Risberg, 2010, p. 74), puts the point precisely; “the emergence of trauma as a theory ... was an event that came too soon, and was largely missed, only to return to us repeatedly via literary representations, political studies, and historical events throughout the decades that we align with world-wide atrocity”. The fiction that matters most to us is one that enlarges our consciences, our sympathies and our knowledge. There are fictional pieces which articulate the Namibian traumatic experience be it the Herero genocide, physical or emotional abuse and colonisation in Andreas’ *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2008); Diescho’s *Troubled Waters* (2013); Nyathi’s *The Other Presence* (2013); Kahengua’s *Invoking Voices: An Anthology of Poems* (2012) and Morris and Schlettwein’s *Bullies, Beats and Beauties* (2012). Writers can bring life to traumatic events that have happened in the past and some still happening today through fiction which serves to conscientise the readers thus, aligning this study with its objectives.

Trauma scholars such as Vickroy (2002) and Whitehead (2004) all argued for a symbolic and novel mode of depicting trauma that mimics its processes. In the book *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (2002), Vickroy explores fictional depictions of trauma in a context of subjugation and colonialism in the works of such authors as Marguerite Duras, Toni Morrison, Dorothy Allison, Pat Barker, and Larry Heinemann. Vickroy (2002) found that trauma narratives, although fictional, can convey traumatic experiences as authentically as survivor testimonies because of their experimental narrative techniques, including symbolisation, where they not only represent trauma as a content or theme but they also incorporate the “rhythms, processes, and uncertainties of trauma within the consciousness

and structures of these works” (2002, p.14). For Vickroy, these writers employ fictional techniques such as figurative language to represent trauma and its concerns with dissociation, shattered identities, and fragmented memories, thus making traumatic experience more accessible and real to readers.

Traumatized experiences in a society result in suffering and pain, in order to raise the new insights. Marder (2006) further elucidates that “literature is one of the ways that we tell one another about aspects of human experience that cannot be contained by ordinary modes of expression and that may even exceed human understanding”. Caruth (1996) further asserts that trauma and literary studies is critical in that it is through literature that some of the ‘un-representable’ aspects of contemporary life can be conveyed especially, that “the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (Caruth, 1996, p. 2). The event in the fiction and reality was not assimilated as it occurred because it only comes into being ‘belatedly’. The belated event is a trauma which is “absence” or “missed encounter” (Caruth, 1996, p. 9). With this absence, people who have suffered traumatic experiences can become so ‘possessed’ by them that they frequently describe themselves as living ‘ghosts.’ This has a paradoxical meaning in literature in the sense that to be absent has a positive meaning. This chapter investigates the presence of what is known as trauma and being resilient in times of adversity in the select novels for the study. It is according to the researcher’s knowledge, the first time that this kind of investigation has been done on *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016). The two novels focus on traumatic experiences and their effects which is also an objective of this study. It becomes clear that there is a need to illustrate the origins of trauma and knowledge to get the epiphany after the suffering.

Literature concerns itself with literary texts which illustrate the imaginary people as representations of the real individuals. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Caruth (1996)



refers to literature and literary forms of interpretation to emphasise the structure of traumatic events and belated experience. Thus, Caruth (1996) highlights the significant role of literature which enables us to bear witness to events that cannot be completely known and opens our ears to experiences that might have otherwise remained unspoken and unheard.

## **2.10 Confronting fragmented memories**

There are many memories and stories that need to be shared, whether immediately after the event or in the long time afterward. Namibia was one of the countries that witnessed the 20<sup>th</sup> century genocide. A central claim of contemporary literary trauma theory by Balaev (2008) asserts that trauma creates a speechless fright that divides or destroys identity. With the above said, it also becomes clear as to why there is a need to do research in a Namibian context and explore how traumatic experiences destroy an individual's identity.

It is important, for both reader and author to recognise the fictional construct of trauma testimonies. This is applicable for both, those who survive traumatic experiences first-hand and those who are agents of trans-generational traumatic memory. The need to tell nevertheless remains an intrinsic part of confronting both personal memory and collective histories in the process, and trials of survival. A recent study by Dodd (2015) examined trauma in crime fiction and provided a foundation for further study into the value and power narrative has to evoke cathartic outcomes for genre fiction audiences. For trauma novels, it seems that they are a personal undertaking, offering a representative voice to both victims and survivors who have been silenced. Still, whilst these novels attempt to represent the suffering of victims and survivors, it is impossible for trauma or testimonial literature of any form to act as a voice for all, among the countless stories of suffering and witness accounts that spring from past horrors.

Cultural memory and trauma are produced through objects, images and representations. Erll (2011) clarifies that these are technologies and not vessels of memory in which memory passively resides. Landsberg (2004) (as cited in Erll, 2011) also highlighted the concept of “prosthetic memory” (p. 3) which focuses on the effects that the representations of slavery and the Holocaust in literature have on memory. What makes literature so powerful in memory culture is that it allows us to ‘take on’ other people and groups’ experiences and memories like an “artificial limb” (Landsberg, 2004, p.3). Literary studies can contribute to an understanding of memory by reconstructing the routes of powerful stories.

Njovane (2014) studied trauma in a postcolonial context focusing on individual and cultural trauma. Studies by Caruth (1996), Finck (2006) and Kidd (2005) applied post colonialism, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, gender as well as feminism theories alongside trauma and resilience which proved that trauma and resilience theories have not been extensively applied in the analysis of African literature, let alone in the sphere of traumatic atrocities and resilience in literary works. Thus, the current study intends to extend these frontiers of knowledge as it investigates the literary presentations of atrocious events and resilient tactics using the two theories as articulated by Cloete and Mlambo (2014).

Notable also is that trauma being a novel area in English literature, writers have analysed it through the social and historical frameworks. Inclusive are works by Allport (2009), Baxter (2010), Caruth (1996), Chimamanda (2008), Cloete and Mlambo (2014), Dwyer, O’Kefe, Scott and Wilson (2014), Finck (2006), Kidd (2005) and Mlambo (2014). The researcher noted no similar literary research was carried out in the Namibian context, especially on the traumatic impact of the Herero genocide, and with specific reference to the two novels selected for this study.

Moreover, it is critical to note that Leydesdorff, Graham, Burchardt and Ashplant (2004) assert that the “impact of trauma ... can influence survivors to express themselves in stories containing elements which are imaginary, fragmented or disjointed and loaded with symbolism” (Burchardt & Ashplant, 2004, p. 43). This quotation emphasises the need to investigate trauma in literary fiction, and interrogate this idea further by noting that it is not only survivors of trauma who are ‘sole owners’ of the story, but that novelists can also recreate the atrocities without themselves being direct victims. This complexity inherent in the traumatic experiences presented by the two novelists in question requires a thorough analysis of the chosen mediums and survivor accounts as this is a gap in the available literature.

Brown (2008) broadens the scope of trauma by highlighting the concept of insidious trauma. She considers the private, secret experiences of various minority groups such as girls and women of colour, men of colour, homosexuals, poor and physically challenged people. She brings up the concept of “insidious trauma” by Maria Root, which refers to “the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit” (Brown, 2008, p.107).

Craps (2012) cites Frantz Fanon’s account of black people’s encounters with racism, which leads to the “feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, and self-hatred” (Craps, 2012p. 3) as a classic example of insidious trauma. Craps (2012) indicated that trauma studies have a one-sided focus since they tend to focus almost exclusively on the traumatic experiences of “white Westerners” and apply critical approaches “emanating from a Euro-American context” (Craps, 2012, p. 2). Matus (1995) (as cited by Huffels, 2012) concurs that little work has been done on the “experience of racism as traumatic” (Huffels, 2012, p. 27). The current

study adds literature to such accounts by exploring the traumatic experiences faced by individuals based on their ethnicity which also forms part of the objectives in this study.

### **2.10 Blending of trauma and other theories**

Mlambo (2013) examined trauma through the application of three theories, namely, the chronotope theory, trauma theory and the resilience theory. The research recommended the exploration and analysis of texts to include the important field of literature for development. It also advised African literary critics to utilize the three theories in analysing literature as the theories have proven to be relevant in explicating the troubles facing Africa.

Cloete and Mlambo (2014) focused on the literary representation of trauma and resilience in the novel, *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) by Tagwira. Through the application of trauma theory, the many crises faced by ordinary Zimbabweans are highlighted. In addition, through the application of resilience theory it was shown how Zimbabweans optimistically responded to the challenges to enable them to keep hoping in the face of uncertainty. In their paper, Cloete and Mlambo demonstrated that the trauma theory and resilience theory are relevant and applicable to African literature and they help enhance the message of the author. Tagwira (2006) presented the traumatic events suffered by the ordinary Zimbabweans and how they reconstruct their identity to cope with the crises at hand (Cloete & Mlambo, 2014). The novel is evidence of how the arts in Africa, in this instance literature, serves a central purpose in the life of Africans and how literature can be utilised to teach valuable and lifesaving lessons. The paper concluded that, through the application of trauma theory and resilience theory the work of the female writer can be evaluated and criticised.

Friendship between women, universally referred to as 'sisterhood' is emphasised in Tagwira's narrative. It shows how women, through this support structure, can juggle their many roles at home and in society. It is also demonstrated that the experiences of women and the inspirational ways in which they react to adversity can be studied through trauma theory and resilience theory. Cloete and Mlambo (2014) also assert that literature has become a way through which women can articulate their struggles in societies that are male-centric and male-controlled. In patriarchal societies where all spheres are male controlled, literature might be the only way to communicate their situations. Finally, their paper has also proven that trauma theory and resilience theory should be studied in relation to one another. Traumatized people are able to make resilient choices for their lives and the lives of those who depend on them.

Caruth (1996) argues that theorists working from within the psychoanalytic model of trauma emphasise its interiority: "wound of the mind - the breach in the mind's experience of time, self and the world ... experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known" (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). This essentially means that people who are transformed by traumatic atrocities can never entirely return to a state of previous purity, even though they try to become resilient. As such, this study seeks to further clarify this dimension as it explores this 'silent' phenomenon in the available literature. Thus, there is a need for the study to explore how traumatic atrocities are represented in fiction through *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016) in a Namibian context as these stories have been a 'silent' story in fiction.

## **2.12 Theoretical framework**

In order to evaluate the representation of traumatic atrocities and resilience strategies, there is a need to use a relevant theory, taking into cognisance of the fact that new thoughts require new

concepts and theorisations. The study was guided and informed by the trauma theory and the resilience theory. The concept of memory emphasises the need to recreate or abreact through a narrative recall of the experience. The recollection of trauma is always an estimated account of the past, since traumatic experiences preclude knowledge, and, hence, representation. A critical analysis of the two novels will thus be patterned along the trauma and resilience literary theories.

Trauma is a devastating and damaging experience and as a topic on ‘crisis of representation’ has gained great prominence. This idea was introduced to literary studies in the framework of poststructuralist thinking, notably by Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* in 1996. In a clear-sighted critical survey of the expanding field of trauma studies, Leys as cited in Erll (2011) identifies as its heart of concern the “constitutive failure of linguistic representation in the post-Holocaust and post-Vietnam epoch” (Erll, 2011, p. 3). In poststructuralist trauma discourse, “the Holocaust is held to have precipitated, perhaps caused, an epistemological-ontological crisis of witnessing, a crisis manifested at the level of language itself” (Erll, 2011, p. 3). Such equations between the individual and the cultural, the biological and the linguistic levels, can be highly misleading and the ethical consequences of trauma studies’ tendency to conflate literary works with real people, must be critically assessed.

Trauma theory is an established critical category of literary studies, influenced by psychoanalytic discourse and literary practice, in particular by sources of psychoanalytic literary criticism (Rodi-Risberg, 2010). On the other hand, new insights on modern trauma theory have emerged making it possible to talk about a new evolving literary genre of trauma fiction. Whitehead (2004) observes, there is a mutual influence between trauma theory and fiction, “in which each speaks to and addresses the other” (Whitehead, 2004, p. 4).

The word trauma comes from ancient Greek meaning ‘wound’ (Marder, 2006). The literary trauma theory was articulated by Caruth in the 1990’s. The trauma theory employed depends upon the abreactive model of trauma, which is used to assert the position that traumatic experiences produce a “temporal gap and the dissolution of the self (Balaev, 2008, p. 15). Tal (2004) (as cited in Balaev, 2008) posits that “accurate representations of trauma can never be achieved without recreating the event since, by its very definition, trauma lies beyond the bounds of ‘normal’ conception” (Balaev, 2008, p. 15). This concept of trauma and memory emphasises the necessity to recreate or abreact through narrative recall of the experience. Yet, at the same time, this model claims that the remembrance of trauma is always an approximate account of the past, since traumatic experience precludes knowledge and hence representation. Trauma theory relates to the study of literary works about traumatic atrocities as demonstrated in *Mama Namibia* and *The Scattering*. The literary trauma theory is very critical to the study because it relates to literature about extreme and overwhelming atrocities that people go through and manage to survive. Traumatic experiences in fiction represent the horrors of life.

In modern literary criticism, the Freudian trauma theory has played a vital role in analysing texts. Caruth (1996), in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, aptly captures the connection between literature and psychoanalysis and claims that:

texts of a certain period—the texts of psychoanalysis, of literature, and literary theory—both speak about and speak through the profound story of traumatic experience [and] the complex ways that knowing and not knowing are entangled in the language of trauma and in the stories associated with it. (Caruth, 1996, p. 4)

Caruth’s conception of trauma makes a key connection with the vital role of an individual’s memory, which is intensely involved in the repetition of traumatic experiences. The traumatic

event, obviously, seems to be restored and twisted into the individual's stories of the past. In addition, the traumatic memory seems to be re-presented repeatedly, for it always remains unprepared and in unspeakable forms.

According to Caruth (1995), trauma refers to a person's emotional reaction to an overpowering incident that disrupts previous ideas of an individual's sense of self and the standards by which one assesses society (Caruth, 1995). The theory considers responses to traumatic experience, including cognitive chaos and the possible division of consciousness, as an inherent characteristic of traumatic experience and memory. The idea that traumatic experience pathologically divides identity is employed by the literary scholar as a metaphor to describe the degree of damage done to the individual's coherent sense of self and the change of consciousness caused by the experience.

Trauma as a new phenomenon in English African literature makes an interdisciplinary role for itself. It starts a movement to illustrate an episode of change; the path of suffering and pain continues to reach a point of knowledge and understanding. Moreover, trauma engages serious long-term negative consequences. Essentially, past trauma and traumatic memories affect the mind of the characters. Factors such as, confusion, insecurity, abuse, racial inferiority, bullying, domestic violence and particularly painful and disturbing childhood experiences induce trauma. Furthermore, catastrophic events such as war, treachery, betrayal and sexual abuse can cause psychological trauma. Even so, different people will react differently to similar events. In other words, not all people who have experienced the same traumatic event will become psychologically traumatised.

Through literature we experience events that might have remained hidden to us. Through literature these events become meaningful to us and by reflecting the world, fiction is thus one avenue through which trauma can be expressed. According to Cloete and Mlambo (2014), trauma is the story of the wound that needs to be told and this mode of expression is



found through literary both fictional and non-fictional texts. It unveils the reality or truth that we can only experience through a close reading of the text. Trauma is therefore the act of bearing witness and this act places the witness in a unique position of risk, a risk associated with selectivity, self-censorship and the betrayal arising out of the unreliability of memory as Mlambo and Pasi (2010) have pointed out.

The word trauma comes from the Greek word for “wound”. Trauma produces repeated, uncontrollable and incalculable effects that endure long after an event (Marder, 2006). Marder (2006) articulates that trauma has an inherently political, historical and ethnical dimension because traumatic events occur due to social forces in the social world. The impact of trauma cannot be fully located in a traumatic event. Trauma breaks the experience of the person who undergoes it, and the event cannot be experienced fully at the time (Mlambo, 2014), as reflected in *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016).

According to Martínez-Falquina (2015), the trauma theory has been critiqued for excluding the trauma in African cultures. As appropriately phrased by Craps (2012) and agreed upon by many more critics, “if trauma theory is to adhere to its ethical aspirations”, it is worth remembering Caruth’s notion that “trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures” (Craps, 2012, p. 11), “the sufferings of those belonging to non-Western or minority cultures must be given due recognition” (Craps, 2012, p. 13). There has also been a call to cross-examine and work primarily towards a Eurocentric trauma paradigm. Bracken and Thomas (2005) condemn how Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been introduced to the developing world “without any great thought of the great cultural, social, and other difficulties there would be with that move” (Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p. 7). The lack of historical assessment of trauma and careful attention to context is compared to the postcolonial focus on historical, political and social factors, which explains the universal

claim to attend to specific postcolonial experiences, like the trauma of racism, or the negative outcomes of colonialism. Craps (2012) argues that “the traumas of non-Western or minority populations need to be acknowledged for their own sake” (Craps, 2012, p. 3). This observation is useful to endeavours in this study as it foregrounds trauma and resilience in a developing country.

However, trauma does not only produce negative consequences, but there is the possibility of new beginnings. These new channels allow the traumatised person to survive, and by implication, this points to the value of resilience which is the thrust of this study. It is evident that trauma theory has benefitted and will keep benefitting from its development, but whether the opposite influence is also true still needs to be discussed systematically, mainly because most of the critics who support postcolonial trauma theory take it for granted that its expansion to the post-colony is a positive, even ethical move, without entering into much more debate (Visser, 2014). As argued above, the interaction with postcolonial theory has offered trauma studies an enormous opening to face many of its contradictions and improve itself in the process. In Visser’s (2014) words:

postcolonial literary texts often engage with trauma in ways not envisioned in the currently dominant trauma theory, or in ways that reverse trauma theory’s assumptions, for instance by depicting victims’ resilience, resistance, and eventual triumph over trauma, or a community’s increased cohesion and enhanced sense of identity after a traumatic event. (Visser, 2014, p. 127)

A number of authors also underscore the positive contribution of trauma theory for the understanding of previously ignored issues. For example, Herrero and Baelo-Allué (2011), observe trauma theory’s usefulness “in analysing and understanding colonial traumas such as

forced migration, sexual, racial and political violence, dispossession, segregation, genocide, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma, to mention but some” (Herrero & Baelo-Allué, 2011, p. 17). Further, Craps (2012), illustrates the contribution that a decolonised trauma theory can make to our understanding of “postcolonial literature that bears witness to the suffering engendered by racial or colonial oppression” (Craps, 2012, p. 5), and remarks that it can act “as a catalyst for meaningful change”, enabling us to “expose situations of injustice and abuse, and open up ways to imagine a different global future” (Craps, 2012, p. 8).

The field of resilience is broad and diverse. In some aspects it is well developed and explored, and in others it is still nascent. Resilience originates from the Latin word *resiliens*, which refers to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance (Caruth, 1995). Mlambo (2013) argues that “resilience theory in literature helps open instructive fissures for better elucidating the representation of the inspirational survival tactics” (Mlambo, 2012, p. 39). Resilience can be defined as a vigorous process in which people display positive acclimatisation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma. Lothar et al., (as cited in Cloete & Mlambo, 2014), alluded that resilience does not represent a personality trait or an attribute of the individual, rather, it is a two dimensional structure that implies exposure to adversity and the demonstration of positive adjustment outcomes. According to Mlambo (2014), “resilience, therefore, emphasises the strengths that the people have, rather than their vulnerability, through exploring the coping strategies that they exhibit” (Mlambo, 2014, p. 39).

People react to life’s challenges in miscellaneous ways. Some will emotionally explode, become angry, and become physically violent. Others may implode, go numb, feel helpless and overwhelmed by what has happened. Some might even portray themselves as victims, blaming others for what has happened. They twist downward and shelter unhappy feelings.

Then there are people who survive this situation. They bounce back; emerge better and stronger than before. These are the strong people who can quickly adapt to the new circumstances. Hence, the current study explores the extent to which the characters face traumatic circumstances which are typically African, in a resilient manner.

Research into coping, optimism, stress-resistance, post-traumatic growth, creativity, emotional intelligence and survivor personality has been identified as the main attribute of resilience (Mlambo, 2013). Resilience has been frequently defined as the act of positive adaptation despite adversity and these are the very acts which are represented in this study through the two literary texts. Lothar (2000) defines resilience as “a construct with two distinct dimensions: significant adversity and positive adaption” (as cited in Cloete and Mlambo, 2014, p. 94). This qualification indicates that resilience is never directly measured, but indirectly inferred, and by implication therefore, one way of recording and measuring it is through literary representations. Hence, trauma theory and resilience theory are lenses through which the African critic can investigate and explore trauma and coping mechanisms. This study therefore seeks to demonstrate how peoples’ livelihood and constructed identities are threatened in times of crisis and they have to adopt and explore new possibilities in life.

The Herero genocide and atrocities in the Namibian context remain under-investigated in literary criticism despite its presence in the public discourse. This is equally fascinating as *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016) are not researched on despite their rich and diverse recreations of the Herero genocide atrocities. Therefore, this area has largely remained under-investigated in the Namibian literary context and this study filled up the critical gap.

Analysing literary texts through the lens of the resilience theory means focusing on people’s resilience methods and their ability to withstand adversity even in the worst of situations; situations

like the ones presented in *Mama Namibia* and *The Scattering*. Literary characters are more than victims who succumbed to horrific atrocities, because they can turn over a new leaf and reconstruct their lives even after experiencing an overwhelming traumatic event. With the above mentioned, one can see that there is a correlation between trauma and resilience. People often try to bounce back after experiencing a horrifying event and for some these memories keep haunting them.

The study attempted to demonstrate how trauma theory and resilience theory can be used to analyse fictional texts, to explain the realities of everyday lives in Africa. The two theories were selected because they provide a framework for analysing and understanding better the effect of the ‘wound’ which was inflicted by the traumatic atrocities of the Herero genocide. Trauma causes an emotional breakdown and for people to step out of this ‘breakdown’, they need to be resilient, thus the need for the resilience theory to be used along trauma theory. The two theories are rooted in the social sciences and when used in literary studies as literary lenses, they bring about some novel perspectives to literary studies (Mlambo, 2011). The trauma theory and resilience theory are lenses through which the African critic can investigate and explore traumatic atrocities and resilience techniques, thus justifying the need to employ both as frameworks to analyse the selected texts, as they are dependent on each other.

### **2.13 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature for this study and provided an overview of the theoretical framework, such as trauma and resilience. The chapter looked at the effects and dangers of trauma as well as the need to bounce back and withstand adversity from a literary perspective. The next chapter highlights and defines the methods applied in order to collect the data used for the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the methodology and takes into account aspects such as approach and design, population, sample, data analysis as well as ethical consideration.

#### **3.2 Research approach and design**

The study adopted the qualitative research approach to gain a deeper understanding on the reconstruction of atrocities as presented by Serebrov (2013) in *Mama Namibia* and Kubuitsile (2016) in *The Scattering*. Qualitative research is a means of for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem or situation (Creswell, 2009). Researchers use the qualitative approach to explore the behaviours, perspectives, experiences and feelings of people and emphasise the understanding of these elements (Bhatacherjee, 2012).

A qualitative approach is based on arguments and interpretations aimed at understanding the complex nature of the social world within a specific context. Kothari (2004) states that, “the qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour” (p. 5). This means that the researcher is the main data gathering instrument whose function is to investigate the issues under study and then communicate the data in the form of words. This allows the researcher to conduct an inductive analysis of data and extract information from a variety of sources, analyse and draw conclusions.

The qualitative approach is important in this instance as it gives form and direction for this study. Kothari (2004, p. 3) states that a research design is the arrangement of the conditions for collection

and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose. Designing a study helps the researcher to plan and implement the study in a way that will help to obtain intended results, thus increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation (Burns & Grove, 2003). The researcher analysed the two novels; *Mama Namibia* and *The Scattering* using content analysis as an approach to study the two novels. The study is a desktop study, because no field work was involved, but the study relied on secondary data.

### **3.3 Population**

The population of the study was all African literary texts on the Nama - Herero genocide written in English. Burns and Grove (2003) define a research population as “all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study.”(p. 213). Bhattacharjee (2012) defines a population as all people or items with the characteristics that one wishes to study. Taking Bhattacharjee’s definition into account, the population of this study are all English literary texts that articulate trauma and resilience with regards to the Nama- Herero genocide

### **3.4 Sample**

The study is restricted to the critical analysis of the two novels, *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016) which forms the sample. The sampling method used is the purposive sampling method. This is because the two selected novels have “a preselected relevant criteria” (Mlambo, 2013, p. 43) to the study. The critical concepts of trauma and resilience were common in both texts, thus the chosen texts were similar from a thematic perspective, and in a way the study was able to fulfill the identified research objectives. The rationale for choosing this approach is that the researcher intended to seek knowledge about the reconstruction of traumatic atrocities and resilience tactics in literary fiction, which the two novels provide by virtue of their content. The two novels were selected because they represent traumatic atrocities and resilience tactics employed

during the Herero genocide and still remain with unanswered questions. Another reason for choosing the two novels is that they have never been researched on despite their powerful content on the atrocious events of the Herero genocide.

### **3.5 Research instruments**

The two novels and critical work on literature were used to enlighten and bring focus on what other academics and fiction writers have written on trauma and resilience. These instruments assisted the researcher to gather information, critically analyse and to come up with original and well-informed ideas.

### **3.6 Procedure**

As a desk top literary study, the data was collected through a critical reading and analysis of the two novels using the trauma and the resilience theories of literature. The two novels were critically examined, informed by the relevant literary theories, and then relegated in terms of the emerging themes and characters in *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016). The researcher considered relevant secondary sources including works by literary critics, book reviews, journals, scholars' research papers, academic presentations as well as relevant sources on the Herero – Nama genocide. These sources facilitated a close and critical analysis of this study's topic. Furthermore, the sources complemented the analysis and provided the framework on which this study was hinged upon. The chosen novels were analysed by applying the trauma and resilience theories that formed the theoretical framework of this study, and they were also informed by the reviewed literature, and culminated in informed findings and judgment for the conclusions.



### **3.7 Data analysis**

Kothari (2004) posits that, “content analysis consists of analysing the contents of documentary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and the content of all other verbal materials which can either be spoken or printed” (p. 110). The data collected from *Mama Namibia* and *The Scattering* was analysed using content analysis. The analysis was then coded according to thematic concerns and the mode of characterisation in the novels. The data was grouped into chunks that were easy to manage. Data was interpreted through the implementation of the trauma theory and the resilience theory. Conclusions were then drawn from the interpretation and analysis, and presented in a narrative form.

### **3.8 Research ethics**

The study is based on fiction novels, which make the characters, imaginative creations. As such, the literary analysis will be centred on the notion that references to real people, events and places in the two primary texts are used fictitiously. The study employed the trauma and resilience theories as its theoretical framework which will enable the researcher to refrain from influencing the research based on any personal feelings or emotions which may hinder the objectivity of the study. Due to the historical sensitivity of the topic, the researcher will consider the emotions that might be evoked in the people who have experienced trauma.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter the researcher gave a comprehensive backdrop of the research methodology applied in this study. The research questions were highlighted to inform scholars of the objectives of the study. The population and sample were defined. The population consisted of all literary texts written on trauma and resilience in Namibia and purposive sampling was used to select *The Scattering* and *Mama Namibia*. The research approach and the design were described and specified

in the chapter. To ensure objectivity and integrity, ethical considerations were also applied to this study. The next chapter presents an in-depth data analysis from the two selected novels.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the selected, *The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) were discussed and analysed based on the literature reviewed in chapter two and guided by the trauma and resilience theories. The emerging themes formed part of the subtitles.

The following research objectives were considered:

1. Explore how traumatic avenues are presented in fiction through the two selected novels.
2. Investigate how fiction portrays trauma and resilience in a Namibian context.
3. Examine the coping and resilient tactics that the victims in the novels devised.

#### 4.2 *The Scattering* summary

At the turn of the twentieth century, colonial wars were being waged across Southern Africa. *The Scattering* tells the story of Tjipuka, the daughter of a Herero chief, who's life is shattered during the brutal Herero wars. Fed up with the German occupation of their land, the Herero people had staged an uprising that led to extermination orders from a German general. Having survived the massacre at Ohamakari, Tjipuka flees into the desert with her child while her husband is presumed dead. From the desolate no-man's-land of the desert to the death camps on Shark Island and the border of Bechuanaland, Tjipuka has to find the courage and the will to survive. Meanwhile, in the Transvaal, twenty – five year old Riette is forced into marriage with her British neighbour. When he is taken captive and their farm is set ablaze part of the British scorched- earth policy she and his daughters are headed into a

concentration camp. *The Scattering* follows two women's journey through history as they wrestle with betrayal, loyalty, hope and the struggle to survive. Despite the challenges they develop a friendship to motivate each other to become strong and resilient.

### **4.3 *Mama Namibia* summary**

The novel narrates the story of Jahohora, a 12 year old girl who escapes from the mountains. She is forced to become an adult who endures tragic moments and in turn learns to survive the Omaheke desert on her own in search of her lost family. Surviving on her own in the desert, Jahohora searches for her family while hiding from the German soldiers. It's 1904, and Germany has claimed all of South West Africa. Since the Herero would rather fight than surrender their ancestral homes, General von Trotha has declared that they all should be forced into the Omaheke to die. Wasting away in the desert, Jahohora is about to give up her desperate struggle for life when she finds hope in a simple act of kindness from a Jewish doctor serving in the German army.

### **4.4 Violence**

Violence was marked as the framework under which rape, death, murder, physical abuse and psychological conflict were analysed in this study. In this section, the researcher presents the different circumstances regarding violence and dehumanisation during the 1904–1908 war and explores how men, women and children endured the ordeals. The Germans exert violence to make black people submissive. Kubuitsile (2016) and Serebrov (2013) underscore the pattern of abuse in their novels and how they are transferred through the different societies.

#### 4.4.1 Rape

Both *The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) highlight the theme of rape through their main characters. Rape is commonly used as a weapon of war to dilute the ethnic purity of the victims to humiliate its men and disgrace its men. During the war, a patriarchal society was further enhanced by the feeling of superiority, especially by the German soldiers and missionaries. The two female authors emphasise the subordinate role of the Herero men and women and the implications of rape as well as cultural stereotypes during the war.

In *The Scattering* (2016), a number of scenes reflect on the theme of rape. The reader is confronted with the harsh reality of rape when a German soldier takes advantage of a helpless Herero woman:

The tall German ran his hands down the front of the woman's dress. With sudden violence, he ripped the dress open and tore again at her petticoat underneath revealing her bare breasts. She brought her hands up to cover herself, and the tall German slashed her with a knife ... he pulled out his manhood, already stiff and push it into her. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 4)

The German soldiers took advantage of powerless women. They knew the women were defenceless and helpless and treated them as sexual objects. This incident describes a powerless woman who was subjected to gender-based violence. Garg (2014) concludes that women have always been oppressed due to sex stereotyping, and have been considered even as 'God's second mistake'(see section 2.6.1). In both novels, women are treated as sexual objects and the authors recreate the images of the cruel and traumatic incidents vividly using

literary devices. Such vivid descriptions enable the reader to relive the experiences and imagine as if they were a part of that moment.

For instance, in *The Scattering* (2016), Henk treated Riette like his own property. Even though she longed for an intimate relationship with her husband, theirs was strictly a physical relationship, like the need to eat or drink or defecate. He never asked her for permission to have sex and she acted as he pleased, which in fact amounts to ‘marital rape.’ She was subjected to a physical and mentally disturbing act:

He blow out the lamb, push up her night gown, and pull her thighs apart. He’d push himself inside her as if she were a hole dug in the ground. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p.75)

It was as if Riette was a toilet pot where Henk would urinate and flush the toilet. Through this act it became clear how men subjugate women because they own their bodies. Kubuitsile (2016) exposes the reality behind the abuse of women by their intimate partners and its damage which is unquestionably severe and undermines a woman's sense of worth, agency, and independence. Family and marriage are supposed to be fundamental institutions in which people share love, trust and protection, but this dream gets shattered by the men who tend to look down on women and consider them their ‘property’. Henk defies his commitment to his wife Riette. Riette felt disgusted every time Henk forced himself on her. She wiped his “seed” away even though it did not entirely cleanse her (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 75).

This is evidence of the incalculable damage that she suffers at the hands of her husband. He also causes emotional damage by never showing any respect for her as a human being.

Moreover, *The Scattering* (2016) narrates how men were commonly beaten to death for minor infringements and the women were turned into sex slaves by the soldiers and settlers. Sometimes people who witness traumatic events can go into a state of shock (Njovane, 2014). The character, Mara who was considered a strong, courageous and selfless person but she lost all these qualities the moment all walls came down on her. She was rendered vulnerable and powerless when she had an encounter with the German soldiers:

In front of everyone, before they began the shooting, they raped her. One by one. But before that, when they'd only just began her sons tried to fight off. The elder one was shot in the forehead, dead before he hit the ground. But the younger one, a sweet boy, not even fourteen, they made him suffer. They shot his feet so he could not move. Then they took turns on his mother... When they were done with her, they shot the boy in the eyes. She fell to him, Mara, she fell to her son and never spoke again (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 138)

Mara degenerates into a state of shock after this traumatic experience which totally fragments her. Firstly, she was raped in front of her children and many other people. So many things could have gone through her mind. Probably, the fact that people were helpless and looked on whilst being raped might have traumatised her. The feeling of shame and helplessness also overcomes her. Mara is victimised and she knows she will never get justice. Secondly, she lost her children who tried to protect her from the merciless demons. The manner in which her children were murdered is gruesome. What kind of a person rapes a woman and kills her children whilst continuing with raping her in front of their dead bodies?

In addition, Kubuitsile (2016) further depicts how Tjipuka's was almost a victim of rape by a fellow Herero man, who also tried to rape in front of people. Mara had gone through the same

traumatic incident and could not be a witness to such an atrocity again. She knew what rape does to people, so she stood up for Tjipuka by murdering the traitor, Waeza. Even though she stands by Tjipuka, the author shows how selfish and greedy some people are that they would use any opportunity to abuse women. In her effort to attain agency, Mara lost her life as she was shot by a Herero man. The government system failed the Herero women and always subjugated them. Under the oppressive rule, women were treated as if they were non-living beings.

Equally, during the genocide, white men took advantage of the helpless and vulnerable Herero women. Women were few especially in towns. They knew the law did not protect Herero women so they took advantage and they were free to do what they like. In *The Scattering*, Tjipuka was bought by Ludwig and she became his sex slave. He used her as property:

He would enter her room without knocking, asserting who owned it, who owned everything. He would get undressed and get into the bed without a word. He would enter her until he was satisfied and then he would dress and disappear. There was no kindness. It was a physical release. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 211)

This incident can be equated to a toilet pot situation. People enter a toilet, to urinate and excrete and leave when they are done. This whole rape act happens with no respect towards the victim and is motivated by the feeling of ownership and power. The above somewhat correlates with Njovane's (2014) view on how rape was commonly used as a weapon of war to dilute the ethnic purity of the victims to humiliate its men and disgrace its men which has been highlighted by Kubuitsile (2016)..



Similarly, in *Mama Namibia* (2013), German soldiers gang rape a woman who is half dead. Even someone who is on the verge of death gets abused. This proves that only an animal can commit such an atrocity. “It’s harder for women and girls... the soldiers lie with them at night” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 197). The author reveals how the German soldiers took advantage of poor and defenceless young girls.

#### **4.4.2 Death and murder**

In *The Scattering* (2016), Ruhapo and his people intend to stop Zürn and Luthern from attacking the Herero communities. However, immediately after their departure, Novengi comes across delicate bones of a male skull. This scene foreshadows death or darkness that is yet to happen as a result of the Herero people resisting against the Germans.

Njovane (2014) interprets the detachment with which characters narrate the incidents as a symptom of a trauma inscribed in their voice. In *The Scattering*, Tjipuka has a nerve wrecking experience when she stumbles across a loved one’s scattered body parts:

She saw a foot. She followed the ankle to the leg, to the body. The stomach was burst open, the insides spilled to the ground; ants already crawled on the intestines. It was her mother in-law, Mama Ruhapo. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 41).

The narrator aptly captures this horrific scene. Mama Ruhapo had been totally annihilated and one could imagine she had a very painful death. The question is, how does one find peace and courage to speak out after witnessing such a gruesome scene?

It is important to note Langer’s (1995) sentiments on the psychological implications of witnessing a loved one’s death (see section 2.6). A number of people undergo similar

experiences. Riette struggles to come to terms with her brother, Koos's death. Also, Henk and his daughter Martie, struggle to come to terms with Martie's mother's death. We are told that "the death of her mother had hardened her, as Riette expected it had hardened Henk" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 71). This death was the cause of the resentment and animosity between Riette and Martie. Martie, a child herself, is forced to be an adult to her sister Annemie. Martie marked her territory and set boundaries to prevent Riette invading her space. Losing Martie hardened both Riette and Annemie and in the end, Riette loses everyone. Despite going through all the deaths including her parents', Martie and Annemie's, Riette's heart-wrecking experiences continue as she witnesses them all go one by one.

Men were hanged with wires simply because they were not worthy being hanged with their scarce rope. The rope was much more important than a human beings' life. *The Scattering* highlights the nature of this scene: "Each morning before leaving for the dock yards, the dead needed to be collected" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 180). Death became something normal because everyday at the camp started with death. In addition, the conditions in the camp resulted in more deaths. Hunger, starvation, fever and rash were always among the major contributing factors to the death of children in the camp. For instance, Tjipuka lost her only child because of these conditions: "his tiny body was cold... her son was gone" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 182).

Ludwig also, opens up to Tjipuka about his life's challenges, starting with the death of his son and wife. Losing a child is not something a parent takes easily as it can either make or break them. His wife went into a state of shock and denial after losing their son, Rudolf: "she became a leaf in autumn, so fragile" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 193). Her situation was compared to a leaf in autumn, a season when normally leaves are dry and vulnerable when the wind blows.

Almost everyone that Tjipuka formed ties with was murdered. The small boy who blamed himself for Saul's death was also murdered; the same Tjirwe she motivated not to take blame for Saul's death. Tjirwe was a victim of physical abuse by the German soldiers who assaulted and harassed him with sjamboks: "Tjirwe is dead... the soldier pulled out his gun and shot him" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 195).

It had become a norm such Tjipuka could recognise death coming at any moment: "Tjipuka had learned how to recognise death when it had its hold on a person" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 198). They say no one knows someone's fate or destiny but Tjipuka could see and feel death coming all around her.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), we learn of the traumatising and dehumanising effects of death during the war. One such effect is revealed through Yakov's relationship with his father. Parents and children are supposed to have a close and strong relationship bond such as the one Yakov shared with his mother. Hence, losing his mother changed so many things for Yakov. The mother was the link and connection between the family members but with her death, it was all gone: "when she died, I lost my connection to papa" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 48). The disconnection between father and son is a result of the death of Yakov's mother. The German soldiers also die. In the opening chapters, the reader gets introduced to the Herero people as helpless victims, who will be wiped out within seconds, but this is not the case as the Herero people fought the German soldiers back: "Germans are dying. We've lost several men in the last week" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 151). Thus, death becomes an everyday eye-sight for both the Germans and the Herero people.

#### 4.4.3 Physical abuse

Riette is also one of the victims of abuse in *The Scattering* (2016). In the process of being defiant and standing up for her dreams her father assaulted her in the face: “He hit her once in the face and everything went black” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 69). He must have hit her so hard that she had a blackout. Her father is not even supposed to place his hands on his own child. She had to pause and remember what had happened. The assault was severe that “her cheek was sore and her eye swollen” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 69). Riette was “chained to the bed” as if she was an animal for the whole week. Riette was imprisoned by her parents in her own room. Despite the mother being the only visitor to clean up her chamber pot and apply salve to her sore face, she was still manipulating her into becoming obedient and compliant to her father’s demands. Riette was a victim of emotional and physical abuse at the hands of her parents. Her mother emotionally contributed to the abuse by comforting her yet selling her out to Henk Venter. She encouraged her marry the old man.

Martie was assaulted when she spit into a soldier’s face who tried to help her into the wagon they were being ‘collected’ into: “He slapped her so hard that she fell to the dirt” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 82). The German soldiers had so much power that they did as they pleased. They felt they were above the law and the Herero women, were mere objects to be treated anyhow.

Another example is when Franz Sneider physically abused Tjipuka with a ‘sjambok’ as if she was an animal. Tjipuka took in seventeen whips because she felt guilty and responsible for Joseph’s death. As a result, she welcomed the beating by Franz Sneider: “She welcomed this punishment” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 160). Her whole body was covered with puss. A sjambok is meant for a animal’s bodies; never was it meant to be used on a human body. One can imagine the magnitude of its strength and the scars it would live on poor Tjipuka’s body.

Furthermore, people in the Namib dessert were being whipped with long straps as they were reluctant to go forward. The ocean might have reached its peak, yet soldiers wanted them to walk towards it. The only time the German soldiers got everything right with the people was through physical abuse. They were so violent as if violence was born in their DNA. They could not do anything in peace.

Tjipuka's attempted escape from Ludwig changed so many things. She was treated like a prisoner who was nothing, but property that he owned and he abused her physically: "Ludwig slammed the sjambok down her back" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 210). Ruhapo also begins to abuse Tjipuka physically and emotionally. He was angered by the fact that she had slept with someone else. Tjipuka did not know that he was alive, and she had been sold into slavery. He hit a pregnant woman and accused her of being characterless. He blamed her for a situation she had no control over. The effect of trauma unveils a different side of Ruhapo who became an abusive coward: "you are a whore" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 260). The abuse incident traumatised Tjipuka so much that she wanted to die because the person she loved and hoped to see for many years had disappointed her. He enslaved her and she became a slave in her own body and home:

his hand came out like a knife and slashed across her face. The force was massive. She fell, her hands squished into the cow dung, her knees cut from the rough ground. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 260)

Ruhapo went to drink alcohol because of the anger and disappointment he felt for Tjipuka: "she could smell alcohol, he didn't usually drink" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 281). The pain and anger made him to abuse alcohol probably to forget the nightmare. This depicts how trauma

can put us in a place where we do not recognise ourselves because we cannot deal with the pain and implications associated with being hurt by a loved one.

In the opening chapters of *Mama Namibia* (2013) the reader is confronted with the harsh realities of racism and abuse. “They pushed him down and tied his hands and feet to a wood bench. One white man hits the Herero with sticks made from skin” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 219). Herero men are abused with sjamboks by German traders. Women are not excluded as they also fall victim to physical abuse: “she was publicly flogged with a sjambok on her bare stomach and between her legs. The beating didn’t stop until she was dead” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 219). The German soldier hit the Herero woman because he had tried to rape her. The text reveals how women are marginalised by the patriarchal system of white domination which negates and suppresses women. This system gives more power to the German soldiers who feel they can do as they please with the Herero women.

Furthermore. *Mama Namibia* (2013), presents the character of Uaporimana who becomes a victim of psychological abuse because of the loss of her baby. She could not come to terms with her baby’s death that was offered as a ‘sacrificial lamb;’ “life has not come back to her eyes. Her soul is dying” (Serebrov, 2013, p.186). The Herero men also suffered when they witnessed their women being raped by the German soldiers.

The child narrator in *Mama Namibia* (2013), Jahohora, was also traumatised by the soldier who tried to molest her, Herr Jurgen. Marthe tried to help her face and overcome her fears by confronting her fear towards German soldiers visits Jurgen “it’s time for you to get over your fears” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 293).

One of the agonising and dehumanising scenes in *Mama Namibia* (2013) is when the heads of the Herero prisoners and their children are cooked. No human being kills and makes people cook their loved ones, but the Herero women were forced to carry out such acts: “the woman is dropping the severed heads of prisoners into the boiling water” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 325). The skulls become science experiments and subjects for the German scientists. Mixed race children were the victims of this insensitive research by the German doctors.

#### **4.4.4 Psychological Conflict**

In African Cultures parents have a tendency of marrying their children off to their preferred or rather selected suitors. Kubuitsile exposes this reality in her novel through the characters of Riette and Tjipuka. Riette’s father marries her off to their neighbour, Henk, an old and miserable widower. Without even giving Riette a chance to do what she wanted and weighing the psychological conflicts that accompany the arranged marriage, her father was more interested in self-enrichment: “We’ve agreed to join the farms and work them together” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 68).

He would rather marry her off at the expense of her own happiness of going to work in Kimberly. He could have at least given her a chance to explore her dreams and potential, and also choose her own partner. She is however treated as property for exchange at the market. This however remains the reality for many young African women. Her father is inconsiderate of Riette’s feelings and denies her an opportunity to express her feelings: “You will be marrying Henk Venter next Friday” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 68). Riette was destined to marry Henk (a widower, father of two and, old) by nail or by hook. Not even the plea to become independent (working as a nurse) could save Riette from her father’s decision as his interests were more important than his daughter’s happiness. This study argues that parents that are

not prepared or willing to listen to their children's dreams can have a negative psychological impact on a child. Children can become rebellious, shut down mentally or just run away to protect their interests. In the case of Riette, she wanted to run away from home.

Riette's marriage to Mr Henk Venter was doomed from the beginning – it was a forced marriage. He did not bother to even look better on their wedding day. He does not worry about her nor does marrying her please him. "He's not bothered with a suit, but he'd put on a new pair of overalls" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 69); as if overalls are supposed to somehow comfort her as they were new.

Riette's mother also failed her when she needed her the most. Her mother was also a victim of patriarchy; she's also caught in the web of culture and cannot help her child. However, even though knowing the implications of marrying an older man, she could not defend or support Riette against her patriarchal and selfish father. They are both women and are supposed to stand together and support each other, in 'female solidarity', but out of fear, her mother would rather support her husband. Her parents were a 'united front' and she had no chance of winning against them. Her mother advises her to marry Henk: "He's a good man. The best a girl like you can expect" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 69). She does not have hope that her child can get someone better and poor Riette begins to believe that she should be grateful as she really is not worth him. She accepts her father's desire to marry a much older man. This is forced marriage, a common experience for many girls in various communities of Namibia. However, this traditional practice is harmful and violates many basic human rights of children. Riette's mother, by supporting this marriage, takes away her child's confidence and human rights. Only someone who does not care would do something like that.



Riette confirms how her mum is afraid of her dad. It's like as if she is his 'yes' person always ready to support whatever he puts to the table. Riette mentions how she cannot be like her mother who was "nothing but a tool for her father. A compliant tool with not a shred of life left in her" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 68). Riette's parents are shown as controlling, with an inconsiderate father and, a vulnerable and voiceless mother. Parents are supposed to be role-models for their children, but in this case, Riette refuses to go down the same lane the mother went through. Her ability to refuse to be like her mother shows how resilient a person can be even without the support from the family.

Riette's failure to be there for Henk's children and be a mother who guides and controls them lead to the children doing wrong things because there was no negative reinforcement: "Riette had no interest in imposing rules on these girls, Henk's daughters. They could do what they wanted" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 72). When the stepmother steps in, Martie would always do the opposite of what Riette would say to her. This could be because Martie was struggling to come to terms with her mother's death and a new woman taking her mother's place. Any child would become defenceless and protective to keep their 'passed' loved ones' memories alive. It could also be an act of rebellion because of the minor age differences between the two.

Martie's friendship with the women from the (concentration) camp was a motivation to her rebellious. She wanted to stand up for her rights and fight the soldiers. Her actions were causing tension between her and sister Annemie, "I am tired of Martie. She is trying to get the women to stand up against the soldiers. Do you know" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 87).

Tjipuka begins to question her husband's promises. The battle was supposed to end the conflict, but it opened a can of worms for them. She had many doubts concerning the

husband's promises. Her mind was confused and battling psychologically as she didn't know what to believe or do. She would ask herself questions like: Could she trust Ruhapo? Could she trust what he said? Could any of them trust Samuel Maharero? These questions bring in a sense of conflict within her as the questions keep disturbing her mind.

Somehow Riette saw having children at a tender age as a burden especially for Henk's first wife – she referred to it as “a small life defined for a girl before she left her nappies” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 77). It was a life that she felt would literally kill her.

Joseph was killed for helping his own people – body was hanged like a trophy. This usually happens to show that anyone who betrays the Germans will suffer the same fate. They used emotional blackmail to instil fear. After Tjipuka and Ruhapo reunited, he demanded his wife back from Ludwig, the man who bought her. The Herero people were so angry with the Germans that they would do anything to kill them. Ruhapo got angry when his wife kneeled to beg a German for her freedom:

There was no need to beg. He's lucky I don't slice his neck open right here. We're many he is one. We could cut him into pieces for the hyenas (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 223).

Ruhapo is traumatised by all the overwhelming events he had to face in the past months. He found his long lost wife, who was also a victim of sexual violence by 'her owner'. At the same time, he learned of the death of his son. He had already put all this behind when he was told they were all dead just to come and relive the pain and trauma of his son's death again. MmaLesedi made a comment on his behaviour to Tjipuka: “that man is caught in a cage. Like a bull caught in a cage” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 237). His anger was visible and people could

see his behaviour had changed. He was now a broken man. This just paints a picture of what pain and suffering can do to people. This disorder created animosity between husband and wife and he was neglecting his pregnant wife: “Touch now only meant sex” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 249).

Kubuitsile (2016) and Serebrov (2013) through their novels try to paint an image of the continuation of racism across the period. This is an issue that has always been associated with Africa and that to be black is wrong wherever you go. It gives the impression that people have a choice to skin colour. Herero people were being segregated in all aspects of their lives, because of the colour of their skin as if they chose to be born black.

Being educated meant nothing if you were born black. People will never see your potential or see beyond you except for the colour of your skin. The German settlers and soldiers felt they were superior to the Herero people; this could have been the reason for racism to be rife. The belief that one race is much more superior than the other was the route of so many atrocities. The belief has produced so many unjust actions such as the rape and killings of innocent mothers, fathers, sons and daughters of the Herero clan.

The Germans always felt they were superior to the Herero people. They considered the Herero people to be less human and that they were inferior. Because the colour of their skin is different, this makes them less human according to them: “She is beautiful for a black” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 192). This somewhat reaches the peak of prejudice and racism—the author exposes the inside of a German’s heart. British men at the makeshift border made a comment on black people as if they were not human “we’ve had enough of your kaffirs this side” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 217); a name usually given to slaves.

#### **4.5 Lost Identity, racism and suppression**

*The Scattering* (2016) explores the themes of identity, racism and suppression. The metal tags that every Herero person is forced to carry is the foundation for this question of identity. The metal tag imposes limits on all aspects of the Herero peoples' lives. It takes away their freedom, making them less than humans.

Then he took a small tag from the metal box and pinned it to her dress. He warned her that she must. He warned her that she must always wear that metal tag or she would be shot (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 177) People were reduced to nothing but a number "Novengi's number was 8867, Tjipuka's 8868" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 177). They were labelled and only remembered as numbers and their identities were lost and not considered important by the German soldiers. Their entire lives are contained in this number tag, and with a move, a German can totally alter a Herero person's future and determine their fate. They are told who they are, where to live, and how to live, by the German soldiers. They are forced to give up their dignity and humanity in order to continue to exist. They are constantly treated as less than human and are certainly never given the respect they deserve. Hence, the tag is a constant reminder that their value as human beings has been degraded.

The characters depicted in the novels struggle to maintain their own identities and sense of themselves as human beings under the oppressive rule. Within these circumstances, however, Tjipuka, Riette and Jahohora realise that all they own is themselves. The only legacy they have to leave behind is the memory of their lives, so they strive to be the best they can be and live the best life they can.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), the theme of identity comes to light when the Herero people's tradition and culture was questioned by the German missionaries. The German destroyed and took away their sense of identity: "they make the Herero forget their ancestors" (Serebrov, 2013, p.12).

Yakov is stacked between two cultures –he often fights with his father on the issue of embracing both German and Jew cultures. His father does not support him portraying himself as German as he says-"it's not worth the price" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 45). His fathers defiance could be linked to the traumatising 'Jewish cleansing' carried out by the Germans many years ago. He does not want his son to be associated with such evil people.

The war changed Yakov-he became someone else. The trauma and horrible things that he had experience changed him- "physically, I'm still whole ... I am not the man who left you all those months ago" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 256).

#### **4.6 Life in "collection camps"**

The "collection camps" are camps in which people who were considered inferior or powerful were kept during the liberation struggle. People who survived the march to death were captured and made prisoners; men, women, children and elderly people indiscriminately, were defined in concentration camps. Conditions in these camps were usually harsh and dilapidating and do not make room for a prisoner to have a fair trial. *The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) both share stories pertaining to the 'collection camps.'

#### 4.6.1 Congested accommodation

Life in the concentration camps was so difficult that they felt kidnapped because they were being held against their own will. Women and children were kept in ‘collection camps’ against their own will in order to lure their husbands out of hiding. In *The Scattering* (2016), Riette and the girls were placed in a camp. Conditions in the camp were horrible and the camp was dilapidated. It was not a sight for any human being to witness and live: “They were hosted in white canvas tents with no floors save the dirt of the bare ground... it was crowded and dirty and smelled of sweat” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 84).

In the same vein, Riette, the two girls and a family of four had to share a canvas tent. The size and make of the tent shows how unhygienic and congested their living quarters were. The conditions were also health hazardous because no human being deserves to live in such conditions no matter how bad or poor they are. Different diseases were probably being spread, in addition to the heartaches and irritation of lice. One could just imagine the horror and pain these people had to endure at the cost of the Germans’ negligence. Sarkin (2011) highlighted how the people who survived the extermination lived in dilapidated conditions and those who succumbed to the oppressive rule. Burden (2017) alluded to the fact that colonialism and Nazism are not precisely associated as they are connected by a philosophy of which its trademarks included racist pseudo-science and the devaluation of human life. The German Southwest Africa genocide should be studied both as an episode in the violent history of European colonialism, and as the forebear of the atrocities committed in the second world war which prompted the need for this study. Segregation was very high in all aspects of life in the tents. If white Afrikaners lived in such terrible conditions, one could imagine the tents occupied by the Herero people (farm workers) were worse off.

#### **4.6.2 Food scarcity**

Food is always a major issue when it comes to war and camps. Kubuitsile (2016) and Serebrov (2013) recount through their characters how hunger and starvation affected the peoples' lives in the concentration camps. Food supply was never enough. "Food is the problem here. There'd be a lot less sickness if there was a bit more food" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p.89). Food supplies were just not enough in the camps. Food is supposed to be something that brings good health and satisfaction but the food people at the camp had to eat was "full of bugs" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 84). Psychological incontinence arises as the victims' battle with hunger. The food was so horrible that even if one was hungry, one could not eat it. The mere mention of bugs in food, gives goose bumps. The condensed milk that came with the rations was not enough for a baby of her age and now she had developed a fever (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 85).

Such conditions created a very dangerous and unsafe environment especially for children, because these are poor souls who were subjected to a situation that was beyond their control. The women and children were subjected to the situation because their fathers were part of the 'commandos' and now the German soldiers were using all kinds of psychology on them in order to root out their families that were fighting in hiding.

#### **4.6.3 Illness in camps**

In one week that Riette has been at the camp, she has seen "five children and one elderly woman die" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 85). This becomes evident on how unhealthy and hazardous

life in the concentration camp was. Children became victims of unhygienic conditions such as “measles, typhoid and dysentery [which] killed many” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 85).

#### **4.6.4 Death, violence and retaliation**

People were dying every day in the camps. Women rioted against the soldiers and many were wounded. Martie got shot in the chest twice: “Its Martie! She’s been shot!” (p.94). Martie succumbed to her wounds and one can imagine the pain the young sister felt at the news of her sister’s shooting. Annemie lost her only surviving family member and she was too young to deal with it. It was a difficult moment for Riette to witness how Anemmie was traumatised by the death of her only sister, Martie. One could just imagine the pain of losing an only surviving biological family member. Riette was not physically there for her during her darkest time. She felt she had failed Annemie as her protector. This child felt alone in a big world. Nonetheless, Riette still hoped for a positive future for the two of them.

Martie at just seventeen years of age was forced to grow up prematurely because of the war environment that necessitated that she stand up for her and take charge. She ended up losing her life as a price of freedom. If the situation had been different she could have survived – a young girl who knew nothing about fighting and rioting. She was just a young girl trying to survive the war (Kubuitsile, p. 94). On the other hand, one could argue that trauma was the reason for Martie’s hatred for step mother (Riette) and her rebellion against her. As a result, she became a troubled child who ended up sealing her fate: “Martie was gone” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 94).



Blinded by the realities of the war, Riette did not have any time to mourn. One need to mourn in order to find closure and it is supposed to be a personal and private period, but because of the emergencies at the casualties she had to overlook the fact that she lost Martie.

#### **4.6.5 Winter cold**

Concentration camps were located largely in the relatively cold and moist climate areas of the two port towns, Swakopmund and Lüderitz. Unaccustomed to these conditions, underfed, ill-clothed and badly accommodated, thousands of Herero prisoners died from sheer neglect or from their exertions as forced labour.

Women and children suffered during winter. In the concentration camps many children lost their lives due to poor health conditions, “the cold was harsh on the women and children” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 96). People were forced out of their houses with nothing but what they had on; some managed to take blankets. Women and children suffered because the commandos refused to surrender. There were new infections that saw three to four children a week were coming with a bloody cough (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 99), and dying in the hospital. Infections are common in camps and they spread like wildfires. Annemie got infected and she concealed the truth from Riette. She got furious as this was something she could have prevented: for her “losing Martie was difficult, but losing Annemie would be the end of her. She realised now that she loved her as much as she’d ever love anyone” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 99). Families were scattered all over instead of keeping together, and supporting each other. In the camps, they were divided Riette: “wondered about the fate of her mother... her father? And Henk? ” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 97). She had no idea where they were because the camp dismembered families and divided people.

Conditions in Luderitz were quite difficult to survive because of the cold. Shark Island was also a concentration camp where German soldiers placed Herero women and children. It was windy and nothing could save them from the cold: “the cold, wet air pushed into their wickered bodies. Each night a heavy fog came in from the sea and settled in the camp” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 179).

They all set huddled around the small fire place to keep warm as it was very cold since they were not given any blankets or proper clothing. They were also forced to consume uncooked rice which was soaked and cooked by the sun:

they ate very little. They were given uncooked rice, but they had no wood to cook with. Any wood that arrived on the waves was quickly grabbed to make shelter. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p.179)

#### **4.6.6 Squalid working conditions**

People were divided into groups for them to work on different jobs because of lack of labourers in the colony. People had to do hard labour, overwork and work on a hungry stomach. Men and women walked to work every day “men in leg irons” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 180) to prevent them from escaping. They were treated like dogs with tags on their clothing and on their legs; it is somewhat ironic in the sense that dogs get tags in the neck with a rope. The owner gets to give or lead the dog on. Thus, they lose their identities as human being because they are not different from dogs. Women also worked hard and “if a woman failed to lift something or fall from exhaustion the soldiers beat her with long leather sjamboks” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 180). The German soldiers will beat her until she rose and worked again

or carried her away; often a woman carried away was never seen again, one could just imagine the things that happened to her.

#### **4.7 Hunger and starvation**

Food supplies ran out as people escaped to find refuge in the desert. Von Trotha threatened to kill them and forced them into the dry lands of the Omaheke desert. The desert was dry with no possible food supplies. People died especially children because they are weak souls, “Five children had died so far” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 113), who cannot bear hunger like adults.

Clean water was not available. It was hard enough to find water because the desert was dry: “The men had dug with sticks deep into the hard soil” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 113). Desperation and thirst, forced people to drink unhealthy water; it was better than facing thirst: “The water was salty, but they drank it” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p.113): The salty water was dangerous but the situation forced them into drinking it for survival because water is life. However, some people were affected; Novengi got a stomach problem: “Salty water was troubling her” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 114).

Food supplies ran out and man had to find food for survival. Kahaka managed to hunt a lizard. Because of hunger, they are forced to consume whatever is provided in order to survive. People ate it without considering the health risks involved: “Though it was not food, they would have considered eating before, they were thankful for the meat now” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 115). People did not care what they ate – what was important was that, “they had food and water; they had a place to rest and that was enough” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 115).

One year after Henk left to fight the British, Riette and the girls struggled with shortages of supplies. Traditionally the father being the head of the family would provide all the necessities for the house, but Riette and the girls struggled because Henk was gone for a year and the British destroyed the railway lines to prevent people from moving out of the neighbourhood (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 79) as they took over Transvaal. Riette and Annemie worked on the garden that fed them.

The Germans poisoned the water to wipe out the Herero people because their mission was to kill all of them. When the water is poisoned people die because no one can live without consuming water. Whenever they found waterholes in the desert there was always uncertainty whether or not to consume it: “The birds were drinking and not dying, so the Germans must not have found this one yet” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 153).

People knew how vulnerable the Herero people were when it comes to water. Waterholes were used by the Herero men who worked for the Germans as a tactic to find Herero people in exchange for money: “Three men emerged from waterhole, all of them armed” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 153). The presence and availability of food meant so much especially to the Herero people:

She hadn't seen food like that for a long time... It was so much food, but she finished it all, then wiped up the plate with her finger. She could not leave anything. She didn't know when she might get food like this again. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 187)

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), we learn of Jahohora and her family's relocation to keep the cattle safe from the Germans. They settled in the mountains and life was very hard. They were confined to the mountains only and there was a shortage of food and water for the family.

They were instructed not to leave the place and wait for the men's return in a few days. Tjipuka narrates her ordeal: "the next few days are very long. My belly is hungry, but there's nothing to eat. My mouth feels like I've eaten dirt. And my throat sticks together" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 118). People had to make sacrifices to survive and stay alive even though it meant starving – safety was the main goal at all times. Even Karikuta begins to cry because of hunger; the mother did not have enough food to produce milk for the baby: "... can hear Karikuta cry. His cry, weak and raspy because he's hungry. Tuahekua Ehi can't make good milk when she doesn't eat" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 119). Jahohora had to find ways to survive and fend for herself. She ate rotten food and uncooked meat which could cause food poisoning. Water "holes have been poisoned with death," (Serebrov, 2013, p. 119), this is a clear indication that the Germans wanted the Herero people dead so that they can reposes all their assets with no force and wipe out all the Herero from the country.

#### **4.8 Expropriation of land and cattle without compensation**

The mistreatment and the appropriation of land of the Herero by the Germans was the main reason of the war. Land is very important as it conjures on the idea and sense of place of attachment. Okolo (2013) and Huggins (2010) rationalised the importance of land to especially African communities. The elucidated how land was considered a sign of belonging to a particular community, a link to one's roots and source and issues of identity and power. Von Trotha threatened to execute the Herero people who were found inside the German frontier, whether armed or not. The irony of all this is that they have more rights to the land which belongs to the Herero people and will belong to their ancestors for many generations. It is logical that this land will be inherited by the Herero generations but Germans claim it is their land. Von Trotha does not have a heart. It is as if his heart is made of steel. He does not

even spare helpless women and children. He vows to destroy and wipe them out just to give the land to his people.

Germans plundered the Herero people's land, houses and live stocks. Massive land was given to the white settlers. The Herero people were being wiped out to make space and land available to the German settlers who needed good land: "settlers need the good land now. They are coming every day and the new settlers need land, lots of it" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 142). Both texts reveal how the land was illegally expropriated from the Herero people without any compensation during the war. Wealth of somebody is measured by materialistic possessions such as livestock and land thus supporting the researchers idea that the Herero people were now considered poor as they only had nothing but their names to call their own. It is evident through the reconstructions of events in *The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) that, the Herero people were forced out of their ancestral land and forced to occupy land that was not good for farming and living. Good land was given to the German settlers through what they called 'protection treaties'.

Herero chiefs were forced into signing treaties illegally. Treaties were signed without knowing they were giving their land away to the Germans: "Large areas, once range for the herds of cattle owned by the Herero, were now farms owned by single German families" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 215). The land was finally expropriated from the rightful owners without receiving a cent for the land which they got from their ancestors. The two authors proved that Von Trotha's policy was indeed successful; he managed to put the Herero people out in the cold without any shelter, food or means of survival. It was painful for people to lose everything without a fight or receiving compensation.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), Germans tricked and made up an excuse to wipe out the Herero cattle by infecting them with a disease which forced the Herero people to kill their cattle and in turn become vulnerable and work for them as slaves:

they are looking for a reason to kill our cattle... they think if we don't have cattle, we will give up our land and work for them... the Germans want to make us their servant and to take more of our land (Serebrov, 2013, p. 15).

The Germans lied about protecting the Herero people from Witbooi and his people but it was all just a lie and a ploy to expropriate land. People lost their homes, land and cattle as the Germans burnt and destroyed them: "there's no village to go back to. It's been burned" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 120). A German chief claimed that "Herero land now belonged to white people" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 182). This is land that they didn't pay for, the same land the Herero got from their ancestors was now possessed by Germans and referred to as "German land" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 182).

Deceit and lies are also exposed by the writer through some German characters. Some German men realised that the German soldiers lied to them from the beginning. They deceived them into fighting the poor and innocent Herero people: "we're the ones raping young Herero girls and killing babies and old people. And we are supposed to be the civilised race" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 219).

When gold was discovered in Witwatersrand – the foreigners grew more interests and took land from the people. At the end of the day, they cleared more land than the people who originally lived there. People demanded for fair and equal rights but the government refused because they knew the power was in the hands of the people and they would eventually lose

the land they took away without compensation. The British took away any means of supplies from the community. They destroyed railway lines and made life even harder for the people. They had to send out all the supplies from their farms so that Herero people would be forced to leave the land.

#### **4.9 The unacknowledged presence of the devalued and denigrated ‘other’**

Riette felt devalued as the parents only loved ‘Koos.’ According to her, she could not wait to go far from them (to study nursing) as the parents only valued the late Koos: “they expected little from Riette ... she would finally be free of them, with their strict rules and old-fashioned ways, all covered with the loss of the only child they ever really valued” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 66).

Sometimes parents are the very reason why many children do not have a strong sense of self and confidence. Riette’s parents had no faith in her and they never expected anything positive from her. They favoured one child over the other and this could be traumatising in the sense that no one believes in them and eventually lose hope and motivation: “for him she was a disappointment” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 67). This is a sign of parents victimising their children instead of grooming them to become good people.

The element of gender stereotyping arises through the character of Riette’s father who believed a son was more worth than a female child. He claimed to struggle with work as there was lack of manpower; a ‘son’ to help him. Riette had to compete for the love and affection of her parents with her dead brother’s spirit. Riette has to face the pain and trauma of having to compete for her parent’s love with someone who is dead. Riette is considered a ‘worthless’



unmarried daughter who is unable to give her father grandsons to assist him on the farm. To her father, having a female daughter was a disappointment.

Having been sold off to marry and being raped by her husband, Riette considered herself as an outcast and somebody meant to go through trauma. Even after meeting John Raily, Riette denigrated herself. She never thought she could be a woman who would be loved or find happiness: “She’d thought she was a woman ... not made to be loved” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 96). After Annemie’s death, Riette was so traumatised that she felt alone as she had lost everyone who was close to her. John Reilly comforted her throughout and helped her come to terms with Annemie’s death. She was branded a ‘hensopper,’ that is, someone who betrayed her own people to sleep with an enemy. Normally, things do not go well for those who are believed to have betrayed their people, especially during the war. Their fates get sealed very fast and are considered as people who sell secrets to help the enemies win. A woman called her “Hensopper! Dirty whore!” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 101). Tannie Aggie feared for Riette’s life – it’s like she could see and feel the resentment of the angry woman. She knew what they were capable of. She was worried and advised Riette to run for her life “you need to find a place to be safe. The women are angry. They know about you and Tommy” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 101).

Riette becomes the ‘other’ the moment she started sleeping with the ‘enemy’. Hatred and betrayal become motives to kill or hurt somebody. Women felt betrayed by their own kind. Tannie Aggie even overheard the woman threatening to harm Riette “she’ll put blue vitriol in your sugar” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 107) which is something that would wipe her off from the face of the earth immediately.

Even after escaping the camp to live in Mafikeng, the life of torment and hatred still followed Riette. People still judged and labelled her a whore. Some Afrikaner woman Ms Du Ploy treated her badly as if she was a ‘waste of the human race’: “you opened your thighs just to make an easy life for yourself” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 105). She uttered nasty words to Riette. Riette always felt different because of the colour of her skin. She was an Afrikaner in Tsau (a village full of Batswana and Herero people): “She was forever an outsider because of her white skin” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 265). She was lonely because people did not want to be associated with her and had no friends apart from Tjipuka who later establishes a relationship with her. Kubuitsile (2016) presents a universal vision of humanity that transcends one’s the skin colour.

Despite giving Ruhapo refuge and protection, Mogalakwe never saw Ruhapo as an equal; he was simply his servant. Traditionally, people are not allowed to ask others how many cattle they own, as it was considered an act of undermining the other. Ruhapo owned twelve cattle, a number that could easily be counted, hence, “Mogalakwe didn’t see Ruhapo as his equal. He was a servant, Mogalakwe the master. There was no respect” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 251). The spirit of Ubuntu and camaraderie is broken when a black man looks down upon the other rather than working together as social partners in transformation. Instead of supporting Tjipuka and Ruhapo for the atrocities they endured, the society judged and questioned the paternity of Tjipuka’s child considering she was a ‘victim’ of sexual violence.

Although the Herero people subjugate each other in *The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013), it is done in a subtle manner but if magnified it projects an ugly picture of how extremely bad the whole issue was. For instance, Chief Maharero sold his people out through the signing of a protection treaty. Many people had faith and trusted their chief’s word just to end up being disappointed; a sad reality that traumatised many Herero families.

Their chief, Samuel Maharero, was handing more and more land to the settlers. “Taking more land from his own people to get money for himself” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 25). The chief sold land for his own benefit – land that he took from his people. This was a clear act of betrayal. Samuel Maharero promised his people that they will be protected from the Germans (Governor Lieutenant) and he gave them his word that they should go to Hamakari and wait for him just to later realise it was a trap to exterminate the whole Herero race to pave way for German settlers.

Riette sensed something was wrong from the moment she saw her mother looking all confused and disorganised: “her hair pulled from its usual tidy bun” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 80). The British had no mercy; they had burned down Riette’s parent’s house, farm and animals. Basically, everything was burned to the extent where her mother only managed to escape with a blanket and a photo of her late son. The offenders took everything from helpless people. People worked hard to own land as well as produce on the land, but the British soldiers took that hope away in a matter of seconds. Not even the strong can overlook such an evil deed. Land was not just taken away from them, it was burned so that it may not be fertile for production and houses were burned down and people ‘collected’ as property. The soldiers burned and took away land and livestock; they destroyed many lives. As if it was not enough, they even went on to capture the families as vengeance for the men who were fighting them on the other side.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), Yakov felt different because he was not accepted by his society. To them he was a Jewish-someone not to be associated with because of his cultural background. He is constantly reminded that he is different from others: “I know there are many people in Austria and Germany who will never view me as anything but an

opportunistic Jew who somehow took something that rightfully should be theirs” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 56).

Even during the war, Germans still thought of Herero people as weak links and their subordinates. The Herero were inferior to them and should not be considered as enemies because they are not worth the title: “you are not our brothers. You are not even our equals. You should feel privileged to be our slaves” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 219). The author exposes the extent to which social prejudice affects the other’. It even goes to an extent where a Herero baby has been referred to as “a baby baboon” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 259). A baboon is a primitive animal which is being compared to an innocent baby. Despite the war being over, racism was still high between the Herero and the Germans. A Herero man was flogged simply because he spoke English: “he was speaking English” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 300).

*The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) both highlight the aspect of inferiority as presented in the above paragraphs. Characters were made to feel as if they were not a part of humanity and their subjection to racism and prejudices were motivated by the colour of their skins.

#### **4.10 Property for Sale**

The Herero who survived the Omaheke desert and the Ohamakari battle were captured and forced into concentration camps where their lives were confined and controlled by the German soldiers. They became property of the German administration and were sold from concentration camps as slaves. People were being sold on a rent basis which defined the basis of property. Tjipuka was a victim of this injustice as she was bought by Ludwig for “sixty marks... for six months” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 186). After six months the owner must take her

back to camp or rent her out again. This is a dehumanising act which views humanity as a free gift given to them. No one has the right to buy or sell anyone because each and everyone belong to themselves. The two texts reveal the harsh realities of the Herero men, women and children to the war.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), we learn of the Herero men, women and children who were forced to become German prisoners. They were treated as property that was owned by the Germans; “they put chains around the necks of many Herero” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 92). This cruel and dehumanising nature of the German soldiers towards the Herero comes to light in *Mama Namibia* (2013). They are tied together with heavy ropes around their necks and wrists. “If one stumbles, the others do, too. The first Herero is tied to the saddle of a soldier’s horse” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 192). People in camps wore chains that symbolised and represented German ownership. They were Herero prisoners and property owned by the Germans.

#### **4.11 The march to death**

People survived the desert under many painful circumstances. It took strength and bravery to survive the German soldiers’ brutality as well as the desert there which shows there was a reason why Von Trotha forced the Herero people into the desert because he knew they would not survive.

The element of race rebranding is highlighted by both authors. Race rebranding has to do with the possibility not only to set a group apart as an enemy, but also to exterminate it with an easy conscience. They survived the ‘march to death’ under terrible conditions. They had nothing but themselves and they were so thin that a mere touch of their body or skin one could feel the bones: “Ruhapo shook him; he could feel the bones of the boy arms pocking

into his hand” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 166). This image becomes clear to the reader on how people starved and the state in which their bodies were after enduring so many days of ‘hell’ on earth. People who survived the march to death were captured and made prisoners; men, women, children and elderly people indiscriminately, were defined in concentration camps.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), the aim and motivation was survival. No setbacks or problems should hold anyone back. A good example was Jahohora when she made sacrifices despite the hardship and condition she was in. She says, “my hands and feet are bleeding. I’m so tired I can barely move. But I have no choice. I must keep going” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 157).

Jahohora had to hide among dead bodies to protect herself from the German soldiers; “I lie among the dead bodies. If the soldiers come, maybe they will think I am dead” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 169). On top of pretending to be dead, Jahohora still had to face the nightmare of being urinated on by a German soldier. This proves the point that the German soldiers had no respect for the Herero people, even in their death they still remain inferior to the Germans. “I lie still as death even when I feel his pee trickling down me” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 170). Despite all this, Jahohora had to be strong and survive the ordeal by remaining still. She still gets confronted with a situation where she had to eat raw meat because she was hungry; “I eat my meat raw” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 181). The author tries to tell us that survival is key and that is all that matters.

Through the story of Uaporimana we learn of babies who became ‘sacrificial lambs’ for the struggle to freedom. Difficult and hard sacrifices had to be made in order for the Herero men to survive and fight the Germans. They had to take baby milk in order to gain strength: “mothers with babies gave what milk they had to the men” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 186), because

this milk was given to the men, the babies died of hunger and starvation as milk was no longer enough “babies died so the rest of us could live” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 186).

Fearing to be abused by men, Jahohora smears a poisonous plant’s leaves on her body to avoid being touched and abused “I’m covered with sores, no one will come near me. Not the soldiers. Not the Herero man bought by the soldiers” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 203).

Victims who survived and escaped the ‘march to freedom’ all lost weight and they were in a terrible state.

#### **4.12.1 Scattered bodies – Not burying the dead**

Normally loved ones claim the bodies of their families and accord them the proper burial rights, but in this case (the war) bodies were left scattered or unattended. They probably became prey to wild animals: “it was getting easier to leave the dead behind” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 157).

Thousands of the Herero people’s bodies were scattered all over in the Omaheke desert without being accorded or proper funeral rights: In the Herero culture, people should be buried next to their ancestors: “bodies... were scattered throughout the Omaheke ... The jackals and hyenas have eaten them. They are not there not even their bones” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 168). Animals prey on the exposed bodies because they are not buried.

Vigils are normally carried out to allow care to comfort and encourage the bereaved but this does not happen to the families of those who perished during the war. How will they find closure if proper burial rites were not carried out – They don’t even know whether their loved ones were alive or not.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), the bodies of Herero men, women and children were scattered all over the first place Jahohora saw after running away from the mountains: “the bodies of Herero men and women, of children and ‘tjikuus’ lie next to the carcasses of goats and cattle” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 160). The manner in which the bodies of women scattered along animals is dehumanising. By implication, the Herero people were animalised.

The writer also educates the reader on how the Herero people lost their identity through death. Despite their bodies being scattered all over Herero land as well as the Omaheke desert, they are lost souls forever. There will be no one to burial of the dead bodies, no memories of their lives; it is as if they never existed.

#### **4.13.2 Scattered people**

The division of the people meant being vulnerable, because they could not have each other’s support. The true spirit of Ubuntu will be destroyed because they no longer work together. The separation of Novengi and Tjipuka brought so many uncertain situations. One was happy and taken care of whilst the other, was doing hard labour, and was affected by hunger and starvation. The people were scattered all over the Omaheke and Namib dessert. Families were lost without knowing whether others are alive or not (Ruhapo and Tjipuka): “We’ve been scattered ... our people. We’ve lost each other” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 226).

#### **4.14 Shattered dreams and the “uncertainty of hope”**

In *The Scattering* (2016), we learn of Ruhapo and his family’s faith in the treaty of peace signed by their Chief and the Germans. They believed once they had signed off the treaty, their cattle, land and dignity would be restored. There was so much hope in the treaty: “once



the treaty was agreed, they would move back to Herero land ... Justice for the people would prevail” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 39)

Riette always hoped the “khakis” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 80) would leave her neighbourhood so that Henk would return and she would have a chance to leave but she was still uncertain of the timing of his return. She wanted her freedom back and did not have to worry about raising anyone’s children, but the timing of his return was uncertain thus delaying her dream to independence.

Riette shut down emotionally – losing Annemie was just too much for her. She questioned ever loving someone. Everyone she loved was taken away. She was in a vacuum with no hope of living anymore. There just was no light at the end of the tunnel anymore:

She thought nothing could hurt her more than the loss of her brother, but now she knew otherwise. Loving was a dangerous, hurtful business. Her special, kind, talented Annemie was gone, and Riette wasn’t sure she could go on. Nothing seemed to have any light left in it. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 100)

Being in Mafikeng for more than seven months changed life for Riette. Distance in this case did not just make her heart grow fonder, but she had unanswered questions and her future with John Reilly was something she was uncertain about. Communication was no longer the same and “in some sort of purgatory, she waited for what she didn’t know, fed only by her hopes of what might be” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 104). She waited in awe for the return of John Reilly who had a wife back in his home country but for her, she waited for anything, be it positive or negative. John Reilly broke the promise he made to Riette about coming back to her after the war. He gave her so much hope after going through a lot, but had disappointed

her; leaving her with so many unanswered questions. He didn't even tell her that it had been a month since he left the war whilst she waited for him patiently in Mafikeng: "John Reilly went back home to Ireland last month" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 106).

Riette reminisced about the things she would have done as a child – escape from reality; she found solace in her childhood memories as a way of forgetting about the pain and struggles she had endured.

In December 1904, Tjipuka lost all hope of ever returning to Herero land. There was just no hope for a future in her motherland: "there was no hope of them returning to Herero land. The Germans would lie to them, only to catch them and kill them" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 118). Any attempt by the Germans to lure them back would mean danger and walking into the enemy's trap.

Many people lose their identity and dignity through acts of kindness. Novengi questions whether being kind is really worth it? In this situation, does it bring back all lost loved ones and families? Lucinda opens up about Mara's dilemma and how she tries to be kind to her. Mara went through a lot in life as a result of the on-going Herero-German war. People tend to get angry when listening to traumatic stories and get even worse when the victim is present. Novengi is touched by the story of Mara that it angered her (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 138) and "Her hope was gone now" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 167). The authors try to warn us that confronting fragmented memories is a dangerous disease, because it forces the victims to relive and re-imagine the atrocities that they had been subjected to in the past. It is a painful experience which many survivors try not to expose because of its pain magnitude.

Ruhapo lost hope when he was informed that his wife Tjipuka had died with their son. He gave up on himself and wished he could also die. The reader is further confronted with the certainty that the pain of losing someone you love is very dangerous. It could force anyone to do wrong things like in the case of Ruhapo. Ruhapo blamed himself for everything that had happened. She lost the most important thing in her life. Her reason for living and motivation was gone:

He was the last bit of Ruhapo that she had, the last reason for her to keep fighting, for her to keep living. Tjipuka was emptied inside ... Her only wish was that her death would come quickly. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 182)

Birds attacked the sorghum fields and her hope of selling it to buy their own land was now uncertain. All hope was lost, because she had put in so much effort into the fields. She had worked tirelessly for nothing (for free) for all those months: “This crop was her life. This was her way to freedom” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 255).

Ruhapo was full of anger and became a broken man because his wife was a victim of sexual abuse for many years. The thought of all those men with his wife angered him to the extent that he abused Tjipuka. He performed a ‘cleansing ceremony’ on her by scraping her with a stone on her body by the riverside: “He dragged her into the water. He dunked her and began scrubbing her all over with a rock, her arms, her legs, her face” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 282). Tjipuka gave up on life; she wanted to die because the pain was too much and she believed she deserved it.

Tjipuka had a light bulb moment with her husband; it was a celebration of their new land ownership. They reminisced about all the beautiful memories. He took her to paradise:

her mind was free of its burdens, and she closed her eyes. She stopped her mind from moving to the past or to the future ... this will be our life now she told herself. (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 276)

This indicates that despite having bad and tragic days, beautiful days are lay ahead and all pain and misery would eventually pass the test of time. It is about who always comes out stronger.

After escaping from the collection camp, Tjipuka and others were caught by Waeza and his two accomplices. Despite being uncertain whether or not Waeza would help her or not she knew he was a ruthless selfish woman abuser. “Tjipuka was aware he had no kindness in his heart, but she hoped he was at least human enough to see them as people now” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 155).

Waeza was in the process of rapping Tjipuka when Mara killed him. Sometimes rape victims when witnessing someone being raped brings back painful forgotten memories and it forces victims to re-live their dilemma. This might have been the case for Mara who was also a victim of sexual violence. The manner in which she killed Waeza is so gruesome and brutal. One would not expect a woman to do that. Mara still finds strength and a way to kill Waeza even though her hands were tied together: “She brought the rock down on Waeza’s head, over and over, until his face was only blood and flesh” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p.156).

Joseph believed that Franz Sneider had a soft spot for him and that he was good to him. He had faith that someday things will be fine. Joseph was killed for helping Tjipuka and her people escape from the camp, “the kind hands that had sacrificed everything for them. It was Joseph” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 159). Joseph was used as a ‘sacrificial lamb’ to show that no

one goes against Franz Sneider. He wanted to prove a point to those who go against him/ betray him.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), the Herero chief deceived his own people for his own personal gain. The author tries to show how Herero people subjugate other Herero. Greedy Herero men deceived their own people by lying to them about safe missionary places which were actually concentration camps. They lied to save their own skin and to feed themselves:

the soldiers paid some Herero men to find people like us who are starving in veld... they tell other Herero of missionary camp where they'll be warm and safe and where there'll be lots of food and water. (Serebrov, 2013, p. 198)

A man narrates how he was deceived by his own uncle. Families stick together in difficult times but this was not the case: "a man I called uncle' since I was a boy put a chain around my neck and gave me to the soldiers. They gave him money for me" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 198). The theory of 'survival of the fittest' comes to pass in this scene.

#### **4.15 The light bulb**

The theme of hope is also raised in the novel when Tjipuka hums (humming) a song: "My son will grow up free of all this. He'll be a much powerful man, free of all of this sorrow and conflict." (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 83). Tjipuka finds solace and comfort in earthly treasures rather than from humans. Tjipuka would often wake up before everyone and have some 'me time' and forget about all the pain/ trials and tribulations she's going through. Nature gave her some peace of mind: "She liked to hear the birds" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 39).

Ruhapo had faith that things would get back to normal once the treaty was signed. He reminisced about the wonderful life he would have with his family once peace had been restored: “Justice for the people would prevail” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 39).

The wives and families of the commando members became fearless. Nothing stopped them, not even fear of the Germans: “they think bringing us here will break the commandos... I hope my Willem kills a hundred of these Tonnie's. Thousands” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 85). Tannie Aggie, does not care what actions the commandos take to liberate their people or the pain it could cause. They have become fearless – their humanity is taken away so it's as if they no longer have feelings. Tannie Aggie was so passionate and full of hope about the war that it confused Riette – instead of being afraid of the suffering, she is full of hope and is geared up, proving how powerful trauma is when it comes to suffering amid the horrors of war. Even though Tannie Aggie has a sick baby, she did not let her situation break her down. She was still geared up and ready to defend and fight for the commando. Because of the traumatic experience she had gone through, she learned to accept things she could change and look to the future.

Ruhapo promised to marry Tjipuka during their first encounter just when they were still very young. He tells her, “One day you'll be my wife” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 21). He kept his promise to her and eventually married her. This symbolises the strong bonds of trust and commitments we find in our societies

Close family ties form a refuge, providing mutual love in a world filled with traumatising violence. It becomes clear that mastering one's own story and finding someone to listen and respond to it are crucial steps toward self-empowerment and autonomy.

Tjipuka and Novengi share a powerful friendship marked by so many sacrifices which they endured together. Novengi puts friendship above her own education despite being the brightest. Tjipuka and Novengi's friendship was so strong that they stood by each other when their husbands went off to face Zürn and Luthern. Novengi's daughter had an attachment for Tjipuka. Maveipi called Tjipuka 'mama' first before saying it to her mother. This is a pure act of love and humanity foreshadows so many hopeful moments for the future.

Riette and Annemie form a beautiful bond despite the step-mother-daughter animosity which Martie tried to establish between them. After the swimming fun they had, the two developed a relationship, "Riette and Annemie were best friends" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 73). When Riette wanted to escape from her marriage, (when Henk left for war), she remembered the beautiful memories she had shared with Annemie as well the promise she had made to her, "the promise to help her follow her dreams" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 77). She had convictions on breaking the promise that she had made to little Annemie as well as the bond she had developed with her. Kubuitsile tries to show the readers the power of friendship and strong relationship bonds. The love and memories she created with little Annemie made her stay. The love was too strong that she chose to rather endure pain and lose her freedom at the expense of true love for her 'stepdaughter'. Riette kept talking/ bringing up excuses on how she would leave after the war or leave with Annemie. However, the true power of love and friendship (mother-daughter bond) is reflected in the beautiful relationship that Annemie and Riette share..... Annemie and Riette took along "koeksusters" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 80) for their picnic. 'Koeksusters' translated directly means 'cakesisters' something very sweet. They probably symbolise the beautiful sweet relationship between mother-daughter as opposed to a sour relationship as in the case of Riette (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 80).

In spite of the animosity between Riette and Martie she still stayed behind for her when the British captured her. She listened to Annemie's cry. Riette developed a maternity instinct for Henk's daughters. Even when Riette and Annemie were hiding from the British soldiers, Riette kept calming Annemie down assuring her that all shall be well: "we're going to be free" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 81).

John Reilly promised Riette that he would come for her after the war was over even though he was committed to someone else. Sometimes such promises become refuge and a candle of hope in uncertain moments: "wait for me. When the war is over, I will come for you...I love you, don't you know that? How could I leave you?... Wait for me, I'll come to you. I promise." (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 102).

Even though knowing that they might lose to the Germans, and the fact that they do not have enough ammunition, Ruhapo refused to adhere to Tjipuka's advice to run and hide from the Germans in Botswana: "I wasn't built for running. I'll fight my battles as I always have" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 33). Ruhapo vowed to fight for his land and its people and not run like a coward, a true leader who was willing to die and fight for his people. Tjipuka thinks of all the amazing things and would put on make-up and dress herself beautifully for her husband who went to fight. She believed in her husband and his love kept her going.

Riette always served as a beacon of hope for Annemie. Even when things were not going well, she always reassured her that everything will be fine, "We'll be fine" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 81). Riette was at her happiest when the war started; her father and Henk leave but they were captured. She secretly celebrated her freedom from the people who took it away from a young age, but because of the war situation, she could not share her joy with anyone as she



would be considered a traitor and sell-out. Riette felt the war had nothing to do with her, she thought less about it.

On the other hand, escaping into the dangerous dessert was not a threat to Tjipuka because she was not afraid to live alone in the mountains. She saw the “bush and mountains as places of freedom, not places of fear” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 209). Tjipuka is thus depicted as a strong, resilient and motivated Herero woman who was not deterred by any circumstances from achieving her goals.

Tjipuka worked hard with Ruhapo in order to become independent. They wanted their own freedom, their own livestock and land and a start on a new slate with their unborn baby. The presence of the baby in their lives symbolised growth and hope for the future. The support from women in Bechuanaland meant so much for Tjipuka. She develops a relationship with MmaLesedi and MmaVenter (Riette) who both advise and give her hope and assist her in finding closure with her son’s death: “let your son free now” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 243).

In January 1905 Ruhapo’s whereabouts are revealed. Throughout the novel, there is a lot of uncertainty concerning his whereabouts. While Tjipuka thought her husband was dead, Ruhapo believed that Tjipuka had died. This somewhat is ironic, because both characters were alive and fighting for survival. Tjipuka was confronted by Peter to re-evaluate her situation (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 207). She was battling between her mind and the “self” with both sides out weighing each other. She was happy and at the same time, she wanted freedom. Tjipuka was also optimistic and hopeful. For instance, despite being separated from Novengi at Shark Island she still held on to hope, that she “will see Novengi again” (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 258).

After processing what she had gone through, Tjipuka makes a heart breaking decision to give her child to someone more deserving (MmaVenter), someone who understood her pain and adversities. She knew she was not capable of raising her child after all she had gone through.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), people were still hopeful that some will survive and come out of the Omaheke desert which was intended to kill them strong: “if we came out of the desert, I’m sure others will make it, too” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 183). One thing that kept Jahohora alive was her father’s advice “hide alone” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 183). She knew being alone limited the risks of being caught.

Yakov hopes to one day end the feelings of hatred, racism and have peace as he says, “these are the attitudes I’m trying to change through my service to the fatherland. Someday, the hatred will end” (Serebrov, 2013, p. 216). Yakov always converted himself by reciting biblical verses.

Jahohora’s marriage to Fredrich symbolises a new beginning as well as her independence. She becomes the beacon of hope for her people. She must uphold her cultural values and beliefs by representing her people.

Towards the end of the novel, it is revealed that the white man who helped Jahohora was indeed Yakov and he knew that she had pretended to be dead at the time. This disturbs the set boundaries for racism. Yakov, a Jew, is not evil, which is an act that surprised Jahohora.

Frau Jurgen motivates and encourages Jahohora to be strong and vigilant: “but you must be more careful. I’m not always going to be there to protect you. Do you understand?”

(Serebrov, 2016, p. 292). This represents the strong bonds women always share to stand up for each other. It breaks the boundaries of social class differences and limits.

At the end of the novel, Jahohora is a tjikuu. Her hope and wish of living to tell the tale, did eventually surface in the end. Finding her brother lightened her up as she was the only person who knew the fate of her parents. Visiting her parents' graves helped Jahohora to find peace and closure. Both Jahohora and Yakov reunited with their families

#### **4.15.1 Friendship**

Sometimes people tend to find inner peace in the oddest places. Though working at the hospital and befriending a British soldier seemed like a betrayal to her fellow countryman, Riette was happy. She found the only person who treated decently, "The first man who looked past her plain face and saw who she was underneath and truly like that person" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 91). Riette fell in love for the first time with John Reilly. He has shown her that there was more to love and intimacy. She had a light bulb moment with John Reilly, and for the first time she was happy with a man. Their intimacy complemented each other. It was like a 'reborn virginity loss': "tonight she was a virgin again" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 93). She witnessed happiness and love in the arms of a stranger.

Riette's relationship with John Reilly paved way for her to find happiness within herself. She made the realisation that "happiness could be part of her life" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 96). Clearly, at times meeting people who understand you could be the breaking ground to finding your inner true self.

Riette's refusal to marry Henk Venter in front of her father symbolises defiance. She was an outspoken young and vibrant lady who was ready to defend her dreams no matter the cost. She says, "I will not marry Hank Venter. I'll be leaving for Kimberly tomorrow. You'll have to tell your friend Henk to find a wife somewhere else" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 69). Hope was the force or element that drove most of the Herero people. They always believed the war will end one day.

Ruhapo stayed alive for many years with the hope that he would find his wife (Tjipuka) and son (Saul): "it was the only thing keeping them alive" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 165). Hence, when she lost Saul, Tjipuka was in denial and wanted to give up on life. She was still in a state of shock and blaming herself for Saul's death, she woke up from the dream shock that she was in: "Tjipuka grabbed him up in her arms. She held him tightly and the tears that she had held back for her son flowed for this poor bow" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 184). A mother can never bear a child and take blame and responsibility for someone's action. She refused to let him blame herself. It took her out of the shock. Tjirwe encouraged her to open up, mourn and accept her son's death.

Tjipuka and Novengi hold on to a promise they made to each other years ago, a promise to survive and be resilient. They perceived their situation as temporary and believed that they would one day get back what they had lost. Hope was the only thing keeping them alive, "We'll go home together. I have promised I'll live for you. I promise, on the other side of all this, we'll be together" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 199).

Tjipuka and Peters' friendship was one full of hope and motivation; Peter always gave her hope and encouraged her not to give up on life. Despite her failure to escape, he still motivated her to plan and run for her freedom. "I'll pray that you're successful ... Your time

of sadness is over. Your future is there. You'll make a new life. You'll find much happiness there. You'll finally be free again" (Kubuitsile, 2016, p. 211).

Tjipuka's relationships and bonds with people could be the very reason why she was able to survive so much in life. Everyone she encountered shared the same or similar fate and they strengthened each other by sharing their stories. Her relationship with Novengi, Ruhapo, Mara, Lucinda, Puhapo, Peter, MmaLesedi, Riette, Ludwig and Marieta contributed to her personal development. The friendship symbolised solidarity among people and ability to stand together in good and bad times. Her friendship with Ludwig, Marieta and Riette breaks ground rules to show that the status quo can be changed. This foreshadows the restoration of peace and unity amongst people of the world.

In *Mama Namibia 2013*, the friendships between people who are not of the same race are hard to build. Society has a means of blocking friendships and setting the boundaries of friendship between people who are different from each other. Yakov and Christof represent this relationship, as the latter notes, "Christof is my only friend who isn't Jewish" (Serebrov, 2013, p. 47). Yakov had that one friend, Christof who didn't judge him despite being different.

#### **4.16 Conclusion**

This chapter critically analysed the atrocities that are represented in *The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) and the resilience tactics that their characters employed. Different headings and subheadings have been used for the in-depth analysis which also turned out to be the major themes emerging from the novels of the study. The next chapter concludes and makes recommendations pertaining to this study.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study that has been carried out on the reconstruction of atrocities through fiction in Namibia through an evaluation of Mari Serebrov's *Mama Namibia* and Lauri Kubuitsile's *The Scattering*. The chapter gives a summary on the findings and motivates for further interests to address the gaps noted in the study.

#### 5.2 Findings

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the literary representations of the painful and traumatic impact of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Herero genocide in the selected novels. Mari Serebrov's *Mama Namibia* (2013) and Lauri Kubuitsile's *The Scattering* (2016), formed part of the data collected in this study.

The researcher identified major themes based on specific key aspects that emerged from the literature review. The themes were employed to shed light on the following objectives:

1. Explore how traumatic avenues are presented in fiction through the two selected novels,
2. Investigate how fiction portrays trauma and resilience in a Namibian context, and
3. Examine the coping and resilient tactics that the victims in the novels devised.

In order to explore how traumatic avenues and coping mechanisms are represented in fiction, the researcher investigated the diverse circumstances depicted in the two novels. The researcher looked at how the novel as a genre was employed in articulating the Namibian experiences of trauma and resilience. Marder (2006) succinctly explains that literature is used as a platform to explain aspects of human experience that cannot be contained by ordinary modes of expression and that may even

exceed human understanding. The following findings are highlighted and presented on the relevance of the topic as well as the research objectives.

Firstly, we learn about the pattern of abuse in the novels and how they are transferred using racial discrimination. The Germans exert violence to make the Herero people submissive. During the war a patriarchal society was always motivated by the feeling of superiority, especially by the German soldiers and missionaries. The characters, Jahohora and Tjipuka, represent the subordinate role of Herero men, women and the hypocrisy of rape as well as cultural stereotypes during the war. However, we learn that it is not just Herero women and men that were victims of the genocide, but that an Afrikaner (Riette) and Jewish (Jakov) also became victims of racism and gender stereotypes which could also had a psychological impact on them as highlighted by the research study. The German soldiers took advantage of powerless and defenceless women, and vulnerable children who were subjected to horrible and traumatic conditions.

In *Mama Namibia* (2013), we learn of the traumatising and dehumanising effects that accompanied the aspect of death during the war. Death became something normal because every day at the camp commenced with death.

Secondly, the writers try to show us how women are marginalised by the patriarchal system of white domination which negates and suppresses women. This system empowers the German soldiers who feel they can do as they please with Herero women. We are also made aware of the black society subjugating each other. Some parents are inconsiderate of their children's feelings and do not give them an opportunity to express themselves. Also interesting to note is the exposure of some parents as 'sell outs' who sell their children to the

highest bidder. By implication, they are not any different from those who sold people into slavery.

Thirdly, through the character of Martie, who was struggling to come to terms with the mother's death and a new person is around to take her mother's place, we realise that death is an extremely painful and devastating process. Any child would become defenceless and protective to keep their 'passed' loved ones' memories alive. It could also be act of rebellion, because of the minor age differences between the two. The absence of biological parents does have a negative impact on the emotional stability of their children. They tend to look and hope they were still around to listen and console them in their times of need.

In addition, being educated was insignificant if you were born black. One's potential is never acknowledged. Also noted is that no respect is accorded to the dead as animals prey on the corpses.

*The Scattering* (2016) and *Mama Namibia* (2013) also explore the themes of identity, racism, and suppression. The metal tags that every Herero person is forced to carry is the foundation for this question of identity. The metal tag imposes limits on all aspects of the Herero peoples' lives. It takes away their freedom; making them less human beings. The writer educates the reader on how the Herero people lose their identity through death. Despite their bodies being scattered all over Herero land as well as the Omaheke desert, they are lost and displaced souls forever. There will be no one to bury their dead bodies, or remember their names to memorialise their lives. It is as if they never existed.

Moreover, the authors of the novels expose how the land was illegally expropriated from the Herero people without any compensation during the war. It is evident through the



reconstruction of events in *The Scattering* (2016) that the people who survived the desert and made it to Bechuanaland borders were in a very painful and sad condition. The camps were dilapidated and the conditions were horrible and dehumanising. They were not a sight for any human being to witness. The conditions created a very hazardous and unsafe environment for especially, children since the Germans poisoned the water to wipe out the Herero people. Their mission was to kill all of them. When the water is poisoned people can die because no one can live without consuming water.

In addition, close family ties form a refuge, and provide mutual love in a world filled with traumatising violence. Through the relationships that character present in the two novels, we learn that people form relationships so support one another in times of hardship. Tjipuka and Novengi for example shared their pain and memories. The authors argue that mastering one's own story and finding someone to listen and respond to it are crucial steps toward self-empowerment and autonomy. The character of Tjipuka, Novengi and Jahohora depicts strong, resilient and motivated Herero women who do not allow any circumstance prevent them from achieving what they want.

Lastly, *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016) presented characters who go through similar experiences as the situations and the setting are the same. The three main characters, Tjipuka, Riette and Jahohora suffered similar fates as they all ended up in Bechuanaland to escape the oppressive German rule. Apart from the unmarried Jahohora, the other two women had husbands who went to fight in the war. Riette's husband was a Boer fighter whilst Tjipuka's husband was a Herero fighter. All the characters in the two novels at some point become prisoners of the war.

Von Trotha's extermination policy is highlighted in both novels as the main characters' became victims of the 'march to death'. Survivors of the 'march to freedom' in the desert were all feeble and skeletal because of hunger, starvation and exhaustion in the desert. The oppressors would often justify their actions as a "God ordained fate in the desert" (p. 255), they use God as for their own selfish and evil actions.

The two novels paint a picture of the four years of oppression and war that has left deep, emotional and physical scars in the lives of Tjipuka, Riette, Jahohora and Yakov. The fragmented memories would be difficult to forget. Confronting the broken past memories is not always an indigenous form of reconciliation and healing as it might have a negative and psychological effect on the victim.

In *Mama Namibia* the story is narrated to the readers through the experiences of the victims of the traumatic war. Everyone that Jahohora meets has a story to tell and share with her whilst the ordeals in *The Scattering* are experienced by the main characters, Tjipuka and Riette. In both stories, the two main characters' fates cross in the closing chapters.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The study explored how fiction writers presented traumatic avenues and resilience tactics in *Mama Namibia* (2013) and *The Scattering* (2016). The African novelist has an obligation to educate, to help society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement (Achebe, 1988). The two novels painted a picture of how the Herero community faced many obstacles and challenges that prevented them from realising their identity. Among these handicaps, were rape, murder, loss of identity, hunger, starvation,

kidnapping, greed deceit and many others. As such, this study recommends that researchers should look into the following aspects for future research:

- Investigate whether the colonial genocide was motivated by rational aims, such as greed
- Nama genocide as a precursor to the policies of the Third Reich
- Feminism in the novels
- Aspect of identity and the genocide

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Kubuitsile and Serebrov are amazing writers who were able to rekindle images of the atrocities committed many years ago. They persuaded the reader to relive the moment as if they were also a part of the genocide. The issue of subjugation in the two primary texts is subtle, but if magnified, it gives an ugly picture of how extremely intense the whole situation is. The use of literary devices as well as symbolism in *Mama Namibia* and *The Scattering* helped the reader to understand the essence of fiction.

Through literature we experience events that might have remained hidden to us. Through literature these events attain meaning and by reflecting on the world, fiction is thus one avenue through which trauma can be expressed. According to Cloete and Mlambo (2014) trauma is the story of the wound that needs to be told and this mode of expression is found through literary texts both fictional and non-fictional. It unveils the reality or truth that we can only experience through close reading of the text.

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