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SENDING UP TRAUMA

A STUDY OF POLITICAL CARTOONING IN SOUTH AFRICA'S
POST-APARTHEID TRAUMA DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The idea of trauma as a wound in the psyche of a person, has dramatically altered in the twentieth century. From its inception in the mid-nineteenth century, the trauma concept has moved away and evolved in different directions. Though in the absence of a psyche, groups and nations are now considered to be able to undergo traumatic experiences.

This idea of the collective trauma has been applied to South Africa in the period of transition from apartheid to democracy. Especially during the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), as the commission invested heavily in the practice of traumatic storytelling as part the broader globalization of psychiatric knowledge about trauma (Colvin, 2008).

Political cartoons shed an interesting light on the establishment and development of trauma discourse. This study looks at the contribution of South African political cartoonists to trauma discourse at the time of the hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee (HRVC) of the TRC.

This study first looks at how the notion of trauma evolved preparatory to the analysis of trauma discourse in South Africa. Cartoons are used to illustrate how trauma discourse established itself; however, the second part of this work is dedicated to a close analysis of the cartoons.

I conclude that the cartoons indeed contributed to trauma discourse, however, due to their particular style and composition, they did not contribute in a similar manner. Both Zapiro and Nanda Soobben look at current affairs and thus directly responded to whatever occurred at the hearings. They are more 'political' as they display the (failing) attempt of the creation of the imaginary national trauma identity by the state. They both question the work of the TRC, however, they do not address the creation of a trauma discourse in South Africa. Furthermore their nature as political cartoonists demands from them a focus on high profile political characters. The Cartoon Madam & Eve tackles social issues. The main focus of the creators lies on the continuation of social apartheid and the subsequent distorted economic and social power relation between the maid and the employer. Thus, the social situation, which is considered to be traumatic for the nation.

Abbreviations

TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
HRVC	Human Rights Violations Committee
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
M&G	Mail & Guardian
ANC	African National Congress
NP	<i>Nasionale</i> Party
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
PAC	Pan African Congress
SACP	South African Communist Party
UDF	United Democratic Front
CFAD	Centre for Fine Art Animation & Design
NNP	New National Party

Introduction

When a society deals with the aftermath of conflict, violations of human rights or other atrocities or major disasters, trauma discourse often emerges. In trauma discourse, past suffering, in any form whatsoever, is labelled as ‘traumatic’, which not only involve a scholarly approach to the concept, but also includes the public debates on past atrocities and memory. The word trauma stems from the Greek word ‘*Ψυχολογικο τραυμα*’ (*Psychologico trauma*), literally meaning ‘psychological wound’. A wounded psyche is the result of a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. Nations, societies or groups however do not have these psyches which people have.

Until recent years the trauma concept was only found in the (academic) field of (clinical) psychology and was only applicable to individuals. In recent years though, the idea that a collective can be traumatised gained more acceptance. And in that process ideas and practises from clinical psychology revolving around the idea of trauma, have found their way into the public sphere, where they have been transformed into new ideas which support the notion of the traumatised collective. As the idea of trauma and its explanation moved away from clinical psychology in recent years, so did its ability to change within the public sphere from the individual to the collective. With the result: the emergence of trauma discourse.

One of the key actors within trauma discourse, which feeds into the notion of the collective trauma, is the mass media. And in particular the commercial, mainstream media. It plays an important role, due to its power to reach a large public and to popularise trauma discourse. Political cartoons, which have a prominent place in the mass media, then too can make a contribution to the shape that trauma discourse takes.

In this study I analyse how South African political cartoonists contributed to trauma discourse at the time of the hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee

(HRVC) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)¹. In particular, I look at the period between 1 April 1996, two weeks before the first hearings of the HRVC, and 11 November 1998, two weeks after the TRC presented the final rapport to then president Nelson Mandela.

The HRVC was the first of the three committees that were part of the TRC where testimonies were given. The Committee was mandated to aid the so-called 'truth recovery' process, by taking statements from survivors and families of victims, establishing the identities of the perpetrators and the circumstances of perpetration and selecting representative cases to be presented at the public hearings (Moon, 40:2008). Because of the nature of these interviews, personal testimonies of violence, there was an emphasis on personal traumas of the interviewees. The second round of hearings by the Amnesty Committee were more factual and were not as sensational, especially for the mass media, as the HRVC was (Verdoolaege, 2003). Therefore it is interesting to study the reaction of political cartoons, as part of the media, to these events, which attributed to trauma discourse in South Africa.

The TRC used a particular language of an 'ill' and 'traumatized' nation which needed healing through truth finding and reconciliation, thus through the work of the TRC. Subsequently this lexicon became the vocabulary within trauma discourse as it was picked up by the mass media and later the public². I will elaborate on this aspect of the TRC in the third chapter of this study.

Next to the particular language the TRC used, another very important aspect of its HRVC attributed to trauma discourse. This was the therapeutic practice of what scholars call 'traumatic storytelling'. Colvin in particular describes it as 'the difficult

¹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up under the provision of Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995.

The aim of the TRC was to: investigate acts of 'gross human rights violations', committed during the period from 1 March 1960 to 10 May 1994 in order to establish a complete picture of what happened in the specified period; granting of amnesty to perpetrators of human rights violations who make full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to acts; offering victims and relations of victims the opportunity to testify to their suffering during the specified period and taking measurements aimed at the granting of reparations (<http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/legal/bill.htm>, retrieved on 3 December 2011).

² Christopher Colvin describes in the chapter 'Trauma' in 'New South African Keywords', how he encountered South Africans speaking of *i-trauma* (noun form for trauma) and *uku-trauma-taisa* ('to be traumatized') when speaking of past events they experienced or witnessed. It shows how the (Western) notion of trauma entered the everyday language in South Africa (Colvin, 2008: 228).

recounting of experiences of violence, which was supposed to transform the violent, officially suppressed history of apartheid into a new, shared national History' (1:2006). It is a practice, which too finds its origin in psychology.

One of the important aspects of this study is its approach to trauma discourse, by looking at political cartoons. One key reason for doing so is that political cartoons are first and foremost a way of storytelling and function as witnesses to socio-political processes in society. On a different level cartoons are part of the media, which serves as a platform for the message the cartoonist wants to convey. As I will discuss in chapter three, the mass media and the TRC were inseparable. As a result the media also became a platform for the traumatic testimonies given at the HRVC hearings. Thus, the media became a platform for the cartoonists who were engaged in and with trauma discourse. And second, it served as platform for therapeutic practices and the language of trauma which one found at the HRVC hearings.

Trauma discourse in South Africa was largely influenced by what happened in the political domain. First, by establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the South African government had placed itself prominently in the process of processing trauma, truth and reconciliation. Second, the trauma of the nation was the result of the actions of previous apartheid governments, according to the TRC.³ In order for perpetrators of gross human rights violations to be granted amnesty, their actions had to be politically motivated in order to get amnesty. Therefore, the essence of the TRC was political (Krog, 1998:6).

Political cartoons, according to Mulkay, contribute directly to the world of real politics (1998:197). So where political cartoonists were critical of the TRC and the process of truth and reconciliation, they were indirectly critical of a political process. Political cartoonists contribute to the political domain as they have the power to make a

³ However, the trauma of the South African society as result institutionalised racial oppression was did not start from day the Malan government took office in 1948. Pass laws for example, already existed in the 18th century. First these laws applied to slaves, but in 1809 with the 'Hottentot proclamation' pass laws were extended to Khokhoi (Du Toit and Giliomee, 1983:45). Neither did South Africa's traumatic history start with 'Sharpeville' as Desmond Tutu insinuates the foreword of the final report of the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998a:1). Apartheid cannot, as shows in the example of the pass laws, be regarded as a separate system of racial segregation in a closed, separate era. Institutionalised racial oppression and the trauma it inflicted on the South African society was established years before the Malan government took office. And socio-economic inequality, as part of racial three centuries of racial oppression, still exists in South Africa today.

contested issue, a traumatic experience for example, open for discussion to a large public. Political cartoons are engaged with serious issues, serious actions and serious discourses. Furthermore, political cartoons make use of powerful channels such as the mass media and humour as a tool to carry across a message. This provides cartoonists a powerful voice, often functioning as a voice for those who are often not heard. In essence, one picture can open up a discussion and to clarify what needs to be on the political agenda.

As South Africa has a lively cartooning culture and a very extensive archive (even dating back to the 17th century), I had to make a selection of which cartoons to analyse. I selected the following cartoons: Madam & Eve, the cartoons of Zapiro and those of Nanda Soobben, all drawn and published between 1 April 1996 and 1 November 1998.

Zapiro was born as Jonathan Shapiro in Cape Town in 1958 into a politically active family. The security police detained both his mother and sister in the 1980s. In that same decade Shapiro, who became known as Zapiro, created his first major cartoon with his now famous signature in the right-hand corner: the 1987 United Democratic Front (UDF) calendar.

Even though Zapiro had been drawing since the age of four, it was the, now famous, UDF calendar that set his career in motion. He had been drawing for a number of anti-apartheid organisations after his military service, during which he remained critical of the apartheid regime and openly supported the UDF. It was a request by the Rondebosch⁴ branch of the UDF for the calendar design, which presented his first major opportunity (Ibid:198). In 1987 Zapiro obtained a Fulbright Scholarship to study at the prestigious School of Visual Arts in New York. After his return to South Africa 1991 he did not immediately return to political cartooning, because, he had to adapt to the new political climate. However in 1994 he returned and became the daily editorial cartoonist for the *Sowetan* and also for the *Weekly Mail & Guardian* a few months later.

⁴ Rondebosch is one of the Southern suburbs of Cape Town.

Contrary to more conventional political cartoons, Madam & Eve focuses more on the social issues in South Africa and less on the political domain, thus engaging more extensively with social discourses in the transitional period.

Similar to Zapiro, Madam & Eve was also created in the zeitgeist of the troubled State of Emergency of the late 1980s. Initially three men created the strip: Rico Schacherl, Stephen Francis and Harry Dugmore. The latter left the trio in 2001 and was according to Francis the ‘business man’ behind the success. Schacherl was born in Austria in 1966 and moved to South Africa when he was two years old. Similar to Zapiro, Schacherl pursued a career in cartooning after he finished military service in 1989. After hearing a radio interview with the writers of a new satirical magazine *Laughing Stock* he phoned the office and got himself an interview. It was here that he met his future partner, Stephen Francis. Francis, born in the United States, moved to South Africa in the 1980s after he married his wife, Wendy, a South African. Together with Dugmore and a handful of other cartoonists and humorists, the creators of Madam and Eve worked a year for the magazine after it collapsed after a year. Soon after the three men came together and started to draw and write the chronicles of a domestic worker and her employer in the *Weekly Mail & Guardian: Madam & Eve*.

Nanda Soobben was the first cartoonist of colour to be appointed to a mainstream newspaper, the ‘Daily News’ in Durban where he still works today (Lent, 2009:238). He was born in Durban in 1954 and similar to Zapiro and the creators of Madam & Eve, Soobben was also part of the new generation of cartoonists that emerged in the 1980s. However because of his skin colour he also represented a ‘different type’ of new cartoonists namely the black cartoonists of South Africa.

Soobben “struggled throughout the years of apartheid under the watchful eyes of the censors” (*cartoonist.co.za*, n.d.). In the early days, also similar to his colleagues in this study, Soobben’s work appeared in the alternative newspapers where, although he was meant to deal with the lighter side of the news, engaged in the question of racism in the country. In 1987, Soobben moved to Brazil and later the United States, where he lived until after Nelson Mandela was released from prison, in 1993. Upon his

return, Soobben set up the Centre for Fine Art Animation & Design (CFAD) in Durban, a cartooning, animation and design school.

The cartoonists I have chosen are all three very different in their style, composition and way of story telling. Where Zapiro and Soobben focuses on the political aspect of cartooning, Madam & Eve look more at the social dynamics of South Africa in the period of transition from apartheid to democracy. Therefore I expect that the aspect of a traumatized society will be more apparent in the drawings of Madam & Even then in the other two.

Both Zapiro and Madam & Eve are very popular in the mainstream media. Soobben however, is less 'famous' and has a less prominent spot within the South African cartooning discipline. Apart from that both Zapiro and the cartoonists of Madam & Eve are white and are therefore in a different social position then Soobben, which could have an influence on the way they approach certain topics in their cartoons.

In this study, the contribution of Soobben's cartoons is less because he was only appointed the position of cartoonist for the *Daily News* in 1998. At that time the TRC hearings had been taking place for about a year and a half. Therefore his contribution in terms of quantity is more limited than Zapiro or the cartoonists of Madam & Eve, who at the time were drawing for a number of national newspapers.

All three cartoons however have one thing in common which is important when it comes to trauma discourse in South Africa and that is that all three emerged and rose to prominence in a period right before South Africa made a transition from apartheid government to a constitutional democracy.

Through an exploration of selected cartoons by some of South Africa's well-known cartoonists, I will analyse the relationship between trauma discourse and political cartoons. This study combines the insight into trauma discourse in South Africa, with the visual narrative approach of political cartoons, building a bridge between these two subjects. By analysing the selected cartoons, I will explore the intersection of trauma discourse and the social role of political cartoons. This study therefore does not only illustrate how political cartoonists contributed to trauma discourse during the

hearings of HRVC, but also exposes the connection between the three subjects: trauma discourse, the TRC and political cartooning. During the analysis I will look at how the cartoonists deal with each subject and whether or not they criticize it and to what extent.

Trauma and Trauma Discourse

This study is divided in two main parts. In the first part, which consists of two chapters, I explore the key concepts, trauma, trauma discourse and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This serves as a basis, which enables me to analyse the intersection of cartoons with these subjects in the second part of this study that also consists of two chapters.

In recent years academic fields such as psychology, psychiatry and sociology saw the emergence of trauma studies, especially in relation to collective trauma. Trauma Studies originated in the context of research about the Holocaust (Kaplan, 1:2005). Simultaneously, “it seemed as if the entire twentieth century was marked under the sign of ‘historical trauma’” (Huyssen, 9:2003). As trauma’s explanatory capacity expanded, so did its application. First to Vietnam veterans, then to victims of sexual and domestic abuse, to victims of all kinds of violence and to victims of natural disasters and finally to those who have even witnessed or heard about traumatic events, such as ‘terrorist’ attacks (Colvin, 2:2006).

The first chapter of this study, *Trauma in the public sphere*, focuses on the notion of trauma and trauma discourse. I examine how its use and thinking has expanded from the field of psychiatry to become a popular public discourse. Furthermore, trauma discourse has travelled from the ‘Global North’ across the world, enabling those formally silenced in the ‘Global South’ to have a voice using the idea of ‘trauma’. I draw from the vast literature available on trauma in relation to the collective, which will form the basis of this thesis and further chapters.

The second chapter, *Trauma Discourse in South Africa*, looks at how conceptual ideas involving trauma, truth and reconciliation influenced trauma discourse in South Africa. More specifically, how some of these concepts were actually used to popularize the work of the TRC. As the popularisation of the notion of trauma is part of a wider

global human rights discourse, I will continue to examine the South African place in the global context. Apart from this, I examine the role of the mass media in the popularisation of trauma discourse and subsequently the TRC. It was the fruit of this relationship, which brought the ‘trauma circus’ straight into the living room of the South Africans. And political cartoonists most certainly played a role in this circus.

Political Cartooning

There are a number of scholars who acknowledge the fact that the media, in its broadest sense, contributes to trauma discourse in its own way. However, they tend to overlook humour and humoristic expressions in the media as an aspect of a trauma discourse. Kaplan’s study of trauma cultures (2005), for example, mainly focuses on cultural expressions, which tend to present the traumatic event as it ‘really was’, to give a representation of reality of that time. This tendency was also seen in Germany, for example, where studies of the cultural representation of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust highlight the ‘serious’ – or, ‘realist’ – images (Ashkenazi, 2009:3). Therefore political cartoons are an interesting medium within trauma discourse, as a way of bringing forth a message (critique) that takes place in a separate space, outside the general, more ‘serious’ public discourse.

Cartoons are, similar to the texts of the articles in the newspaper cartoons appear, forms of communication. Although in many cases cartoons are less, or better said, not objective compared to newspapers articles. Political cartoons are, also different from other forms of cartoons, such as comic strips or comic books, because the latter have a more entertaining element to them. Political cartoons can be distinguished from these other forms of cartoons because of their cynicism, use of stereotypes, aim to educate and the fact that, more often than not, political cartoons try to bring daily commentary on important domestic and global issues.

In the third chapter, *Political Cartooning in South Africa*, I look at the role of cartooning the early days of the post-apartheid era. I explain how cartoons are structured and how cartoonists convey their message. I do so by using examples of cartoons and linking them to trauma discourse in South Africa.

The fourth and final chapter of this study, *Political Cartooning and Trauma Discourse*,

analyses how the selected cartoons have engaged in and with trauma discourse in South Africa at the time of the hearings of the HRVC of the TRC. This chapter serves as the main analysis of the cartoonists' engagement in and with trauma discourse in post-apartheid South Africa.

All the cartoons I have selected come from (annual) collections of the cartoonists, published in book form. Both Zapiro and the creators of Madam & Eve have published more cartoon collections than Nanda Soobben. Therefore the archive of Soobben's cartoons is smaller.

Political cartoons are like time capsules; they offer the reader a *slice of life*⁵ of the time in which they were created. Although they may seem locked in a given era as they refer to specific events, the themes expressed in cartoons are often universal, transcending time and place (*Understanding the World of Political Cartoons*, n.d.: 16). The selections of cartoons, which this study is based on, opens a window to a particular historical moment in South Africa's political transition and disclose how the mass media was engaging with questions of truth and reconciliation.

⁵ *Slice of life* refers to a narrative form, which is a realistic representation of every day experiences in arts and entertainment, a feature often seen in cartoons. Stories, which use the slice-of-life technique, often have an open ending. The authors do not use 'catastrophes', a wedding or death of a villain to end their story. Or as Irish play writer and Nobel laureates Bernard Shaw put it in the preface of *Three Plays by Brieux: Maternity; the Three Daughters of M. Dupont; Damaged Goods*: "The curtain no longer comes down on a hero slain or married: it comes down when the audience has seen enough of the life presented to it to draw the moral, and must either leave the theater or miss its last train." (Shaw, xv-xvi: 1911)

Chapter One:

Trauma in the Public Sphere

The twentieth century is a period which can be marked as an ‘age of trauma’. It was a period in which the notion of trauma became globally popularized and its conceptual ideas evolved. It was in this period that trauma studies became grounded in the academia. Since, ‘trauma’ has become part of our daily life. On daily basis pictures of war, famine, natural disasters, ‘terrorist’ attacks, state violence and smaller incidents of crime enter our living room through the mass media. Small, insignificant and unpleasant experiences in life have come to be described as ‘traumatic’. The entertainment industry has sought, and succeeded to, express the idea of trauma in literature, cinema and other forms of art. Furthermore, the (international) commercial media have come to see it as their task to label events as ‘traumatic’.

The conceptual idea of trauma in the twentieth century has evolved from the notion of a damaged psyche into a signifier and an explanation of any form of (historical) suffering. Subsequently the idea of trauma has become a concept, which can be part of a person’s or group identity. As a result, in what I have named the ‘age of trauma’, the idea of trauma has become an important tool when dealing with the past.

In this chapter I will analyse the connections between trauma and identity, trauma and past suffering and finally trauma and dealing with the past. I will do so as these are recurring subjects in trauma discourses. The way in which members of society, social and political agencies approach these subjects determines the formation and development of trauma discourses. First, I will look at the dual genealogy of the trauma concept. What are the differences and similarities of the trauma idea when applied to an individual and a collective? How did the idea of trauma travel from clinical psychology into the public sphere? Although my main analysis of the selected cartoons will be covered in chapter four and five, respectively *Political Cartooning in South Africa* and *Political Cartooning and Trauma Discourse*, I will use some examples, which support my argument and illustrate how the trauma concept enters the public sphere.

Whilst trying to explain and cope with past suffering, victims, survivors and their families, have started to use their past, which they label as traumatic, to express their personal and group identity. I will analyse this aspect, which is part of trauma discourse, by using the writings of Frantz Fanon. This chapter ends with a brief analysis of how trauma discourse is further used by actors in society as part of their particular agenda. This will give a clearer insight to my next chapter; how trauma discourse in South African was established.

By the 1980s, the latter days of white minority rule in South Africa, the country was largely excluded from the majority of the world as a result of international boycotts. However, global discourses involving trauma and reconciliation did not pass by. Therefore it is important to have a better understanding of what I have dubbed the 'age of trauma', in order to put trauma discourse in the transitional period in South Africa, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in this process, in perspective.

Dual genealogy of the trauma concept

Fassin and Rechtman (2009:8) argue that there is a dual genealogy of the trauma concept. In the mid-nineteenth century there was the invention of traumatic stress, which became the basis of the trauma concept.

Subsequently the idea of trauma was 'rediscovered' in the latter part of the twentieth century as soldiers returning from the Vietnam War were diagnosed with what was known until 1980 as either 'shell shock', 'combat stress' or 'traumatic neurosis'. From 1980 onwards these concepts were all officially listed as 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder', PTSD, by the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

According to Fassin and Rechtman the second concept of trauma focuses on misfortune and those who suffer from it, and less on traumatic events themselves. For example accident victims: trauma can be applied to survivors of smaller incidents and survivors of concentration camps, as trauma can be applied to a group. What Fassin and Rechtman argue, is that the understanding of the second element of the notion of trauma should be understood both in the way it has been used in the clinical mental health field, as traces left on the psyche, but now in the new popular use, as an 'open wound' in the collective memory. In Greek the word 'trauma' literally means 'wound'.

The use of the description 'open wound' in the collective memory demonstrates how the use of clinical medical terms, as metaphor, has travelled out of this domain and is used in every day life. Second, it illustrates how one idea becomes applicable to, and part of, ideas to explain past suffering. And third it shows how the idea of trauma has become detached from the 'wound', the actual trauma. This is the main idea behind trauma discourse, which I will use in this study. It is remarkable that the concept can shift from one meaning to another, in the same instance, without making a clear distinction.

Briefly taking the hearings of the TRC as an example, I found that the same shifts were evident. Through the process of what the TRC called 'truth finding', they tried to establish as clear as possible a picture of abuses of human rights between 1960 and 1994. They did so by holding public hearings with victims and their relatives of these gross human rights violations. 'Truth finding' happened by the practice of traumatic storytelling; victims of gross human rights violations telling their traumatic stories in front of the HRVC. According to Colvin, the right to such memory turned into a demand for memory by therapists, journalists and politicians, justified by trauma discourse at the time. Memories are the events and things, which happened in the past or have existed in the past, which individual people or groups want to remember. Collective memories, according to Brewer, are understood as group memories, shared by a community that help to bind that community together (2006:2). As part of the narrative nationhood, personal stories, shared images and other forms of representations of the past are needed, in order to 'build the nation'. In the nation building process, and particular during the hearings of the HRVC, victims were reminded that both personal and national recovery depended on the narrative therapy, which was traumatic storytelling (Colvin, 2006:2). Thus, we see that trauma discourse in South Africa's created a connection between the two concepts of trauma, namely the individual trauma and the national trauma, and which became interwoven; the 'national trauma' depended on, and demanded healing of, the individual trauma. This shows how the two concepts of trauma in South Africa became entwined.

Scholars, in their own words, have described the concept of trauma⁶. However, in this study I make use of the description by Robert Jay Lifton. According to this scholar, traumas are so-called ‘death-equivalents’, a separation from a deceased person. A death-equivalent resembles the cut off between loved ones, as the deceased is permanently asleep and buried under ground or cremated. According to Lifton a trauma resembles this experiences as the traumatized victim loses their connection with fellow human beings and subsequently the sense of community and/or group. This, according to Lifton, is essentially to the human identity (Lifton, 1996).

I use this description because it highlights the aspect of a fractured connection; similar to the fractured social fabric of a society, as explained when a collective suffers from a traumatic experience, thus the ‘open wound’. Lifton’s explanation of the concept of trauma resonates with Alexander’s Lay Trauma Theory (2004), in which he explains how an event, series of events or continuation of suffering, cuts off the connection of an individual with his or her respected community or the interconnection between individuals in a group. By looking at South Africa using these two theories, I will be able to look beyond the limited interpretation gross violation of human rights as being traumatic, and thus will be able to analyse the cartoon more thoroughly with regards to the cartoonists’ depiction of the traumatic legacy of apartheid.

The shifting of the concept from the damaged psyche of an individual to an ‘open wound’ in the collective memory demonstrates how the use of the notion of trauma has moved beyond its use in clinical psychology. So too has the notion of a damaged connection, now a way of explaining (past) suffering of a group, moved beyond the initial idea of trauma, as explained by Lifton.

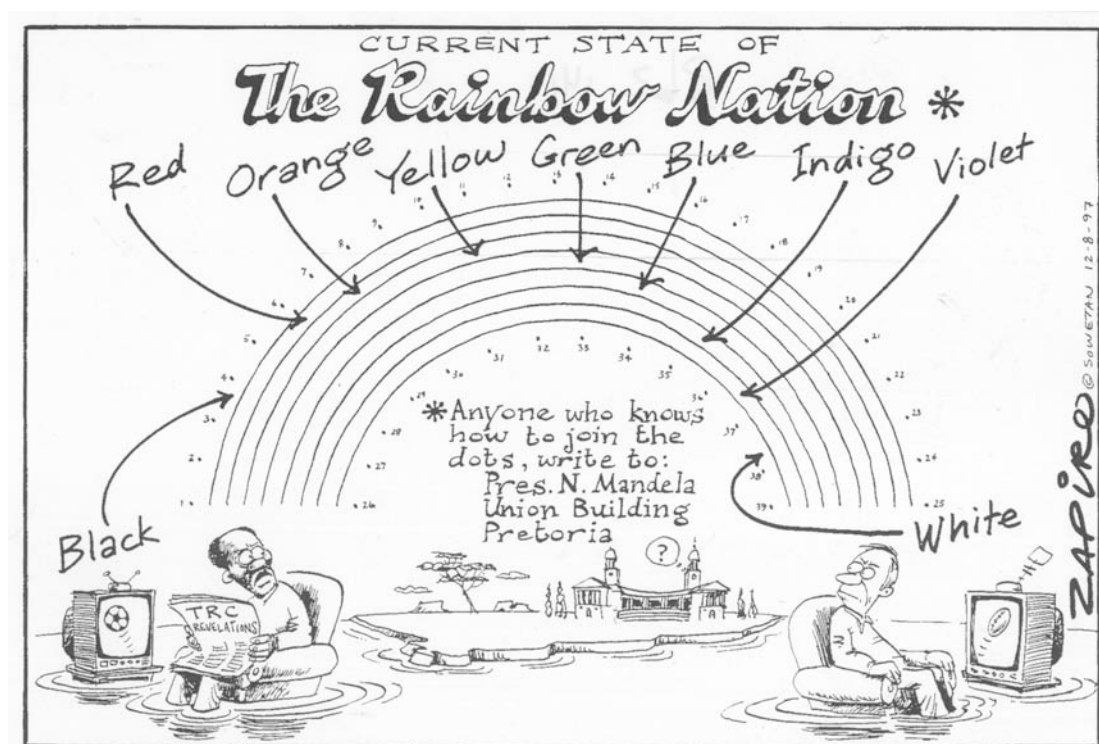
Though Fassin and Rechtman argue that there is a dual genealogy, I have to disagree. As discussed in the examples above, ideas of a traumatized collective can be traced back to the idea of a traumatized individual, meaning that there is a single instead of a dual genealogy. Though both ideas have since developed in their own right, it is obvious that ideas of a traumatized group were created out of ideas regarding the

⁶ See Lifton (1996), Moroz (2005) and Van der Kolk, McFarlane and Weisaeth (2007)

traumatized individual. And by being applicable to a collective, it has travelled from clinical psychology and psychiatry into the public sphere of the collective.

Trauma discourse visualized

In the twentieth century, platforms were made available for ideas of the traumatized society to enter the public sphere. The mainstream mass media in particular made this possible. I will illustrate how the one concept of trauma travelled via the media and entered the public sphere in South Africa, using a cartoon by Jonathan Shapiro, better known as Zapiro.



Shapiro, 1997: 141

The Zapiro cartoon addressed the issue of a deeply divided society on the basis of race, the so-called 'legacy of apartheid'. The two subjects, two males, one black and one white, seem to be unwilling to make the idea of the so-called 'Rainbow Nation' work. This is made to look easy, as the subjects only have to 'connect the dots.' The unconnected dots in this cartoon represent the absent connection in society between the different people of South Africa. Apart from the fact that they sit far apart, they are seemingly interested in different things. The black subject in the cartoon reads about the TRC revelations and watches football, while the white man watches rugby and because of the absence of newspapers, he is seemingly not interested in the works of the TRC.

In the background of the cartoon stands the Union Building in Pretoria, the official seat of the South African government, from where Nelson Mandela calls for someone to connect the dots, thus connect the people. This cartoon is critical to the work of the state and subsequently the TRC, as the message Zapiro conveys, is that these political actors were not capable of connecting the dots and create a common connection between people in South Africa and thus one nation. The difficulties lay in the fact that there was no nation in South Africa, pre-1994, as the apartheid regime did everything in its power to exclude the majority of those who lived within the borders of the state of any rights associated with what it believed was a nation. Therefore, the 'trauma' in this picture is not so much about the trauma of an absent connection ('death-equivalents'), but about the failure to connect people as a result of racial violence by the white minority state, which followed three hundred years of colonialism.

Through visual symbols that act as 'short cuts' to a message, the cartoonist was able to capture and visually represent the absent cohesion between the groups the two men represent, black and white South Africans, thus a divided nation. Furthermore the black subject reads in the newspaper about the revelations of the TRC, which in turn deals with the trauma of the individuals who came forth to tell their story. So the individual traumatic story, reported on by the newspaper and read by the black subject, is juxtaposed with the unsolved problem of a traumatized society expressed by the subject who reads the traumatic stories and the other subject at the other end of the cartoon. On a different level, the individual 'trauma' of the subjects in the cartoon, the black and white male, both 'suffer' from different kind of trauma' s as both men their experience with apartheid must have been different. Therefore, connecting the dots is a difficult, if not impossible, task as both experiences with history is different.

The minor, seemingly insignificant details, the individual traumatic experience as a story in the newspaper, illustrates how the concept of trauma travels into the living room (of the black subject) and puts emphasis on the idea of a traumatized society. And this not only happened in the cartoon, but it also happened in reality, as the cartoon itself addressed the issue of a divided society. This will be further explored in chapter three.

The final interesting aspect of the cartoon in relation to the concept of trauma entering the public sphere, relates to what has been mentioned in the previous section: the interdependency of the two concepts of traumas. If the 'Rainbow Nation' experiment wants to succeed, the two subjects in the cartoon have to reconcile with each other for that to happen. If the two subjects can overcome their personal trauma, the nation will too. If not, then the 'Rainbow Nation' experiment, thus the healing of the collective memory fails. Secondly, the individual, about whom the newspaper reports, is not completely healed because the nation is not completely healed and vice versa. Thus, there is a second narrative in the cartoon, which highlights the interdependency of the two traumas within trauma discourse in South Africa. This Zapiro cartoon literally illustrates how the two concepts of trauma were intertwined in trauma discourse in South Africa.

Trauma and identity

Collective memories, sometimes referred to as 'social memory' (Brewer, 2006:2), are group memories, shared by a community that support the cohesion of the community. Therefore nations have collective memories as part of their narrative of nationhood (Ibid.). These collective memories are shared images and representations of the past that help to create social solidarity. Thus the collective memory is the basis of the national identity.

The damaged psyche of an individual is similar to an 'open wound' in the collective memory of a group. Connections between single individuals and between an individual and the rest of the group are cut off as the collective memory is 'wounded'. In order to reinstall these connections, people seek to give meaning to previous suffering which created the wound. Individuals and groups try to give meaning to the past in different ways from each other. Therefore each trauma discourse is different and continuously evolving into a different direction. However, the process of remembering is not one that is completely dominated and possessed by ordinary people, as I will explore further in this chapter as well as in my next chapter.

Boldly stated, the South African TRC had the responsibility of archiving South Africa's collective memory of the past (Verdoornlaege, 2003:8). And, to stay in the

terminology of the TRC, 'heal the nation'. Thus giving meaning to past suffering and to the collective memory. Though not exclusively, the TRC was primarily in charge of this process, which exceeded its primary task (Grunebaum, 2011:18). In the next chapter I look closer at the South African case and how dominant groups imposed their discourses on the South African people.

Now back to past suffering, which in the process of 'nation building'⁷ becomes distorted. The fact that the TRC's investigation only involved politically motivated human rights abuses resulting in 'bodily trauma' is one such example. All the other forms of injustice and traumatic experiences, such as forced removals, pass laws and the general fear in which people lived on a daily basis, did not fit this description and was thus not part of the 'traumatic past' and was moved to the periphery of the collective past. In trauma discourse the distorted idea of past suffering is taken up as a signifier of belonging to a group and the traumatic experience becomes a token of the identity of that group. The open wound is put on display for others to gaze at, when the traumatized group wants to show how their society, community and/or identity came about.

An example of where this is evident is that of African Americans. Slavery has shaped the way members of these groups interact with both each other and with other groups. According to Eyerman, the exact point when slavery became part of the identity of African Americans was around 1880, as a reaction to rejected full citizenship and integration (2004:76). The issue was picked up by a new black educated elite who used the available media and other forms of representation as a platform to reconstitute slavery as the "primal sense of black identity" (Ibid.). Eyerman writes: "In this emergent identity, slavery, not as an institution or experiences but as a point of origin in a common past, would ground the formation of the black 'community' (Ibid.).

And here we arrive at a critical point. There is a distinction between slavery as the evil institution in which people are treated as property and regarded as 'less human' and the 'slavery', which is part of the identity of African Americans. Even for those who

⁷ Nation building is the process of working towards a stable state. In recent years, the democratization process of nation building has become more prominent, however nation building does not necessarily mean that a nation is democratic, nor does it mean that a nation has to be unstable first (Watson, 2004:2).

did not experience slavery, they still see it as part of their identity. The 'slavery identity' entails more than just acts of human rights abuse. African Americans view slavery as much more: as a social condition, a lived experience, producing a distinct way of live, a culture, a community and finally an identity (2004:77). Slavery is an explanation for the reasons why Africans are in the Americas. In this sense the traumatic experience of slavery has been given meaning.

In the emergence of 'slavery identity' the new black educated elite used the media, oral transmission and other forms of representation to rebuild the 'new' black identity. Also in this case we see that media served as a tool to connect people and to impose the ideas of one group, that of the new black elite, onto another group, the ordinary African American. Similar examples of narratives about (past) suffering and identity can be found throughout modern history.

About eight decades later after the emergence of the 'Slavery identity', Martinican psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary writer Frantz Fanon started to write about how his personal 'traumatic' experiences and the experience of black and colonized peoples affected him and triggered him to go in search of a 'new' identity. What is interesting about Fanon is the manner in which he writes about his personal experiences. As a psychiatrist he uses concepts from his profession to explain his personal suffering. For example, he describes how his body reacts every time he encounters racism: nausea, the body shivers and fear when a boy calls out "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" (1986:112) These are all physical symptoms ascribed to traumatic stress.

There are three important aspects of Fanon's writings. First, Fanon's use of a language, which belongs to the domain of his profession: psychiatry. Very graphic is the way he describes the bodily sensations he experiences as the little boy points out to him.

One of the things about trauma is that 'it', the trauma, is experienced in the form of flashbacks. The victim returns to the moment the traumatic event occurred and he re-lives it in his mind. This is could be triggered by a scent, an image or a sound which reminds the victim of his original traumatic experience. This too happens to Fanon as

he writes: “I cannot go to a film without seeing myself. I wait for me. In the interval, just before the film starts, I wait for me. The people in the theater are watching me, examining me, waiting for me. A Negro groom is going to appear. My heart makes my head swim.” (1986:140)

The original experience, as he becomes detached from the French, white community, is not fully understood by the mind. As the subject, Fanon in this case, feels as if he is put in the same situation as before, his body reacts in the same way as it did when the boy called him out.

Second, Fanon’s experience enables him to point out past suffering. Not only does he speak about his experiences as a traumatic event, but he also uses ‘trauma’ to address the issue of racism. As a victim, or patient, he wants to share his story. It is a form of traumatic storytelling, the difficult recounting of experiences of violence. The same practise, which we see in psychotherapy, we have also seen during the hearings of the TRC in South Africa. By using this Western way of psychoanalysis, the TRC put the question of race aside, which does not incorporate this. Fanon, as psychiatrist reconceptualised the idea of ‘trauma’ by placing it in a North African, colonized framework. His work proposed a shift in the objects of psychoanalysis, first from the individual to the social situation. Second, from relations in the family unit to relations between the families and the national unit. And third, and that is the most important aspect of with regards to the work of the TRC, Fanon proposed a shift from the single event, which is regarded as a traumatic, to the pervasive and diffuse inhumanity of racism and colonialism (Saunders and Aghaie, 2005:18). And exactly this has been left out by the TRC to investigate as it only looked at politically motivated acts of gross human rights violations and not viewed apartheid as a system in this light.

In the particular text of Fanon, which is quoted above, the emphasis is more or less on the individual. Fanon writes about his personal experience and about his (bodily) reaction as the little boy cries: “Mama, see the Negro!” However, in the same chapter, Fanon writes about his consolation, which he finds in the writings of Léopold Sédar Senghor: “Had I read that right?... From the opposite end of the white world a magical Negro culture was hailing me... Was this our salvation?” (1986:143)

Senghor's 'Negritude'⁸ is to Fanon an answer and a way of coping with exactly the traumatic experience Fanon writes about. Fanon embraces his connection with the black community around the globe as he writes 'our' salvation instead of 'my' salvation. Through 'Negritude', Fanon discovers his own identity and that of the community he belongs to. All the features, seemingly belonging to the black man and praised by 'Negritude', are recognized as his own and embraced by Fanon as he writes: "At last I had been recognized, I was no longer a zero." (1986:129)

Making use of a lexicon which belongs to the domain of psychiatry and linking a single (traumatic) events that highlight a larger system of racism, are examples of how Fanon uses trauma as a tool to reconstruct an identity and how a subaltern is able to do so as well.

By embracing 'Negritude' and becoming the 'Negro', Fanon reconstructs his identity and the traumatic event(s) become part of his identity. This is the third important aspect of Fanon's writings that show how 'trauma' and identity are linked.

Briefly going back to Eyerman's earlier analysis on the construction of the 'slavery identity' of African Americans, he argues that the memory of slavery would become central, not as an individual experience, but as collective memory, the trauma of slavery. This then resonates with Fanon's experience with racism, where racism and racist remarks, by that little boy, are not part of the identity of the black man per se, but are central to the collective memory of black people around the globe.

Furthermore, Fanon's struggle and quest for an identity is itself is a traumatic journey, as becomes obvious when he walks into a movie theatre. Seemingly he thought (unconsciously) that he was part of the French community (Kaplan, 1999:147), but the event made him realize he was not. Only when he discovers 'Negritude' he finally knows who he is and where he belongs.

Trauma as discursive tool

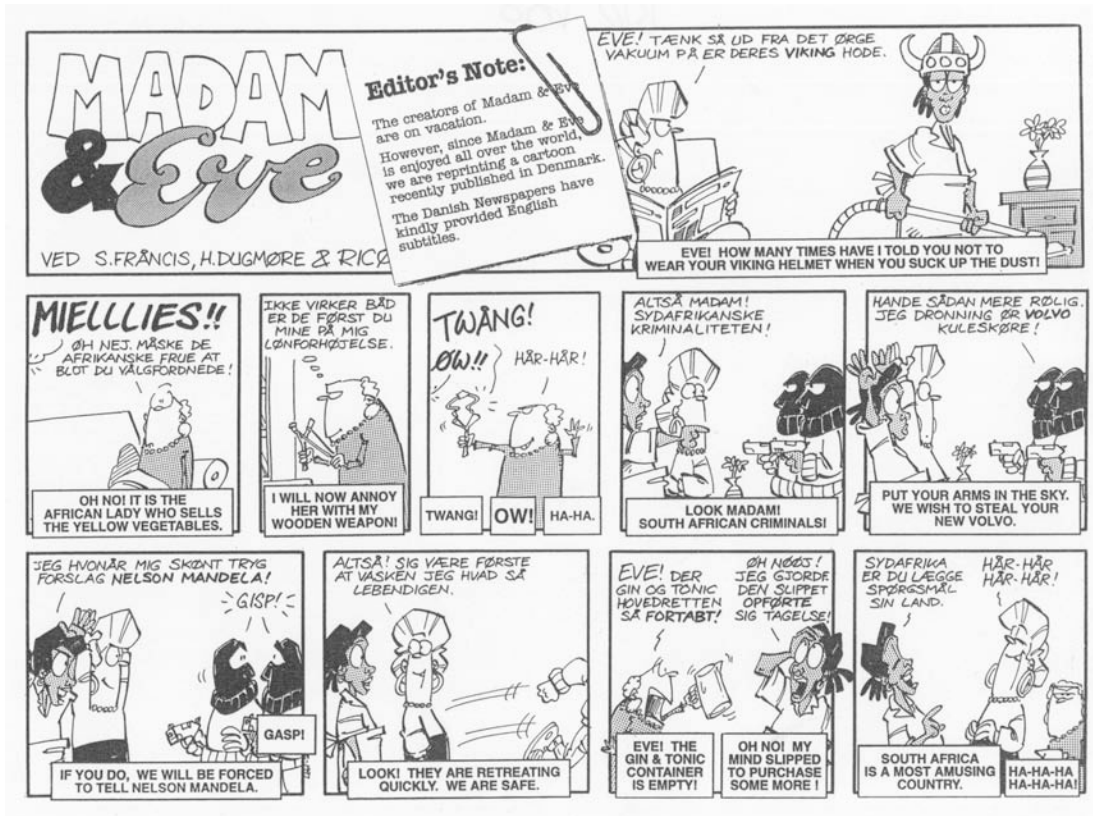
Fanon's writing is an example of how trauma can be used as a tool for the 'racial subaltern' to reconstruct an identity and to explain past suffering. However, as

⁸ Negritude is a literary and ideological movement, which started out as a "response to the modern humanism that European philosophers and scientist have been preparing since the end of the nineteenth century" (Senghor, 1993:30). Three Francophone black intellectuals initiated the movement: Léopold Sédar Senghor, who became the first president of an independent Senegal, Martician poet Aimé Césaire and Guyanese Léon Damas. To Senghor, all black people in the world form a single community because of their historical relation and experience of slavery and colonialism with the West. It is similar to Eyerman describes as the African-American identity.

previously mentioned, it is not a process dominated by ordinary people and their personal narratives. Therefore dominant actors within society largely dominate trauma discourse. They act as gatekeepers and select which narratives suit their ideas and their political agenda. Critically looking at trauma discourse and we see that it can disempower the average citizen, the subaltern and the formerly suppressed.

Fassin and Rechtman argue that, by using the words of Reinhardt Koselleck, the former historical master narrative, that of victors has become the 'historiography of the vanquished'. "Where our gaze on the past was once a celebration of days of triumph, we now look back with wounded eyes, remembering the slave trade and the effects of colonization, playing and replaying the debates that revolve around old wrongs." (2009:275) However the stories of slaves, the colonized and the victims of 'old wrongs' are placed on the periphery of the master narrative to illustrate how the 'Global North' has made a transition from perpetrator to fighter of human rights and so-called peace. In this 'new' historiography of the vanquished there is no mention of a continuation of apartheid in terms of social and economic inequality on the basis of race as the legacy of apartheid.

The following cartoon on the next page of Madam & Eve highlights the aspect of silencing in South Africa at the times of the hearings of the HRVC. It highlights the silencing of narratives of the ordinary South Africans and the amnesia of a continuation of socio-economic apartheid.



Francis, Dugmore, & Rico, 1997: 100

According to Brewer, deliberate collective amnesia or denial helps in nation building since it excludes from the national narrative items that in the present here-and-now are problematic (2006:5). He cites Nelson Mandela who was famous for saying that people needed to forget the past. According to Brewer this was not meant literally. What Mandela meant was that society should forget in order to go forward. However, what is problematic is that personal memories are silenced, in the name of nation building. There is no space in the public sphere for those personal stories to be told. Thus we can conclude that these narratives are problematic for the dominant social actors in their efforts of nation building.

I have explored examples where a dual strand of the trauma concept exists. The first concept revolves around the damaged psyche of an individual. The second, notion of trauma however, should be understood both in the way it has been used in the clinical mental health field, traces left in the psyche, and in the new popular use, as an 'open wound' in the collective memory. As a result, trauma has entered the public sphere. I have explored, by using a cartoon by Zapiro, how the idea of trauma travels into the public sphere. Apart from the subject of the cartoon, the drawing also brings the

concept of trauma into the public sphere. It illustrates how the 'second' trauma concept, which is focused on the collective trauma, is dependent on the first notion of trauma and cannot exist without it.

Because the trauma explanation has expanded, the concept can be used to create and support an identity. I have used the writings of Frantz Fanon to show how both an individual and a group use 'trauma' in search of, and as part of their identity. Lastly I have briefly analysed how powerful actors in society impose their discursive power onto the rest of society by using trauma discourse. Therefore, in the process of the (re-)creation of a (collective) identity in a trauma discourse, one has to keep in mind that due to the discursive power of trauma, ordinary people are disempowered. In the next chapter I will explore how trauma has entered the public sphere in South Africa and how it has contributed to an imagined collective identity.

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Chapter Two:

Trauma Discourse in South Africa

The rise of trauma discourse in South Africa was the result of a number of national and international discourses coming together. In the previous chapter I explored how the trauma concept evolved in the latter part of the twentieth century, and how its meaning expanded. Parallel to this process, the establishment of the reconciliation discourse became grounded, under the influence of a much bigger global human rights discourse.

In this chapter I analyse how, in a so-called ‘age of trauma’, the TRC came about and how it laid the foundations for, and shaped South African trauma discourse. The TRC came about as a result of political negotiations, which were influenced by global discourses concerning human rights and reconciliation. Therefore the TRC was not the only institution responsible for the shape of trauma discourse. As I will argue in the second part of the chapter, the media played an important role too. However, as Grunebaum argues, “[The TRC’s] operating terms have contributed in a very significant way towards occluding the structural, material and symbolic forms of everyday violence, social-economic relations of exclusion, material poverty and privilege, and the structures of continuity in which they remain embedded” (2011:18). Therefore the TRC as an institution was able to define trauma discourse of South Africa as it acted very much as a gatekeeper that determined which voices and stories, were broadcasted and what part of suffering was discussed in the public sphere.

The first part of this chapter briefly looks at how the political negotiations that led to the first democratic elections in 1994, created the TRC. As this study specifically looks at the concept of trauma entering the public sphere, it is important to look at how the concept was taken up by those parties involved in the transitional negotiations. The interim constitution can therefore be seen as a working document for the transitional period with regard to ‘nation building’ and specifically reconciliation. For this reason I will analyse the final clauses of the Interim Constitution of South Africa act No. 200 of 1993, to analyse in what manner the language of trauma was used.

Second, I will analyse the engagement of the TRC in the process of creating an imagined identity. I will look in particular at the use of the Africanist discourse of *Ubuntu*. Hence I will look at the creation of a so-called shared past which went along with the 'new' 'Rainbow Nation' identity.

It has been argued that the TRC would never have been as successful as it was, if it not for the media. At a workshop with journalists in Johannesburg in 1997, Alex Boraine, Deputy Chairman of the TRC has been quoted saying: "The TRC owes a huge debt to the media of South Africa. Without coverage's in newspapers and magazines and without the account of proceedings on TV screens and without the voice of the TRC being beamed through radio across the land, its work would be disadvantaged and immeasurably poorer." (Verdoorlaege, 2003:6). As political cartoons are part of the media it is necessary to look more closely at the engagement of the South African media with trauma discourse and in particular at the manner in which they reported on the TRC. Therefore I will conclude this chapter with an analysis of the symbiotic relationship between the TRC and the media. It is not important, however, to explore the motives for the media's behaviour during this period. Furthermore is it less important in this section to analyse to what extent the media was critical of the TRC. The critical stance towards the TRC is more important in the analysis of the cartoons in the next chapter.

The end of political apartheid

Outside of South Africa the shift from apartheid to democracy may have seemed like a smooth transition. Global common belief is that the release of Nelson Mandela after twenty-seven years of imprisonment on Robben Island, just off the coast of Cape Town, marks the end of apartheid. Although it did mark an important step in, as Mandela would say, a long walk to freedom⁹, for the majority of South Africans. According to journalist Allister Sparks, the initial steps towards dismantle of official apartheid, however, were taken years before (1995:24). In fact, five years before Mandela walked out of the gates of the Victor Vester prison in the town of Paarl, just 60 kilometres out of Cape Town, he had negotiating his freedom and the transition

⁹ This is a reference to Nelson Mandela's autobiography '*Long Walk to Freedom*' (1995).

with the apartheid government. Sparks describes in his account of the transitional period in South Africa that the first steps were already taken in November 1985. Mandela was hospitalized in the Volks Hospital in Cape Town because he developed an enlarged prostate gland. The then minister of justice, police and prison, Hendrik Jacobus Coetsee visited Mandela and as Mandela recalls in Sparks' book "[...] it was clear that he was putting out his feelers." (1995:25)

There is not one single factor that stands out as the main cause that heralded the end of political apartheid. However, the armed conflict had reached a stalemate in which a clear victory of one key party over another was unlikely (Moon, 2008:27). According to Mandela a military victory was a distant if not impossible dream, which did not make sense for either party. Therefore "it was time to talk" (Mandela, 1994: 626). By the time the Nasionale Party (National Party), went into secret talks with Mandela and later the ANC, the apartheid dream of the NP began to seriously crumble. In the same 1980s the mainstream media turned against apartheid, and began to portray the ANC and its armed activities in a somewhat sympathetic light (Maharaj, 2008:15). In 1982 hardliners within the NP, who were unhappy with party policy, broke away and started the Konserwatiewe Party (Conservative Party). As a result the NP lost extreme rightwing weight (Boonen, 2008:18). In the same years, according to Sparks, the black townships were on the boil, living standards for the white minority were declining and there was a general state of emergency (1995:5). Mandela, with the consent of the ANC leadership in exile, embarked on four years of secret talks. By 1989 more than four thousand people had been killed and over fifty thousand detained without a trial (Ibid 48).

Apart from local factors, global developments also contributed to the transition. International sanctions were being applied and the rand currency had crashed (Ibid.) Just over the border, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe became independent, respectively in 1975, 1976 and 1980. According to Maharaj, the *cordon sanitaire* that South Africa had sought to establish beyond its northern borders began to crumble. UN Resolution 435 of 1978 also opened the doors to the independence of Namibia¹⁰.

¹⁰ After the First World War, Namibia, which before its independence was known as South West Africa, was under a League of Nations mandate, after the territory was taken from German control. The Union of South Africa in charge of the administration. After the League of Nations became the United Nations, the mandate was to be

Furthermore the Commonwealth began to worry. Although United Kingdom Prime Minister at the time, Margaret Thatcher, was against sanctions against South Africa, in 1985 at the Commonwealth Conference held in Nassau on the Bahamas she did agree with the setting up of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) which went on a fact-finding mission in 1986 under the co-chairmanship of John Malcolm Fraser a former Australian Prime Minister and Olusegun Obasanjo the former military ruler of Nigeria. The two men talked both with members of the apartheid regime and the outlawed black liberation movement. But after raids of civilian homes in the capitals of Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia, the EPG aborted its mission, and the main international political players came under increasing pressure from their own citizens and within international forums (See: Maharaj, 2008; Sparks, 1995). At the height of this international pressure the world witnessed one of the largest ‘pop-political’¹¹ events of all time: the ‘Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute’¹². Denselow argues that compared to the ‘Live Aid’ concerts, the Mandela tribute was more effective in increasing political consciousness on a global scale (1990: 276).

Furthermore, in the 1980s the Soviet Union tried to reconstruct the political and economy system under the new vision known as *Perestroika*, or ‘rebuilding’. However it set in motion a chain of events, which led the end of the Cold War. And with a relaxation of state censorship in the, under the idea of *Glasnost*, which means openness, the international community saw the demise of the Soviet Union. As a result, the international attitude towards communism changed, and subsequently the South African government had to take a different stance towards communism.

transferred, however the Union of South Africa refused and controlled it as a fifth province until it became independent in 1990 after a long guerilla war for independence and international pressure.

¹¹ The term ‘Pop-political’ refers to the intersection of popular music and politics where pop musicians engage in and with political and current affairs. Hague, Street and Savigny argue that pop music and the engagement of artists with political affairs can be placed in two groups: music as a soundtrack to a political or social movement or musicians whose music not only serves as entertainment, but also act as voice for the movement they represent. (Hague, Street and Savigny, 2008:7)

¹² The Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute was an international pop music concert staged in the Wembley Stadium in London in the United Kingdom on the 11th of June 1988 and organized by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (Ketchum, n.d.). It is often referred to as the Free Nelson Mandela Concert, as reference to the song ‘Free Nelson Mandela’ by pop group The Special A.K.A. The aim of the organizers was to raise political consciousness on imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and other South African and Namibian political prisoners who were held by the apartheid regime (Ibid.).

The official line of politics was that anti-apartheid organisations such as the ANC and PAC were banned under the name of eradicating communism. The NP could thus no longer insist on the idea that communism was a threat to the country. This was yet another factor which heralded the end of apartheid. However, this should not be seen as a decisive factor because, as Adrian Guelke argues, steps towards negotiations were already set in motion before the demise of the Soviet Union (1999: 33). Coetsee visited Mandela in 1988, the same year the initial steps towards reforms were taken in the Soviet Union. The South African government, like the rest of the international community, could at the time not have anticipated global political shift *Perestroika* would bring.

Even though there were a number of changes in the air, the 2 February speech of F.W. De Klerk still came as a surprise. He did not only announce the release of Nelson Mandela, but all political prisoners. Anti-apartheid movements and political parties such as the ANC, PAC and SACP were unbanned. And those who lived in exile could return safely and negotiate a multi-party democracy. These negotiations would be concerned with issues of majority rule versus power sharing, management of transition and the direction in which South Africa was heading. At these negotiations, principles what would lead to the establishment of the TRC were discussed.

Negotiating Truth and Reconciliation

The negotiations took place within a forum which was called the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which was a series of meetings between the then government (led by the NP), the ANC the IFP and others. CODESA lasted until 1992.

Before I start explaining how the Interim Constitution contributed to trauma discourse and how the language of trauma was used in the early period of transition, I briefly want to look at international discourses regarding human rights and the global truth commission's discourse.

Global truth commissions' discourse

Though today the South African TRC is by far the most prominent truth commission to date, it was not the first initiative taken to deal with past atrocities in a transitional

society. In 1984 Argentina's 'National Commission on the Disappeared' began with similar work. Robertson argues that the development of truth commissions happened parallel to the post-World War II development of an international consensus on the importance of holding perpetrators, including state officials, accountable for gross human rights violations, crimes against humanity and genocide. (Robertson, 2006)

Similar to the concept of trauma, there are multiple genealogies of truth commission's discourse. First, the popularization of trauma and the language of trauma made truth commissions, which deal with the individual trauma, but more importantly the collective trauma, important institutions to deal with the 'wound' of the collective memory. Second, the global popularization and recognition of human rights demands an institution that deals with the victims of atrocities, thus truth commissions. Lastly, the global dynamic of the expanding web of researchers and journalists documenting and investigating political violence and demanding traumatic narratives made truth commissions the perfect archive to acquire these narratives. I will focus on the first two elements.

The fact that the TRC invested heavily in traumatic storytelling was part of the broader globalization of psychiatric knowledge about trauma (Colvin, 2008). Furthermore, in the 1980s and early 1990s the South African case was taken up internationally not only by international political powers, but also by the public, given the success of the 'Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute' and the ever-growing international anti-apartheid movement. Therefore it is not surprising that the focus on human rights became so prominent, when the political apartheid system was dismantled and the world welcomed South Africa with open arms.

The particular focus on human rights stems from a shift in the way we have come to see victims. According to Fassin and Rechtman, internationally, especially in the 'Global North', victims have become the very embodiment of our common humanity (2009, 23). Traumatized victims are no longer weak members of society, but part of our collective consciousness, who need healing if we want our collective memory to be healed. This new relationship with the victim is the result of a new relation with time and memory, according to Fassin and Rechtman the psychological concept of trauma enables us to give a name to this relationship (Ibid 276) Truth commissions are the

tools that determine and define this relationship. They are the gatekeepers who decide which voices are heard and which voices and narratives are silenced. Silencing occurs in different ways in different instances, but generally, the fact that truth processes by truth commissions seek to identify human rights abuses or political atrocities (as in the South African case) these processes must be seen as form of silencing. They silence other kinds of suffering, no matter how extensive or severe. The fact that truth commissions mainly look at human rights abuses shows its connection to human rights discourse. Furthermore, in the South African case, the inclusion of those in the realm of victims, but who were not victims of apartheid but in fact beneficiaries, displaced the fact that apartheid (thus the political system which was traumatic) was based on race and that victims became victims as a result of racial discrimination and in this process their human rights were violated.

The emergence of the second element of trauma, with the focus on the collective memory, has made the past, if not treated 'properly', a burden for the future. In other words, it becomes a hurdle to overcome in the process of nation building. As mentioned, the end of the Cold War was not a factor for the apartheid regime to release Nelson Mandela, however, it did mean changes for South Africa. According to Grunebaum, notions of 'development', 'democracy' and 'good governance' are qualifying conditions for a country in transition such as South Africa, to be integrated into the global economy (2011:19). The way to reach the goals set by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund is and was through truth commissions.

Interim Constitution

After the release of Nelson Mandela and removing the ban on political parties such as the ANC, PAC and SACP, negotiations about the future of South Africa started. During these meetings a transitional constitution was drafted. The Interim Constitution was agreed upon and enacted by Parliament. This constitution also facilitated the first democratic elections in 1994. Furthermore the constitution also stated that the foundations of South Africa's new democracy would rest upon the investigation and redress of abuses perpetrated during apartheid. One key aspect of the talks was the issue of how to deal with human rights violations perpetrated under the apartheid regime. What often remains hidden, however, is the fact that the TRC

acted as a commission to get a clear overview of those who could qualify for amnesty, as agreed upon during CODESA. This fact plays a key role in the way perpetrators were treated in comparison to victims and the families of these victims. There are two conclusions one can draw. First, the main reason for the inception of the TRC had less to do with the victims of apartheid, as it may seem on the surface. The TRC was a mean to reach the envisioned goal, which was amnesty as agreed in the meetings of CODESA. Second, and this resonates with the political aspect of the TRC, the commission were to deal with a political compromise made between those who were part of CODESA. 'Healing' of the nation and 'overcoming' personal trauma through traumatic storytelling was thus less an objective of the TRC as intended by parties at CODESA. And thirdly, as mentioned before, the TRC only looked at cases of gross human rights violations if they were politically motivated.

It was the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995 that instituted the TRC¹³. The main task of the TRC was to: investigate so-called acts of 'gross human rights violations', which were committed during a 34-year span between 1 March 1960 to 10 May 1994. The TRC were to create an as clear as possible picture of what happened that specified period. Furthermore, the TRC granted amnesty to perpetrators of human rights violations who came forth and fully confessed to their acts. For victims and their relations, the TRC took measurements aimed at granting reparations. And finally, which gave the TRC so much prominence, offering victims and relations of victims the opportunity to testify to their suffering during the specified period.

However the TRC, amnesty and the language around reconciliation and human rights were already put in the final clauses of the Interim Constitution of South Africa act No. 200 of 1993, two years earlier:

This constitution provides a historic bridge between the past of a *deeply divided* **society** characterized by *strife, conflict untold suffering and injustice* and a **future** founded on the recognition of **human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence** and **development opportunities for all South Africans**, irrespective of **colour, race, class, belief or sex**.

¹³ See <http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1995-034.pdf> (retrieved on 6 November 2011)

The pursuit of **national unity, the well-being** of all South African citizens and **peace** require **reconciliation** between **the people of South Africa** and the **reconstruction** of society.

The adoption of this Constitution lays the **secure foundations** for **the people of South Africa** to *transcend the divisions and strife of the past*, which generated *gross violations of human rights, the transgression of humanitarian principles in violent conflicts and a legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge*.

These can now be addressed on the basis that there is a need for **understanding** but not for *vengeance*, a need for **reparation** but not for *retaliation*, a need for **ubuntu** (**the African philosophy of humanism**) but not for *victimization*.

In order to **advance** such **reconciliation** and **reconstruction, amnesty** shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions and offences associated with political objectives and committed in the course of the *conflicts* of the past. To this end, parliament under this Constitution shall adopt a law determining a firm cut-off date, which shall be after 8 October 1990 and before 6 December 1993, and providing for mechanisms, criteria and procedures, including tribunals, if any, through which such amnesty shall be dealt with at any time after the law has been passed.

With this Constitution and these commitments **we, the people of South Africa** open a new chapter in the history of **this country**.¹⁴

The Interim Constitution illustrates how the South African state and those responsible for the direction, in which the transition was heading at an early stage, used a language that would contribute to trauma discourse of South Africa. It is this lexicon that became the vocabulary of trauma discourse in South Africa. Furthermore, it is the same lexicon, which entered the public sphere and the homes of those formally not familiar with the trauma concept as known in the ‘Global North’.

The first paragraph speaks of a deeply divided ‘nation’, even though pre-1994 South Africa cannot be regarded as a nation, in which the connection between people did not exist. Furthermore the state did not regard and recognise all citizens to be full citizens of the ‘nation’. This, according to the text, is the result of ‘strife, conflict untold suffering and injustice’. However, the text does not give an actual explanation of the roots of the past conflict. It regards it as a closed epoch.

¹⁴ I have highlighted the aspects of the Interim Constitution that refer to a particular notion or concept within the human rights discourse. The words highlighted in *italics* refer to the past and negative aspects of this closed epoch. The words in **bold** speak about the ‘new’ identity of South Africa, while the words that are underlined, refer to the future and the future development of South Africa. Finally, the words that are both **bold and underlined**, speak in and about the human rights discourse.

The constitutional text speaks of the apartheid past in terms of a history and a closed chapter that should be 'embraced', rather than forgotten. This is essential, as apartheid becomes a common past, which in turn becomes the basis of the 'new common identity'.

This part of the Interim Constitution also silences the voices of those who suffered under apartheid, as it speaks of the 'trauma of the nation' as if all South Africans experienced apartheid in the same manner. As if every South African, black and white, were victim of the system. Those who benefitted from other people's inferior positions, for example the 'services' of domestic workers, were now included in the same category of victim as those who indeed suffered from this system. And therefore this text and trauma discourse, to a certain degree, was a continuation of injustice in the sense that the traumas of the victims were trivialized. The sentence "In order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction, amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions and offences associated with political objectives and committed in the course of the conflicts of the past", pushes the victims of apartheid to the margins of the process and makes amnesty central to the process. Only because of amnesty reconciliation and reconstruction can be achieved, according to the text. Thus only if the perpetrators are rehabilitated, the country and the victims can move forward.

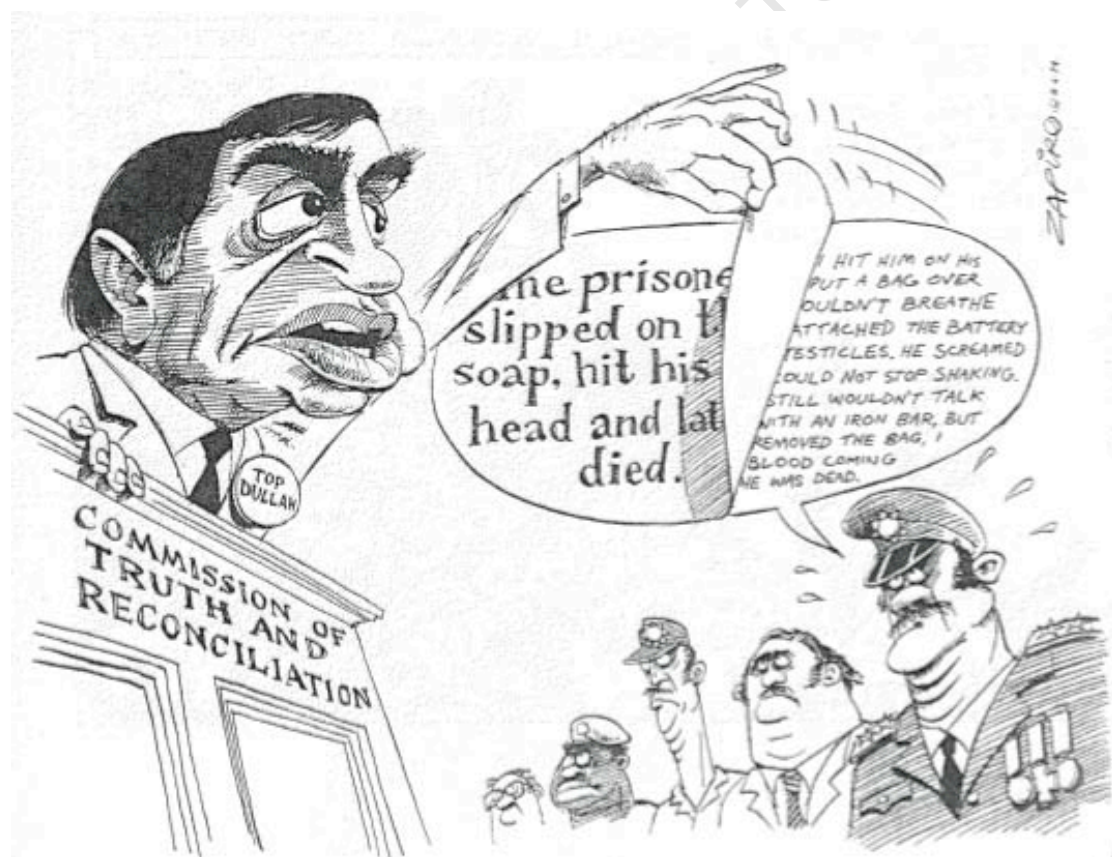
Apart from the fact that the text creates a false idea of a traumatized society, it also creates a false image of the 'past', as if the 'new' South Africa after centuries of colonization and apartheid can return to an imagined past in which all people lived in harmony. Furthermore, the text puts emphasis on apartheid as a shared traumatic history and as a starting point and basis for the new restructured society it envisions: 'We are South Africans, because, we experienced apartheid'. To a certain degree this resonates with the creation of the African American 'slavery identity'. Yet, unlike the case of African Americans, where collective identity first needed articulation and acceptance by those it was meant to incorporate, South Africans were forced upon a 'new' collective identity, and the interim constitution is proof of that.

Another important element of the text is that, according to the Interim Constitution, in the 'new' South Africa there was no place for victimization. This is a remarkable

feature because the hearings of the HRVC were highly emotional and focussed on the trauma of the victims who suffered from human rights violations under apartheid. The victims were put on display as the focal point of the events surrounding the hearings.

It is in this piece of text that I consider the seed for South Africa's trauma discourse was planted. Many of the linguistic elements that were later used by the TRC and its chairman Desmond Tutu can be retraced to this clause of the Interim Constitution. Subsequently other actors such as the media reproduced them in the creation of South Africa's trauma discourse.

I would like to conclude this section with a cartoon of Zapiro on the next page. It is a cartoon that was created in 1994 and which fits in my argument.



Villa-Vincencio and Du Toit, 2006: 131

This drawing pictures Dullah Omar, Minister of Justice at the time. He peels back the veneer of the official jargon that hid the real story of what happened to the thousands of victims of apartheid. This drawing is interesting because of its emphasis on language: the 'official' language that would eventually shape trauma discourse.

Though the cartoons addresses the official language used by members of the apartheid regime, it illustrates the importance of language in relation to trauma discourse.

So far we have seen that the South African government placed a high importance on reconciliation and how it should have been achieved. In doing so they created and established the basis of trauma discourse in South Africa. Next, I will explore the notion of 'Ubutu'. This became an important imagined idea in the transitional period and corresponded with the creation of a 'new' collective identity.

Ubuntu

One of the most heard words during the period of transition and after was the word Ubuntu. The Interim Constitution invoked the concept in 1993: "there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for Ubuntu (the African philosophy of humanism) but not for victimization." However, it was the TRC's chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu who reiterated Ubuntu to a point that it became 'his' phrase.

The word Ubuntu can be traced back to a number of Niger-Congo languages.¹⁵ However, the notion of Ubuntu refers to an isiXhosa proverb in Southern Africa: "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu", meaning, "A human being is a human being only through its relationship to other human beings"(Marx, 2002:52). In general Ubuntu could be described, as "I am because you are." Tutu himself explains in his personal account of his experience as chairman of the TRC: "Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a western language" (1999: 31). Ubuntu is seen as an essential element of African societies, which places the emphasis on the group, unlike the focus on the individual as in many modern Western societies.

Ubuntu as an African discourse stresses the centrality of community, social cohesion and solidarity to identity and humanity. Notably these elements were picked up by the new government to promote the work of the TRC. Ubuntu and the TRC were both

¹⁵ Niger-Congo languages form the largest language family in sub-Saharan Africa. South African languages such as isiXhosa and isiZulu belong to the Niger-Congo language family, together with more than a thousand other languages, such as Kiswahili, Lingala and Kikuyu (Webb and Kembo – Sure, 2000:33)

opposed to retribution because it opposes the core values that lie at the heart of the discourse. Ubuntu was in fact a mechanism to inspire black South Africans, those most affected by apartheid, and to confine them and their culture in the discourse of non-retribution and reconciliation. It became a way to deny any form of vengeance in the process of ‘reconciling with the past’ and to highlight the notion of a ‘common humanity’. In terms of a discourse, Ubuntu served to tie a large group of people to one idea, which could be subsequently tied to another idea, that of reconciliation and thus, conveying the message that the TRC was inherently ‘African’.

The Interim Constitution clearly stated that, in the ‘new’ South Africa, there is no place for victimization. However, the efforts to incorporate Ubuntu within the western epistemology of human rights, truth and reconciliation are yet signs of some form of victimization. Ubuntu evokes an idea of a lost and forgotten past that was stripped of the African communities by centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid. Particularly, the system of apartheid, which had the power to destroy the social fabric and not so much the acts of human rights violations, investigated by the TRC. Thus, Ubuntu created a distorted image of an imagined identity. When a traumatic event occurs and affects either a person or collective it is important to note that ‘things’ will never and can never return to how they were before the event occurred (Kaplan, 2005:19). Thus the imagined society with the idea of Ubuntu at its heart is a false image.

Ubuntu also raises questions in terms of that identity. If the mother of a murdered son calls for retribution for her son who was murdered, to what extent is she African? Marx argues that Ubuntu argues for ‘inclusion’ through its goal of harmony and unity. However, it covertly supports a doctrine of ‘exclusion’, since it fosters identity building, and, for Marx, “identity can only be established through difference”. This again shows how the notion of Ubuntu must be seen as a tool to popularize the work of the TRC. Especially with those most affected by apartheid and those who tried to argue for retribution, rather than reconciliation.

The TRC and the media

I have stressed the importance of the media in trauma discourse. In this section I will explore the role of the media with trauma discourse in South Africa trauma. The

media and the TRC were inseparable during the hearings of the HRVC and the Amnesty Hearings, because of the amount of high profile ‘famous’ people who testified. Therefore it is more than evident that the media played a role in this process (Verdoorlaege, 2003).

Political cartoons by their nature are part of the mass media. Not only do they appear in the printed mass media, but, more importantly, cartoons serve also as a tool to convey a message to a large public. This reflects, to a great extent, the ideology or opinions of the newspapers.

There is a wide range of academic writing that explores the relationship between the media and the TRC. Academics have analysed newspapers, magazines and television programs in which the TRC received extensive coverage. It is not surprising then that Deputy Chairman of the TRC, Alex Boraine, stated that the TRC owes a huge debt to the media of South Africa. Boraine’s views are a testimony to how the TRC had to rely on the media to get its message across. Without the media the TRC would not have been as successful as it was.

The commission, aware of the symbioses, actively encouraged the relationship by issuing press releases on hearings, amnesty decisions and other relevant information on a regular basis. Hence forward, the media, with a few exceptions, became the mouthpiece of the TRC.

For the media the TRC was an interesting event that offered them years of touching and ‘emo-tv’¹⁶, which turned the events into public spectacle. Verdoorlaege argues it is highly possible that people will especially remember this aspect of the TRC while the real significant and maybe more important facet of the TRC’s work will get lost. (2003:7). Therefore, with regards to the coverage of the TRC, the mass media with exceptions, was not fully objective and independent in its reporting on the TRC, given the fact that the media became a voice for the commission.

¹⁶ ‘Emo-tv’ refers to ‘emotional television’ programs, which focuses on the emotions of the people in the program as a way to entertain, but also to trigger empathy with the audience (De Meyer, 1998: 71)

Kabrill argues that the TRC became a 'media event'. He does so by using Dayan and Katz's analytical framework who argue that a media event is a "new narrative genre that employs the unique potential of the (electronic)¹⁷ media to command attention universally and simultaneously in order to tell a primordial story about current affairs." (Krabill, 2001:569).

Dayan and Katz have identified a number of elements in order to identify whether or not an event can be called a media event. Kabrill lists them as follows in his analysis of the TRC as media event: live broadcasting of the TRC hearings, which interrupted routine broadcasting; being pre-planned, which most of the hearing were; having some sort ceremonial element to it. According to Kabrill the opening prayers and lighting of candles by Archbishop Tutu were these ceremonial elements; and finally the fact that the TRC was enthralling for much of South Africa and beyond is the final element, which makes the TRC a media event.

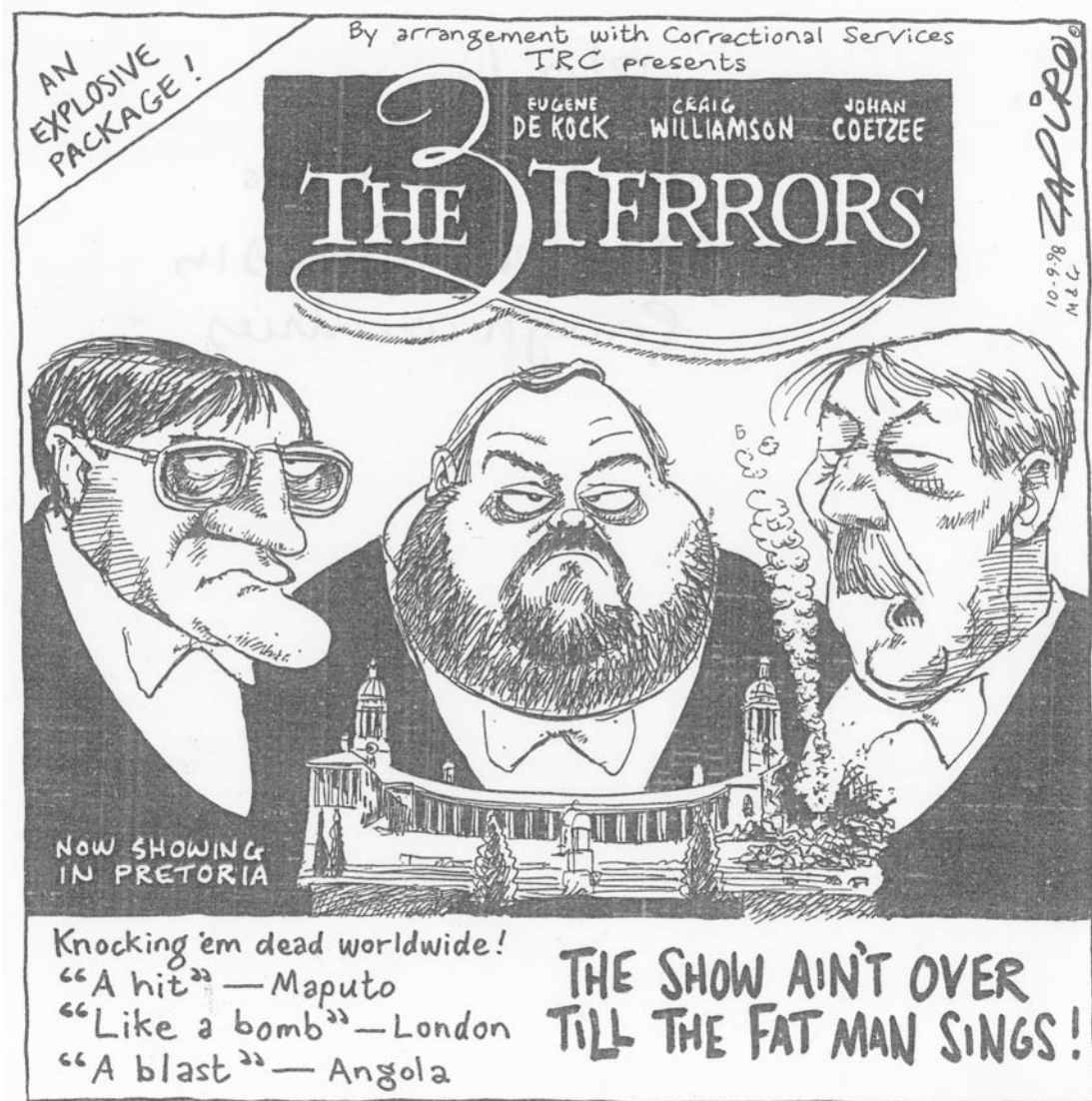
As a result, Dayan and Katz argue, media events, have the ability to shape "our collective consciousness" (Ibid: 570). However, in the South African context in the transitional period and with regards to the works of the TRC, it is not so much a matter of shaping a collective consciousness, but rather a re-shaping of that consciousness. The re-shaping of the South African collective consciousness was a process during the period of nation building and transition, in which the government, with the TRC as the most important actor, sought to bring about a change in the way South Africans ought to perceive 'the past' in order to 'move forward'. They did so by using the TRC as an institution and the language of trauma as a way to institutionalise an idea they wanted to achieve. The media picked this up and thus became the active agency to reshape the collective consciousness. Displacing the fact that great injustice was done to a large percentage of South Africans. The investigation of politically motivated human rights abuses resulting in 'bodily trauma', within the scope of the TRC's investigation, is one such example. All the other forms of injustice and traumatic experiences, such as forced removals, pass laws and the general fear in which people lived on a daily basis, did not fit this description and was thus not part of the 'traumatic past' and was moved to the periphery of the collective

¹⁷ Not only electronic media, but also print media, television and radio.

past. The media, both national and international, created a black and white image of victims and perpetrators. Specifically perpetrators were detached from the large state apparatus, which was central to the workings of the state security machine.

The following Zapiro cartoon on the next page addresses this issue. Three men Eugene de Kock, Craig Williamson and Johan Coetzee are presented as ‘The Three Terrors’¹⁸. At first glance the cartoon conveys the idea that these three men are the only three men who are responsible for the thousands of victims of the grand apartheid security apparatus. However, what Zapiro is doing is reconnect them to the state by placing the Union Building right at the centre of the cartoon. The captions all refer to crimes committed by the tree. The caption ‘The show ain’t over till the fat man sings!’ is a reference to Craig Williamson who never really ‘sang’ but did get away with amnesty (Villa-Vicencio and Du Toit, 2006: 135)

¹⁸ The Three Terrors refers to the Three Tenors, a trio of singers, consisting of Italian Luciano Pavarotti and Spanish Plácido Domingo and José Carreras. They gained popularity in the 1990s and were a big commercial success. The cartoon was published during the hearings of the Amnesty Committee, about atrocities committed by apartheid forces, held in Pretoria. It coincided with a concert of the Three Tenors in Pretoria.



Shapiro, 1998: 6

The South African media “compelled people to discuss a common issue”, namely reconciliation (Krabill, 2001:570). It all happened with a vocabulary that became the language of trauma discourse and continued to feed it. Phrases like ‘the healing of a nation’, ‘closure’, ‘working through the past’, ‘the trauma of apartheid’ and ‘national catharsis’ were part of an emerging political rhetoric about apartheid – and about the new political moment. Post-apartheid trauma discourse created new concepts for South Africans to translate their personal stories and enable the media to translate these and make them understandable for other members of society. Krabill argues that prior to the TRC one would be hard-pressed to find the phrase ‘gross violations of human rights’ in public usage in the country. (Ibid: 570).

An example of a re-shaped collective consciousness is illustrated in a passage of the former TRC commissioner Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's account of interviews she held with Eugene de Kock. She describes how two widows of men allegedly murdered by De Kock wished to meet the former head of the security police and who were able to forgive him. In terms of re-shaping the collective consciousness, it conveys the message that if two women can forgive the one who was dubbed 'Prime Evil' of the apartheid regime, then anyone can and must be able to reconcile with the 'past'. Again, as the media dubbed De Kock 'Prime Evil' and this nickname found its way into the public sphere, he was disconnected from the security apparatus as if he acted by himself and for himself.

The restructuring of the collective consciousness as an outcome of a media event suggests that the media acquired some sort of power to construct and shape a trauma discourse. According to the Critical Discourse Analysis (Verdoolaege, 2003) power and ideology are intertwined and social groups try to impose their ideology on the rest of society. They do so by making their ideology and discourses look natural in order to maintain their discursive power that goes hand in hand with their social, economical and political power. The media and other social institutions such as schools, and legal institutions (the TRC), offer the means to enable those in power to impose their discourse. The media, with its power to persuade and manipulate people is thus both discursive as can create discourses, and they are ideological, as they impose a particular way of thinking onto their audience (Allan 1998: 112)

For example: a long close up of a crying mother in front of the commission, who after fifteen years still does not know what happened to her son juxtaposed with the head of a newspaper article, stating in Afrikaans "Tutu se bieg en liegkommissie" (Tutu's commission of confessing and lying)? (Du Plessis, 1998: 56). Both examples have a way of either implying a subjective idea with regards to the TRC or evoking a feeling or sentiment. This implies that the media are not objective platforms, but rather outlets with an ideology. (See: Hayman and Tomaselli, 1987 and Boonen, 2008).

Apart from ideology, the mainstream, commercial mass media carries and conveys the dominant political and public discourse. In the case of South Africa, a trauma discourse. In this chapter I have explored the coming about of the TRC within a

global human rights discourse. I have looked specifically at the Interim Constitution, as I consider it to be the seed of the South African trauma discourse. Most of the vocabulary used during the transitional period and in trauma discourse can be retraced to the Interim Constitution. In order to popularize the work of the TRC and reconciliation in particular, the notion of Ubuntu was introduced. However, what it did was to create a false sense of identity and a false sense of an imagined past. An important platform in the creation of a discourse is the media. In this chapter I have argued that there was a symbiotic relationship between the media and the TRC, which resulted in the re-shaping of the collective consciousness. In the next chapter I will analyse how political cartoons, as part of the mass media, convey messages, and thus how they operated in, and contributed to, trauma discourse of South Africa in the transitional period.

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Chapter Three:

Political Cartooning in South Africa

Political cartooning, editorial cartooning, or just cartooning in short, has a specific purpose in society. Through simple visual codes, humour and critique it is able to strike a cord in political and social sphere, thus society. Cartoons function as independent actors in these spaces and are therefore able to be critical of the way these domains function.

In this chapter I will look at how political cartoons operate and more specifically, how South African political cartoons engaged with trauma discourse at the time of the hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee. I will do so by looking at three specific features of cartooning: the manner in which they communicate a message, the way in which they ridicule politicians and members of the public and socio-political processes and events. And finally I will look at how political cartoons in their own ways contribute to the discourse of traumatic storytelling in South Africa.

Political cartoons are often overlooked because of their ‘simplicity’ and humorous tone. However, in their own ways and by their own means they have contributed to an archive, which eventually became the source of a ‘new collective identity’ of South Africa. It is the same archive in where we find the narratives of stories told in front of the HRVC that were later retold and reused by the mass media and which too became the ground basis for the identity of the ‘new South Africa’.

Throughout this chapter I will use a number of examples of the cartoons I selected for this study. However, these cartoons are not analysed in detail, as they mainly serve as an illustration to my arguments. I have chosen them though as the cartoonists who I analyse in this study created them, in the time span I have set out for this study. In the next chapter I will look more specific at the specific individual features of the cartoonists. But first I want to look at political cartooning more general.

Communicating through cartoons

Though cave paintings can be arguably be described as the first ‘cartoons’, as way to communicate and give meaning to the environment around mankind, it wasn’t until the 19th century that political cartooning really developed and became part of the media and thus becoming the editorial cartoons we got to know it in Europe and North America. It was the British anti-royalist satirical magazine *Punch* which publicized a set of cartoons by John Leech, in which he ridiculed Prince Alfred (Vernon, 2000:10). Interestingly, it is in the same period that cartooning, as way of ridiculing, found its way to Southern Africa. Although the first ‘South African’ cartoons were used to criticize the British government’s 1820 settlements scheme and were highly racist (Mason, 2010:20). The first true political cartoons in South Africa, published in a magazine, appeared in *The Zingari* in 1870 and soon other magazines followed (Vernon, 2000:13).

Political cartoons have a number of characteristics. As mentioned, humour is one of them. It is often a mixture between cynicism and satire. Cartoons also make use of stereotypes and oversimplified opinions, conceptions and images. This is called a caricature, which is an exaggerated representation of reality, as cartoons have to be immediately recognizable for the reader. Therefore cartoons, depending on the cartoonist, are often simple in their drawing style and the cartoonist has to rely on symbols. Though certainly not in all cases, cartoonists often use captions, to ascribe more meaning to the cartoon and thus the message.

Multiplicity of the message

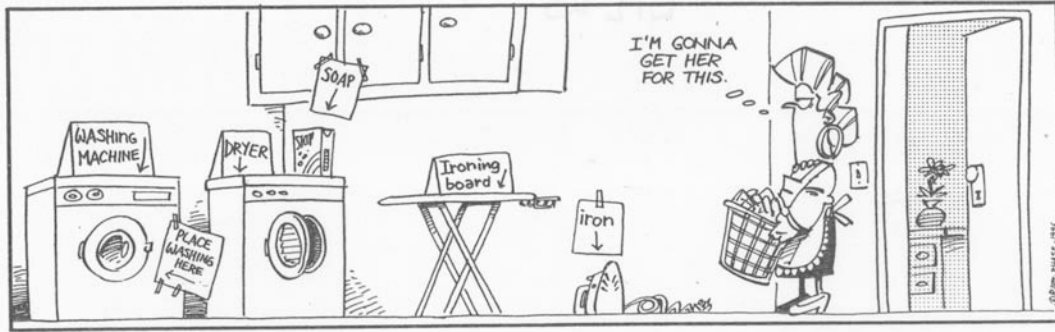
As a whole, a cartoon is a form of communication, a message a cartoonist wants to put across. An additional feature to the characteristics of cartoons is that the message can be multi-layered, meaning that the cartoon can contain a number of messages. A cartoon can have a general narrative about a contested issue in society at a given moment. The cartoonist can mock or criticize this issue and the actors involved. However, a close reading of a cartoon can reveal additional messages in the form of a second, or even third, narrative or a symbol, which represents the cartoonist’s critique of the issue.

Political cartoonists take bits and pieces and symbols of political messages and, or,

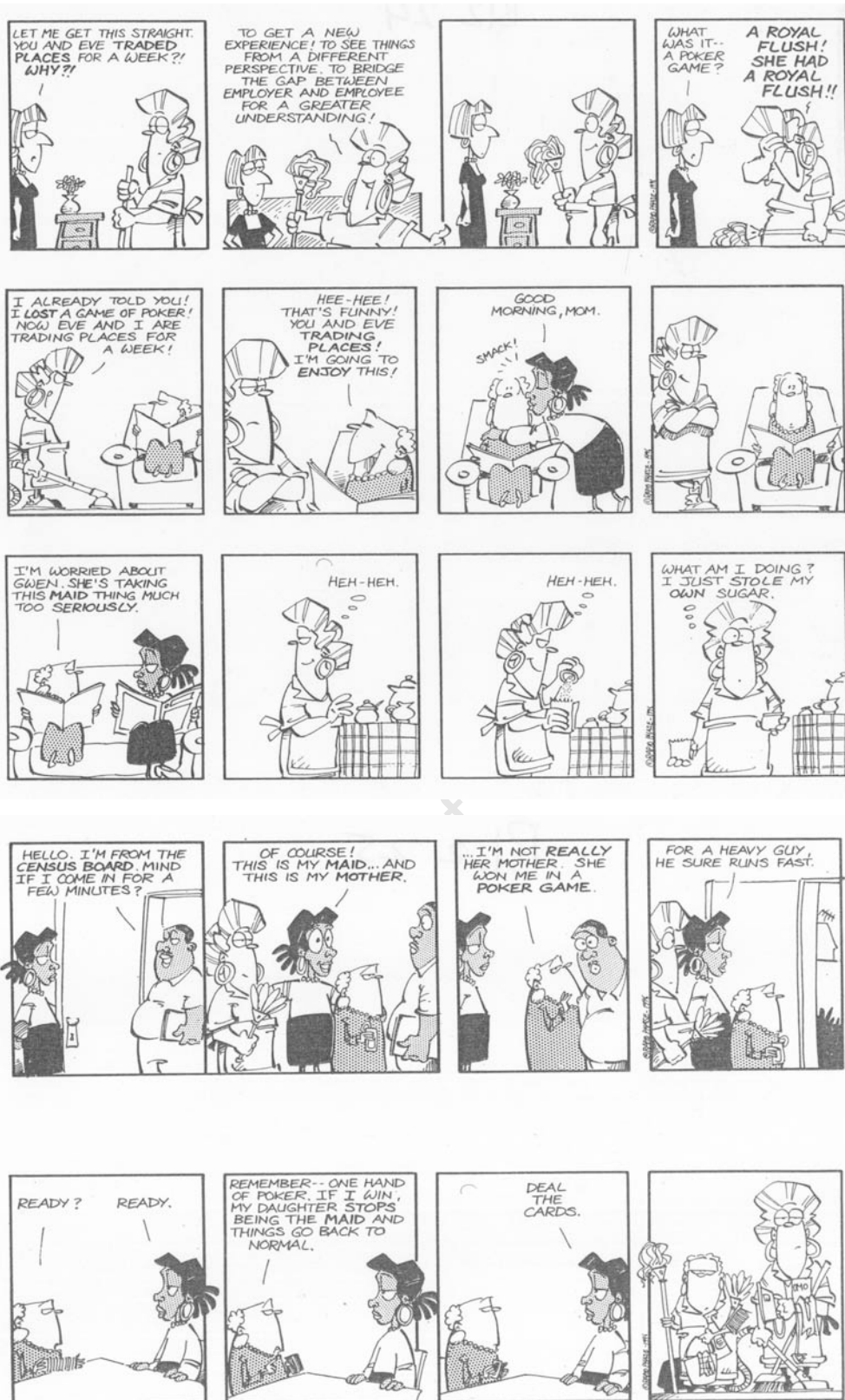
elements of the social sphere and use these to critique that very same political and social domain. The following Madam & Eve cartoon does not only address the issue of the continued, distorted relationship between domestic worker and madams in South Africa, it also contests it. As a result, the cartoonists become actors in the very same domains that they are criticising. Meaning that they position themselves on the periphery of the public sphere from where they observe and subsequently create a space for the reader and other actors to critically engage with the issues they address and contest.

Let us look at a cartoon of Madam & Eve on the next two pages. Gwen Anderson, the madam of the cartoon, and Eve, the maid, trade places for a week after the latter won a game of poker. Gwen has a hard time dealing with, and adapting to the situation, as working as a maid is more difficult than she has expected. The general, overall story is that things are not always as easy as it seems: working as a maid and winning a game of poker. However, in one of the scenes Mother Anderson¹⁹, challenges Eve for a new game of poker to 'free' Gwen. She then says: "Remember...one hand of poker. If I win, my daughter stops being the maid and things go back to normal." Obviously she loses and becomes the maid for a week alongside her daughter.

¹⁹ Initially Mother Anderson was introduced as Abigail Anderson. However, in 1995 a twin sister was introduced by the name of Edith. However, after a year, Mother Abigail Anderson became known as Edith Anderson.



Univer



Francis, Dugmore, & Rico, 1997: 23 – 25

This particular cartoon at first glance seems to have one general story. However, the cartoon has multiple sub-stories and, depending on how one reads the cartoon, there can also be multiple interpretations of the message the cartoonist wants to convey.

The issue that is not contested in the main narrative, however, is the understanding of 'normality' and how Gwen and Mother Anderson experience this. In the setting of the cartoon 'normal' means the subordinate position of Eve as a domestic worker and the superior position Gwen and Mother Anderson have over her. It is a highly skewed economic relationship, which has prevailed since colonial times and continues to exist in 'post apartheid' South Africa (Mason, 2010: 158). Therefore the second reading of the cartoon is more critical and contests the unequal, Self versus Other dichotomy between domestic worker and employer. The Self, Gwen and Mother Anderson, perceive their lives as normal and the lives of Eve and other black domestic workers as abnormal. Furthermore, to them, it is abnormal that a black woman can enjoy the life (style), which they have.

However, one can have an opposite reading of the underlying critical message of the cartoonist. This proves that depending on how one reads one can have a different interpretation and understanding of the cartoon. This accords with Nyamnjoh's views on how cartoons are likely to mean different things to different groups [...] depending on their social positions. (2009:106). Because the fact that Eve not only prevails over her direct employer, but also from Mother Anderson, suggests that (black) people in a subordinate position can achieve a form of power. Even though the game of poker between Gwen and Eve is not depicted in the cartoon, the reader can assume that, contrary to the 'normal' situation, in that specific moment both women enjoyed an equal amount of power. Both women agreed to a status quo, the terms and rules of the game and the reward. The same counts for the mother who negotiates for her daughter to be 'freed'.

The example above shows how cartoonists communicate their message and how they use satire and, in this case clear stereotypes, to provoke thoughts. The Madam & Eve cartoon also demonstrates how the meaning of the message can come across differently depending on the recipient. So what could be criticism for one reader could be an insult or a meaningless message for another.

According to Mulkay, the recipient must be able to make some kind of serious reading by linking the cartoon to the wider political or social context of which it forms a part

(1988: 197). Thus, the general message of the cartoon, ‘nothing is as easy as it seems’, will be understood by a person who has no deep understanding of the power relationship between black domestic workers and their employers in contemporary South Africa. However, for that person it will be more difficult to fully comprehend the thought-provoking message of the cartoonists behind Madam & Eve in this particular example.

Communicating the hidden message

Even though Madam & Eve represent a social reality, the majority of the characters are fictional and so are the majority of the narratives. Most political cartoons, however, are more factual compared to the weekly adventures of the domestic worker and her employer. These political cartoons use symbols and humour in a slightly different way. They tend to be highly personalised. In these cases cartoons become an even more serious actor in the political and social sphere (Mulkay, 1988: 199). Lawrence Streicher analyses that political cartoons deal with the ridicule, debunking or exposure of persons, groups and organizations engaged in power struggles in society (1967: 432). These cartoons are positioned less on the periphery of the public sphere, as they are more actively engaged with the issues and actors involved in power struggles.

An example of a highly personalised cartoon is that of Nanda Soobben where he depicts Nelson Mandela and a group of ‘criminals’ on the next page.



Soobben, 1998: 8

The then president was confronted with a high crime rate and subsequent fears of, mainly white, South Africans. In the cartoon you see Nelson Mandela looking worriedly over his shoulder. In the background a group of six ‘criminals’ is pictured. Four of them are holding a weapon and two are holding bags with obvious stolen goods in them, most likely full of money as on one of the bags the letters SBV are written²⁰. One of the criminals says to Nelson Mandela: “Don’t worry, Madiba, we are staying...we are not cowards!”²¹ It is obvious that the character Mandela in the picture does not want the country to be run by these criminals or for crime to have an effect on him running the country.

There are two issues which Soobben addresses. The first one is Mandela in a ‘power struggle’ and more specifically Mandela in a power struggle with the issue of crime. The high levels of ‘crime’ have been serious issue in South Africa, even today. Though many factors contribute to the level of violence in South Africa, inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization are some of the major factors (CSVR, 2010:3). During the days of apartheid the state focused on protecting the

²⁰ SVB is an abbreviation for Standard Barclays and Volkskas banks. SBV is a company that provides cash services to the bank industry in South Africa.

²¹ Nelson Mandela is often addressed as Madiba. It refers to the Madiba clan of which he is part. Calling someone by his clan name is a sign of respect (Mandela, 1994:4).

white minority in the country and repressing the resistance. The regime neglected the townships and as a result criminal groups and a crime culture came to be established in these areas (CSVR, 2009: 7).

Furthermore crime in South Africa is often cited to be the inheritance of apartheid. Violence is seen as a necessary and justified means of resolving conflict or other difficulties. This, however, does not mean that crime became worse post-1994, as the focus of containing forms of crime, (resistance to apartheid and protection of whites) shifted. This is the reason why 'crime' itself became a factor in the struggle for power, which is highlighted by the cartoonist from Durban.

The second issue Soobben addresses is the issue of so-called 'white fear'. He does that with the caption "[...] We are staying...we are not cowards!" 'Cowards' refers to the white South Africans who wanted to leave the country because of the high crime rate in the country. Soobben plays with the fact that crime has been prevalent in townships and under the black population of South Africa, pre-1994. However, 'white fear' rested on more than solely the high crime rate. According to Mason, white South Africans were taught to expect and fear the moment of ultimate retribution. Something, which was totally the opposite of the message of reconciliation the TRC carried across. The ultimate moment of retribution would be a 'judgement day' on which white South Africans would be punished by the black South Africans who came into power (Mason, 2010: 159).

Both crime and subsequently 'white fear' were two issues, which could pose a threat to the nation-building project, thus the creation of the 'new' South Africa, the 'Rainbow Nation'. The following Madam & Eve cartoon is one of South Africa's all-time classics and shows how 'crime' is allegedly responsible for the collapse of the 'Rainbow Nation'. It depicts how two 'criminals steal a segment of the rainbow which represents the 'Rainbow nation'. While Gwen and here mother gasp at nature's wonder and Gwen' says: Look everyone, it's the Rainbow Nation'. Eve looks at the criminals and observes the collapse of the myth. The cartoon highlights the naïf and ignorant way of thinking about nation building and identity. Obviously the white liberal believes in the 'magic' and the coming about of an all inclusive nation, while the black maid, who has experienced political apartheid and continues to experience socio-economic

apartheid through her work as maid in a white household is more than aware of the reality.



Mason, 2010:161

'Othering' through cartooning

To come back to Nanda Soobben, one of the interesting aspects of his cartoon is the difference in the way Nelson Mandela is drawn and how the 'criminals' are drawn. There is much more detail in the face of Nelson Mandela and therefore he resembles the actual Mandela much more than the anonymous criminals. And because the drawing of Nelson Mandela resembles reality much more, you take him much more seriously than the criminals. This example illustrates how the style of a cartoon contributes to the message.

Though all cartoons that I have selected for this study are different in style and composition, in their own ways they have contributed to the Self vs. Other dichotomy. The cartoon of Nelson Mandela and the 'criminals' by Nanda Soobben is one such example. However, the majority of the cartoons in which 'othering' occurs are related to the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. All cartoonists visualize the outcome of a social process, in which the 'new' South Africa, the 'Self', created a

set of characteristics for what and who it will perceive as the 'Other'. Cartoonists mainly do this by ridiculing the enemies of the new political establishment. So apart from NP politicians, men such as Eugene de Kock, former colonel of the South African police during apartheid and commander of the South African police counter-insurgency unit and intelligence agent Craig Williamson, are often mocked and turned into the 'face of evil'.

The cartoonist can thus create 'otherness' by the style in which a subject is portrayed. However, the way in which they present a subject contributes to 'othering' as well. The way Nelson Mandela is depicted, as an always-happy fellow is a perfect example. Caricature reinforces and emphasises the features of people. This can be a facial feature, but also something which is related to someone's character. By magnifying this, the feature becomes 'part' of that person. Moreover by repeatedly using this feature in the cartoons, it will start get a life of its own.

In the process of 'othering' and ridiculing a person, those who were once perceived as 'untouchable' are made 'touchable'. And subsequently, the public can openly discuss the previous actions of this person. This is a second reason why former members of the apartheid regime are most likely to be ridiculed by cartoonists at the time of transition from political apartheid to democracy. Their actions, their ideas and their appearance are all subjects of ridicule. In this process perpetrators of gross human rights violations and politicians of the apartheid regime who could not be touched in the past, are now ridiculed by the cartoonists and become 'human' again.

Political figures are depicted as being sinister. Their appearance in the cartoon comes over as untrustworthy and their intellect seems to have vanished from the moment Nelson Mandela got inaugurated.

In some cases the 'othering' takes an even more grotesque shape. P.W. Botha the sixth president of South Africa was known in South Africa as 'Die Groot Krokodil' (The Big Crocodile in Afrikaans), reflecting his reputation as a feared and ruthless politician. According to the TRC Botha was responsible of gross human rights violations. The rapport states that the state, with Botha at the head of it, was involved in unlawful activities that included killings and in addition a number of cross border operations (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998b: 252). On several occasions Jonathan Shapiro depicts him as a crocodile with the facial features of a

human, resembling P.W Botha. What ‘othering’ in the transitional period did was ‘convicting’ members of the former apartheid regime, as there was no retribution, in the form of humiliation.

Cartoons in South Africa’s trauma archive

With only a few pencil lines a cartoonist is able to present to the reader, for example in a ‘traumatized’ society, a multi-layered, critical ‘snapshot’ of a social event which serves as a representation of social reality at a time when society was traumatized or a picture of the contemporary traumatized nation. This is the so-called mirror to society and one of the most powerful aspects of the profession of cartoonists; to be able to observe society from the periphery, almost in secret. Therefore, a (humorous) political cartoon is more than just a drawing of a political figure accompanied by a text balloon with a joke. Nor is it a simplistic exaggeration of reality.

If the political landscape and society change, political cartooning seems to change with them. In the case of South Africa, Mason notes that cartooning of the “late apartheid period was sombre, darkly satirical and obsessively focused on the country’s political crisis, whereas post-apartheid cartooning is light, lively, and eclectic, expressing the concerns of a young democracy fiercely critical of itself, struggling to come to terms with diversity.” (Mason, 2009:249). This is in contrast with South African cartooning of pre-1976, which again can be seen as a different kind of cartooning. In those years cartooning, a profession then dominated by white South Africans, was mainly concerned with ridiculing (white) politicians and white party politics. However, the Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976 set in motion a change, which echoed into political cartooning. The change was apparent in the issues these white cartoonists choose to tackle in their cartoons. According to Mason, the liberal cartoonist generally lacked the necessary understanding and political insight to “transcend the arena of white party politics and express support for, or even really engage with, the mass democratic movement and the liberation struggle” (Mason, 2010:117). Thus the liberal white cartoonist generally did not have an understanding of the anti-apartheid movements and the dynamics

In this period emerging cartoonists started to engage in more ‘serious’ matters as white liberalism²² was challenged. These cartoons were indeed serious and sometimes on the borderline of good taste, as evidenced by a cartoon of Derek Bauer who became a cartoonist for the ‘Weekly Mail’ in 1985. His 1987 cartoon, which commemorates the tenth anniversary of Steve Biko’s death, takes the metaphor of ‘ink as blood’ to the extreme.



Mason, 2011: 118

It is true that political cartoons are windows to a nation's psyche, providing insights into the state of the society. And indeed they “speak truth to the face of power” (Dodds, 2007: 173) and act as barometers of opinion, the health of democratic public

²² ‘White liberalism’ in South Africa has been described as “the political expression of a small body of white educationalists, philanthropists, missionaries and social workers who were concerned to alleviate the harsh economic and social consequences of industrialization in a racially divided society.” (Rich, 1984:123). However, Liberals, often white, hence the term ‘White Liberals’ were not one homogeneous group of “non-communists who opposed apartheid on the basis of the classic liberal principle of individual rights.” (Lipton, 2000:335) They were organized in a variety of different organizations such as the South African Institute of Race Relations and political parties such as the Liberal Party, the Progressive Party and the Democratic Party. Apart from the fact that ‘White Liberals’ have been blamed for their elitist approach (Ibid.), their advocacy for the cause of black people during apartheid has been a thorn in the eye for many. Like Steve Biko, founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, who argues: “white liberals always knew what was good for the blacks and told them so.” (Biko, 1996:20) In short, by campaigning against apartheid in the name of black people, white liberals took away the agency from black people to mould the struggle to fit their particular liberal agenda.

culture, and the functioning of democracy (Hariman, 2008: 247). However political cartoonists do need platforms on which they can voice their opinion to society. From the Soweto uprising in 1976 to the 1980s the mainstream commercial South African media, especially the newspapers, turned out not to be that platform. Therefore the new breed of political cartoonists in the 1980s who were critical of the apartheid state had to look for other ways to get their cartoons published. And the alternative press, consisting of a range of oppositional newspapers, magazines and publishing projects was the alternative podium. External donors often funded these alternative papers. However it was a short-lived phenomenon and for several reasons, it disappeared in the transitional period (Mason, 2010: 123). By this time, South African cartooning was more light, lively and eclectic, expressing the concerns of a young democracy fiercely critical of itself (Mason, 2009: 249)

In the process of nation building, an archive was constructed which became the archive of the 'new' South Africa. It is an archive constructed by the narratives of individual trauma. Stories of individual suffering were put into the new archive. However, the gatekeepers of this archive decided which narrative to include and which stories to exclude. Gross human rights violations were part of the national narrative and identity. Forced removal and the narratives of individual suffering as a result of this were not included by the TRC, the most influential social actor in this process. However this archive is an 'open' archive, open to the public and other actors, such as political cartoonists, whose work is positioned on the periphery of the 'nation's archive', often overlooked and not taken seriously. Cartoons as such are underestimated in their function as producers of national historical narratives.

Political cartoons appear to function like a set of closed time capsules within the 'nation's archive', however their narratives overlap. Having a number of cartoons of any given period is therefore like having an archive of historical documentation. Looking at a handful of cartoons that were illustrated five years ago and one can get a clear picture of the politics and of society at the time they were drawn. As mentioned, an archive of cartoons is related to a particular time and space, even if they refer to specific events. The themes expressed in cartoons are often universal, transcending time and place (Understanding the World of Political Cartoons, n.d.: 16). Meaning

that time, which is often celebrated in a linear way as a sequence of specific closed events, is spatialized. Cartoons act as a means to connect spaces in time.

Colvin argues that South Africans were urged to construct new borders as well as temporal ones between past and present, social ones between the healed and the unhealed and political ones between the new state and the old. (Colvin, 2006:1). However, the past, traumatic as it may have been is something, which cannot be cut off. The past is only past because there is a present. And cartoons are the physical proof of that connection, often providing information about the political landscape and provide valuable tools for historians.

Traumatic storytelling is a revisiting of time and space and proves that there is a connection between the two. The present suffering of people and their stories exists because of the traumatic experiences in the past, which cannot be cut off. Political cartoons are thus visual representations of these stories and therefore there must be an element of traumatic storytelling in political cartooning.

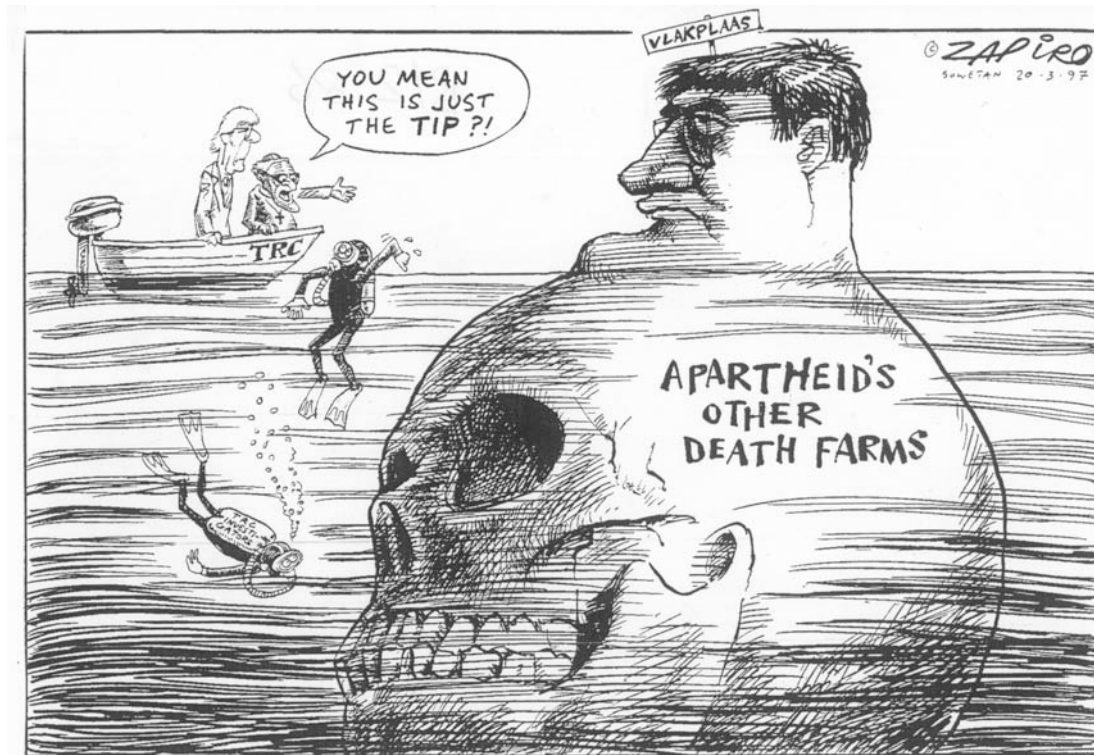
Cartooning as traumatic storytelling

As argued in the previous chapters, clinical terms, practices and a language of trauma entered the public sphere and became the basis of the South African trauma discourse. Traumatic storytelling became the most prominent practise of the TRC and because the media extensively reported on it, the majority of South African people became so familiar with traumatic storytelling that it became a custom through which the language of trauma found its way into the living room. As the TRC became a media event, as argued in the previous chapter, and traumatic storytelling became so important, stories and narratives of suffering were shared with the nation to become the narratives of national suffering.

However, the media was not only the channel through which traumatic stories entered the public sphere; the media was also the gatekeeper to the archive of these narratives. Archives of the media, together with those the TRC created, in turn became the archive of national suffering of the 'Rainbow Nation'.

Traumatic storytelling is a practise that usually takes place in the closed environment of a psychiatrist's office or consulting room. This practise thus travelled into the public sphere where cartoonists, by their own means of revisiting time and space, labelled as 'traumatic' for the nation, also made contributions to the practice of traumatic storytelling.

Zapiro's drawing of the investigation of Vlakplaas²³ is one such example.



Shapiro, 1997: 86

In the Zapiro drawing we see the head of Eugene de Kock sticking out of the water similar to an iceberg. The water reaches up to his chin. A sign saying 'Vlakplaas' sticks on his head. A small motor boat floats on the water with two people in it: Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, archbishop Desmond Tutu and Deputy Chairman Dr. Alex Boraine, who sits behind him.²⁴

²³ Vlakplaas was the site of the headquarters of the South African police counterinsurgency, twenty kilometers out of Pretoria. Though it was the headquarters of the apartheid secret police, most people know Vlakplaas as a place where numerous opponents of the apartheid regime were killed. Head of Vlakplaas was Eugene de Kock, later dubbed as 'Prime Evil' by the media.

²⁴ Boraine is always positioned behind Tutu in Zapiro's drawings as if Zapiro wants to make clear that Tutu is more important than the Deputy Chairman.

Tutu and Boraine clearly have no idea of the size of Vlakplaas and the apartheid regime's other so-called 'death farms'. Therefore what is under the surface and attached to De Kock's head is a surprise to the two men. A gigantic skull, bigger than De Kock's head above the surface saying 'Apartheid's other death farms', represents the size of the intelligence apparatus of the apartheid regime. One of the two divers investigating the skull swims to the surface, to inform Tutu and Boraine that what is under the water, under the surface, is much bigger than the team initially expected. To which Tutu replies: "You mean this is just the tip?!" The cartoon and De Kock's head clearly refers to the expression the 'tip of the ice berg' as the majority of an ice berg is always under the surface and always bigger than what floats above the surface.

The general narrative of the cartoon is quite simple, allowing the reader to put the event (revisiting Vlakplaas for investigations of the TRC), the characters (TRC commission) and site (Vlakplaas) into perspective. The massive skull is a representation of three things: death in general, the victims who died at the hands of the secret police and Vlakplaas as a site of remembrance for the victims of the gross human rights violations which took place at Vlakplaas and other 'death farms' alike. I stress the fact victims of gross human rights violations are remembered, as these were the victims whose death was investigated by the TRC. The victims whose death was not politically motivated, nor who died between 21 of March 1960 and 10 May 1994, the cut off date of the TRC's investigation, are not officially recognized in relation to truth and reconciliation and thus not incorporated in the public commemoration of the victims of apartheid.

It is interesting to note that the iceberg is singled out. It drifts in the water all by itself and is not connected to anything but De Kock's head. Not the divers nor Tutu and Boraine, touch 'Vlakplaas' or De Kock. This represents its detachment of Vlakplaas with the 'new' South Africa. In the 'new' public memory, it is remembered as a site, which belongs to the past. Though physically it is part of the country, in the memory of the nation it has been 'othered'. A 'border' has been constructed around it as Colvin argues.

The contrast between the skull and the head of Eugene de Kock on the one hand and the divers of the TRC investigators and Tutu and Boraine on the other is also worth noting. The head of De Kock remains motionless and his facial expression is

emotionless. His eyes are open, but he is not looking at what the TRC investigators are doing. The TRC investigators, especially Tutu and the two divers, however, are quite active in their search for evidence. Their actions therefore, evoke a feeling of power over Vlakplaas and the memory of it. They are the ones in control over the situation, the place and the memory in the name of the nation.

The obvious symbol in this cartoon is the skull, which represents death, victims and 'death farms'. However, Eugene de Kock, but more specifically his face serves as a representation of death too. Though the apartheid government had an extensive network of men who tortured and killed opponents of the regime similar to De Kock, he bears most of the responsibility. This ties in with the nickname 'Prime Evil' as the representation of death in the cartoon, the skull, is tied to his head.

The cartoon revisits Vlakplaas to give meaning to the place. Dealing with this place as part of the collective past implies that Vlakplaas is a traumatic 'experience' of the nation. Only dealing with, revisiting it and talking about it will 'heal' the nation so the country can, at least theoretically, move on to a future (Hamber and Wilson, 1999:1). Thus we see that political cartoonists, in their own ways contributed to the practice of traumatic storytelling for the nation.

By revisiting an event, time or place, mastery can be taken over a situation which is actually part of, or led to, the trauma. This cannot only be done so by 'Othering', as earlier described (making the previous untouchable touchable), but also through traumatic storytelling.

In this chapter I analyzed how cartoonists convey their message and how they are of value as historical records. Furthermore I have examined how cartoons contribute to the discourse of traumatic storytelling, and therefore constructing a national narrative. In the next chapter I will look at the distinguishing characteristics of three of the cartoonists whose work I have been analyzing to see how they have engaged with trauma discourse.

Chapter Four: Political Cartooning

Intersect Trauma Discourse

Political cartoons are a mirror to society. Question then, how do they engage with public discourses and in particular, how can cartoonists be critical when it comes to something intangible as a discourse? In this chapter I will analyse how political cartoonists engaged in and with trauma discourse in South Africa in the transitional period. To be specific, I will look at their engagement with trauma discourse as constructed at the time of the hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Jonathan ‘Zapiro’ Shapiro

Zapiro could be seen as the most successful cartoonist in South Africa, drawing for a wide range of newspapers from the mass circulation black daily newspaper, *Sowetan*, to the intellectual, left-leaning weekly *Mail & Guardian*, and the mass circulation *Sunday Times*. Zapiro was the first South African political cartoonist to draw for an audience that could be in any way described as ‘national’ (Mason, 2010:203).

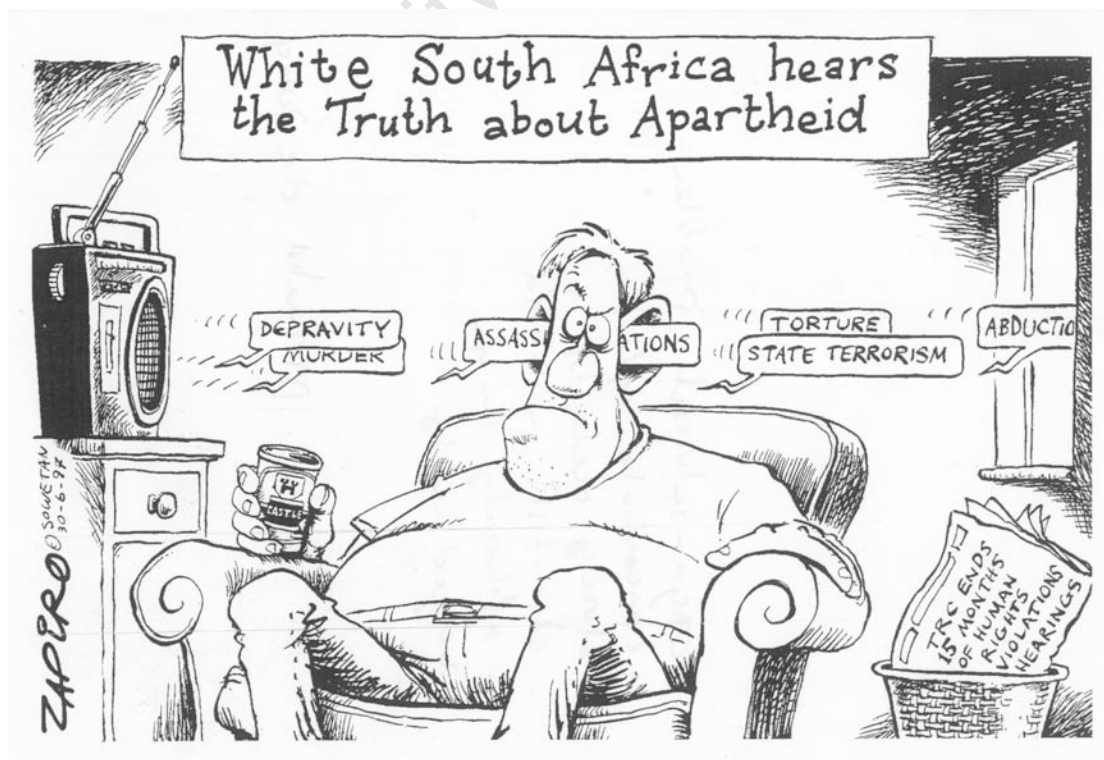
Zapiro's work reflects the changing context, from the constraints and radicalism of the 1980s, to the euphoria of the transition, and the “tempered optimism of the post-apartheid period” (Mason, 2009: 268). Initially he was pro-nation building, however this soon shifted in the transitional period and Zapiro had to abandon his role as an activist for the liberation movement to become more of a watchdog for the nation.

Visualizing trauma discourse

Although there are a number of cartoons in which Zapiro is critical of the nation-building project, and in particular the TRC, he does not critically engage with the popularisation of trauma discourse by the TRC. A number of themes recur in the cartoons analysed in this dissertation. For example, Zapiro is highly critical of the value of the TRC and the way it operates. In his cartoons, Zapiro questions whether the TRC is capable of finding the ‘truth’. He clearly questions whether the TRC has any power to do so. Zapiro addresses, stemming from the question of whether the TRC has any power to find the ‘truth’, the issue of members of the former apartheid

regime who try to counteract the TRC and do not cooperate with the commission. In line with this, his cartoons question whether retribution would not have been a better option. Lastly, the fact that the TRC became a media event is evident looking at Zapiro's cartoons. The majority of his cartoons focus on high profile political figures. Former members of the apartheid regime were ridiculed and ANC members (especially Nelson Mandela) were positively portrayed. This ties in with the fact that Zapiro was much more of an activist in the early days of the transitional period.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, cartoons can have a dual message. And, depending on the reader, one can have a different interpretation from someone else. Therefore, superficially reading Zapiro's cartoon and without a key understanding of the South African political landscape and society at the time of transition, it will be difficult to identify his critical message. In chapter two I used an example to demonstrate the critique Zapiro had on the nation-building project, especially how Nelson Mandela, thus the South African government had difficulties creating a 'Rainbow Nation'. Though the cartoonists, and Zapiro is no different in this case, do not explicitly criticise the subjects they draw, it is clear that in the cartoon of chapter two Zapiro questions if the project was a success. Below is a second example of his critical views of white South Africans and their reactions to the TRC revelations.



Villa-Vincencio and Du Toit, F. 2006: 141

This cartoon boldly says that white people do not care about either the revelations, or the actual events of apartheid. Especially because a newspaper with the headline 'TRC ends 15 months of Human Rights Violations Hearings' is in the rubbish bin. The words 'abduction', 'torture', 'state terrorism', 'assassinations', 'depravity' and 'murder' are also summed up by the radio, but they go into one ear of the white subject and out of the other. The question is whether Zapiro wants to say that white people do not care or that white people did in fact not play a part in the process and subsequently could not have been traumatised, because these words are foreign to the white subject in the cartoon. Therefore this cartoon is critical to the idea of a traumatised nation and the 'Rainbow Nation' identity as it contradicts the notion of a traumatised society. The white population of South Africa was not, and could not have been, traumatised because of apartheid, because policies and acts of human rights abuses did not affect this part of the population in a way that it could be left traumatised.

Though Zapiro does address and contest the issue involving the nation-building process, which is to him a distorted one, it does not mean that he did not contribute to trauma discourse. In the previous chapter I have discussed how Zapiro, as a cartoonist by his own means, contributed to a form of traumatic storytelling, by revisiting Vlakplaas. Apart from the fact that traumatic storytelling as a practice was part trauma discourse, the narratives and the way in which the stories were told contributed to the discourse itself. The depiction of the skull as an iceberg, drifting alone by itself, represents the borders, which South Africans were urged to construct, apart from the temporal borders between the old 'nation' and the 'new' South Africa and the border between those who were already healed and those who were not.

The way in which Zapiro as a political cartoonist contributed to the practise of traumatic storytelling differs from the actual practice. Apart from that contrary to much of the trauma discourse, Zapiro did not use a 'language' of trauma. In the same way, he did not critically 'attack' the practise of traumatic storytelling. What is significant is that public hearings by ordinary South Africans are hardly depicted. Nor are those of their relatives. Only on a few occasions in his cartoons drawn in the transitional does he portray the 'ordinary' South African as a victim. Victims are always represented as a skulls and bones. Though they are present in some of the

cartoons and sometimes have a prominent position, they remain powerless. As if they remain in the days of apartheid as the powerless subaltern. A May 5th cartoon of Zapiro that appeared in the *Sowetan* makes this evident.



Shapiro, 1996: 118

On top of the cartoon the caption says ‘As the TRC scales mount evidence...’ The cartoon portrays chairman archbishop Tutu, deputy-chairman of the TRC Alex Boraine and a number of other people, who represent members of the truth commission. The group is about to embark on a journey to a mountain of skulls and bones²⁵. In between the human remains there are a number of signs with the names of places and the names of members of the former apartheid regime. While the group is climbing the mountain of human remains, led by Tutu, Alex Boraine asks the chairman of the TRC “Desmond, people are asking why she’s been left out of this expedition...” Boraine points out to lady justice. On her dress the words ‘Retributive justice’ are written.

²⁵ The TRC hearings coincided with a South African Mount Everest expedition (Villa-Vicencio and Du Toit, 2006: 133)

Though the skulls and bones, thus the victims, are prominently present, they only function as evidence in this case. The height of the mountain of victims illustrates the size of evidence and the task. The message Zapiro conveys by using skulls to represent victims, is that only those who died at the hands of the apartheid regime (at sites such as Vlakplaas) constitute as 'real' victims. This corresponds, and rather criticizes the official task of the TRC only to investigate gross violations of human rights rather than the system of apartheid.

Though a first reading does not make clear who are the 'people' Boraine is speaking about, a closer reading reveals that Boraine speaks for the victims and questions the absence of retributive justice in the process for the victims. Thus the 'people' Boraine refers to are the victims who died at places such as Vlakplaas or were tortured by the agents of Koevoet in Namibia or in Sharpeville. The signs scattered on the mountain of human remains emphasise this. The cartoon is critical of the absence of retributive justice in South Africa. And by using skulls as symbols of representations of the victims, Zapiro brings them back into the centre of the public sphere and debate. However, Zapiro still uses 'silent' object of representation, human remains and leaves out ordinary South Africans in this, and many other cartoons. He mainly focuses on high profile political figures and therefore leaves out a voice for the survivors and decedents of victims.

The cartoon gives you an overview of the issues the TRC and the South African government were facing in terms of nation-building as indicating by Zapiro's reference to Nelson Mandela. Zapiro clearly paints a picture of a young nation struggling to find his direction. Because of his activism and his belief in the liberation movement, it seems as if there is not enough distance between Zapiro and the new political establishment. As a result, trauma discourse in the public sphere is not contested. Instead, Zapiro engages with trauma discourse in the sense that he dispossessed victims of their narratives, using them as a tool to critically attack the nation-building process and the work of the TRC of which he is fiercely critical. However, Zapiro does fail to clearly visualise why the TRC was working the way it did. As a 'national' political cartoonist, he often speaks with the people, instead of provoking thought for the people and dissecting their existing discourses.

Madam & Eve

While Zapiro is the most famous political cartoonist of South Africa, Madam & Eve is the most successful strip in the history of South African cartooning (Mason, 2009:280). It portrays the social relations between black and white South Africans. In the light of the transitional period, Madam & Eve has “[...] allowed a number of painful and hard-to-talk-about issues to come to the surface, disguised as jokes, allowing readers to ‘deal’ with the past” (Ibid). However, the strip continues to tackle issues in the domestic setting between the white Madam and the black maid. Contrary to more conventional political cartoons, Madam & Eve focuses more on the social issues in South Africa and less on the political domain, thus engaging more extensively with social discourses in the transitional period.

Because ‘Madam & Eve’ is set in a domestic setting, it is interesting to see how the cartoonists portray the daily life of South Africans. In this cartoon the understanding of victim of apartheid is extended from the understanding by the TRC as victim of gross human rights violations, to the domestic setting. It incorporates issues like gender and workers rights and critiques them. In this setting, both the victim and a ‘beneficiary of apartheid’ come together. It is a highly skewed economic relationship, which has prevailed since colonial times and continues to exist in ‘post apartheid’ South Africa (Mason, 2010:158). In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1993, Violet Mothlasedi, the former maid and former president of the Domestic Worker's Union²⁶, said the cartoon reminded her somewhat of her own 11-year relationship with an employer: “When all is said and done, you are actually a beggar in their house. The so-called ‘liberal’ may be telling you, you are part of the family, but at the same time she is using you.” Meaning that domestic workers and their employers are never equal. (Keller, 1993)

Cartooning Social apartheid in Post-apartheid South Africa

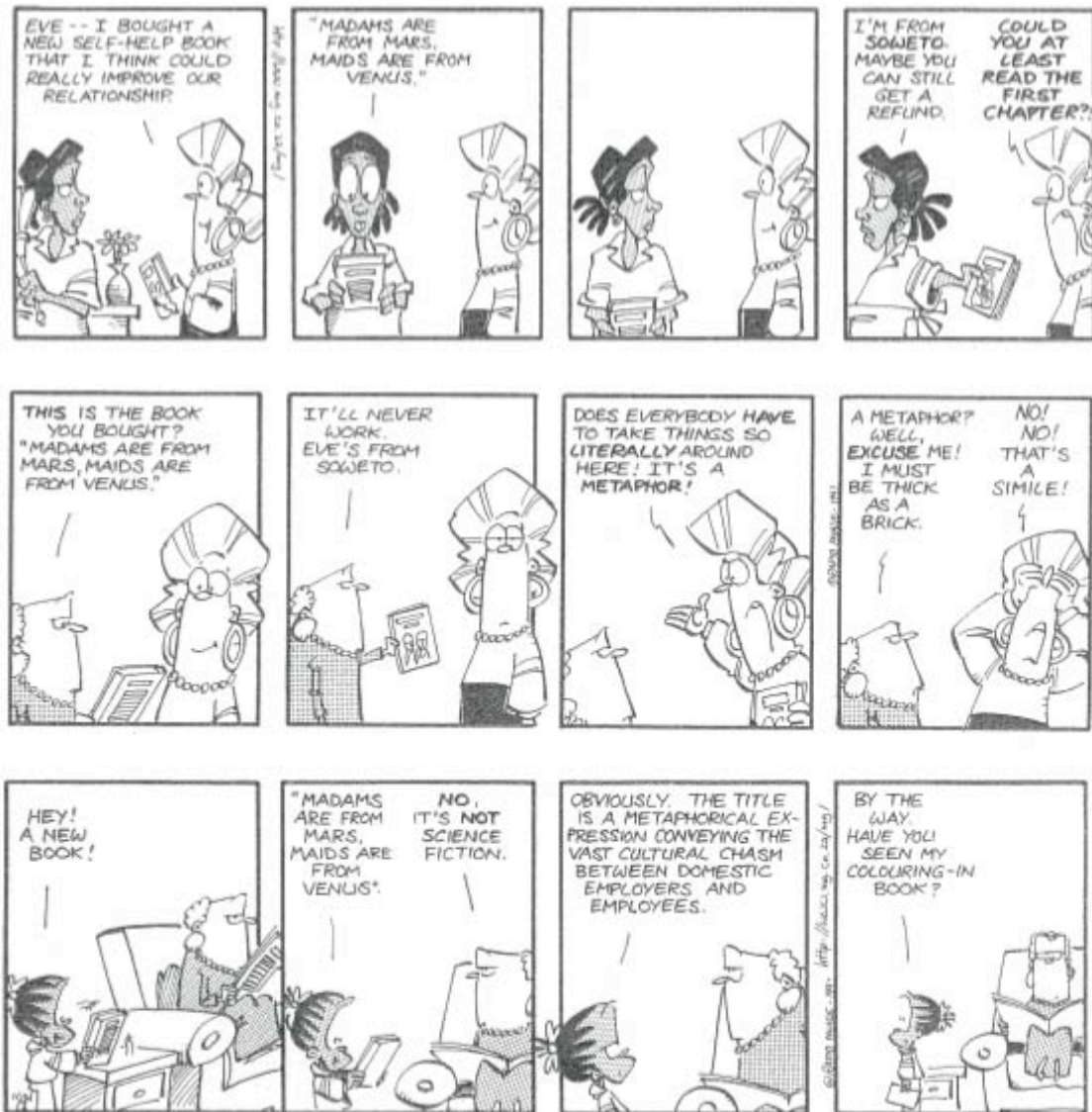
This relationship is constantly contested in the strip of Madam & Eve. As I have said, it focuses more on the social aspects of the relationship between the two women, which represent the inferior, economic dependent relationship black South African

²⁶ The Domestic Worker's Union is now known as the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union. It was set up three years after the initial union closed down because of financial difficulties. (SADSAW, <http://www.sadsawu.org/> retrieved: 14 November 2011).

maids have. Using this domestic setting, Schacherl and Francis are able to tackle a set of stereotypes as well as use them to address other social issues. Madam & Eve focus on the continuation of ‘social and economic apartheid’²⁷. Parallel, in the same transitional period, the cartoons address the failing attempt to create one common South African identity, thus the ‘Rainbow Nation’. With regards to the domestic setting, the creators of Madam & Eve often address the social effect of political policies such as the Black Economic Empowerment Programme or the South African Labour Law. Furthermore, and the caricature of the white madam, Gwen, represents that, ‘white fear’, prejudices and ignorance of white, liberal South Africans is a constantly recurring theme.

The continuation of social apartheid, represented by the distorted relationship between Gwen Anderson and Eve Sisulu, is often juxtaposed with the failure of the ‘Rainbow Nation’ in the strip. The blame, and that is the striking feature of the strip is put both on Gwen and Eve. Though not explicitly mentioned, the fact that these two women seem to be ‘from different planets’, the creation of a common identity continues to be a difficult task. The following cartoon mocks the critique the writers often get and highlights the fact that both women ‘come from different planets.’

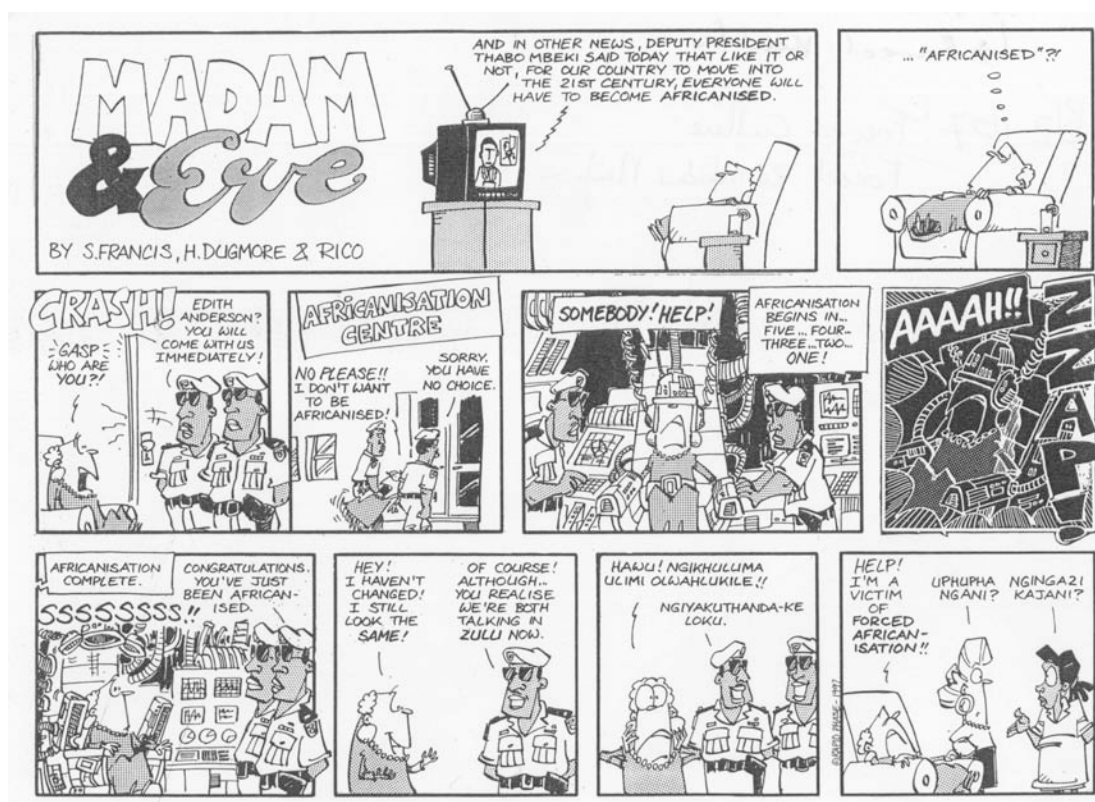
²⁷ ‘Social apartheid’ refers to the continuation of apartheid in post-1994 South Africa, on the basis of socio-economic classes. However, the nature of social apartheid is highly racial as result of years of political apartheid on the basis of ‘race’.



Francis, Dugmore, and Rico, 1997: 1

A narrative device that the writers and cartoonists of *Madam & Eve* often use is that of a dream, thus a fictional story within a fictional story. This second narrative, the dream represents the true nature and or fears of the three main characters. In the following cartoon Mother Anderson dreams of being ‘Africanized’ against her own will and ending up speaking Zulu. This episode of *Madam & Eve* engages with two themes. First Mother Anderson’s fear of African culture(s) and second the forced creation of a singular South African culture by the South African government and promoted by the works of the TRC. White fear, as mentioned in the previous chapter, rested on the fear and expectation that an ultimate moment of retribution would come to white South Africans. This is perfectly captured by the cartoon. By using the

dream or better said, a nightmare, Francis, Dugmore and Rico illustrate how deep-rooted are the fears of her subconsciousness.



Francis, Dugmore and Rico, 1997: 167

The most interesting feature of *Madam & Eve* is the fact that cartoonists do not shy away from the fact that apartheid is not over and remains a continuing factor in the lives of both women. The obvious stereotypes are used as symbols to convey the notion of a continuous social apartheid to the reader. Eve is portrayed as a lazy maid, someone who avoids as much work as she can and thus her responsibility to her employer. Gwen on the other hand is a stingy employer, always reluctant to pay Eve a decent wage. However, in defiance of her low wages and her subordinate position in the house, Eve has the right to seek opportunities to avoid her responsibilities and do her work. And the creators often emphasised this (Mason, 2010: 158).

Contrary to Zapiro, which is more of a conventional political cartoonist, *Madam & Eve* is more critical of the 'Rainbow Nation' idea. The seemingly fixed subordinate position, of Eve as domestic worker, a stereotype, is a symbol for the continued distorted domestic worker – employer relationship in South Africa. The creators overemphasise stereotypes and social positions to highlight the fact that political

the CODESA talks. And this is something that Gwen constantly is reminded of by her mother who acts as commissioner, arguing that she should continue telling the truth otherwise she would not get amnesty. Thus this particular cartoon is highly critical of the Amnesty process and in particular of the confessions, which were presented as a 'requirement' of the nation-building process. In fact part of the agreement not to have retributive justice was incorporated into the transitional process.

Unlike Zapiro and Nanda Soobben, Madam & Eve as a strip has a different way of putting across the message and ideas of the creators. First, the characters are fictional and although they represent the different people of South Africa, they do not represent actual people. Therefore the characters can say things, which, if they had represented actual persons, would have resulted in the makers ending up in court. Secondly, the creators of the strip tackle more social issues rather than political, compared to the other cartoonists, which I have used for this study. Therefore Madam & Eve are more thought provoking, presenting South Africa as a mirror to society, while Zapiro and Soobben, who engage in and thus contribute more to real politics, can push for the behavioural change of actual politicians and other high profile people who they address directly. The creators of Madam & Eve engage with what has been silenced, namely the ongoing racialized social encounters in a private household setting and therefore extending the domain of traumatic storytelling as these experiences, in real life, fell out of the scope of the work of the TRC.

Nanda Soobben

As mentioned, if a cartoonist addresses an existing specific person, he engages more in the political sphere. Second, the more realistic a cartoon is, the more serious one takes the critique expressed by the creator. From this perspective Nanda Soobben can be regarded as the most critical cartoonist in this study.

Tackling 'White Fear'

Similar to Zapiro, Soobben is a 'typical' political cartoonist, meaning that he tackles contemporary issues and contests subjects alike. As a result his cartoons are too highly personalised making prominent political figures subjects of ridicule. As mentioned in the previous chapter in the analysis of the 'white fear' cartoon of Mandela and a group of 'criminals', the stylistics of a cartoon, the manner in which a subject is drawn

contributes to the message and the critique the cartoonist wants to put across. Therefore I concluded that one takes a more realistic drawing of a person more seriously if it is a more accurate representation of reality. This however does not mean that it is more likely that the reader will agree with the cartoonist and, or, the subject in the cartoon. But it does mean that the message will be stronger. This is one of the main characteristics of Nanda Soobben's cartoons. In his cartoons, Nanda Soobben questions the impact of the TRC on South Africa. He is very critical of the previous apartheid government and over the fact that member of the apartheid regime and government were not enough punished in according to him. Furthermore, similar to Madam & Eve, Nada Soobben also addresses the issue of unfounded 'white fear' and of an imminent 'judgment day'.

The following cartoon of Soobben focuses on the issue of the responsibility of the members of the NP for apartheid.



Soobben, 1998: 21

All the previous presidents of the country literally hide behind Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the last leader of the NP, which later became the New National Party (NNP), when they initial withdrew from the government of national unity in 1997. The cartoon particularly focuses on the fact that none of the previous leaders of the

National Party had taken responsibility for the atrocities committed by the apartheid state. Although F.W. De Klerk has since made a public apology in front of the TRC (Duke, 1996). One of the two captions refers to the fact that Van Schalkwyk had little experience when he took over from De Klerk. The cartoon feeds into the general idea that the way in which members of the NP were treated by the TRC and by the new government did not meet up with the years of injustice done to the people of South Africa. The hiding behind the successors of the party in fact represents the evading of responsibility for apartheid and the pointing of fingers towards each other in society; white South Africans of British decent blaming Afrikaners not taking responsibility for the fact that they too benefitted from apartheid. Furthermore it represents the long history of apartheid, which started from the colonial days.

Though Soobben uses wit, there is less emphasis on humor and more on the critical aspect of his cartoons. Contrary to Zapiro and Madam & Eve, Soobben engages very little with trauma discourse. Therefore he did not contribute to the practice of traumatic storytelling, or become an actor in the manner in which the cartoonists did. However, the visualisation of his critique does make him a very critical cartoonist. Furthermore, Soobben's cartoons and their message are more direct, especially towards the behaviour of white South Africans in the transitional period. And the underlying message in his cartoon is often stronger compared to the other two cartoonists.

Political cartoons have certainly contributed to trauma discourse in South Africa in the transitional period. Both Zapiro and Nanda Soobben look at current affairs and thus directly responded to whatever occurred at the hearings. They are more 'political' as they display the (failing) attempt of the creation of the imaginary national trauma identity by the state. They both question the work of the TRC, however, they do not address the creation of trauma discourse in South Africa. Furthermore their nature as political cartoonists demands from them a focus on high profile political characters. In the case the cartoonists use 'random' subjects as characters, the message becomes stronger as it appeals more to the reader in terms of identification with the subjects portrayed. This is the case for Madam & Eve, which tackles social issues. The main focus of the creators lies on the continuation of social apartheid and the

subsequent distorted economic and social power relation between the maid and the employer.

In trauma discourse in South Africa, political cartoonists have challenged the space of public debate created by the TRC and other actors. However, for cartoonists it is harder to create new spaces, which have not yet been explored or touched. This may be the biggest weakness of cartoonists. To a certain degree though, they can extend the spaces already created by other social agencies.

Apart from contributing to trauma discourse, I can also conclude that all cartoons have shaped the collective consciousness, contributing to the shaping of the TRC as media event. Political cartoons, with its critique, contributed to the public discussion, “compelling people to discuss a common issue” (Krabill, 2001:570).

In this chapter I have analysed how political cartoonists engaged in and with trauma discourse in South Africa in the transitional period. More specifically, I have looked at each cartoonist’s engagement with trauma discourse as constructed at the time of the hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. And finally, I have looked at how they each visualized trauma discourse and how they have, in their own ways, engaged in and with the practice of traumatic storytelling.

Conclusion

The idea of trauma as a wound in the psyche of a person as a result of a shocking event, has dramatically changed in the twentieth century, to finally result in the emergence of trauma discourse. Critical agents in society, such as political cartoons shed an interesting light on the establishment through the development of a discourse. In this study I have explored the emergence of the South African trauma discourse at the height of the transitional period. In particular, I have looked at the influence of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on this discourse. This study has combined the insight of the South African trauma discourse with the visual narrative approach of political cartoons and has built a bridge between the subjects of collective trauma, post-conflict reconciliation and political cartooning. I have analysed trauma discourse in South Africa by using the political cartoons of Zapiro, Nanda Soobben and Madam & Eve, created and published in the period between 1 April 1996 and 1 November 1998, the time of the transitional period.

There exists a duality of the trauma concept. The first idea revolves around the damaged psyche of an individual. The second notion of trauma, which, to a certain degree, should be understood in the way it has been used in the clinical mental health field, works as an ‘open wound’ in the collective memory; traces left in the public psyche. As a result of this new invented notion of ‘trauma’, trauma has entered the public sphere.

One of the results of the expanded trauma explanation is that the concept can be used to create and support an identity. Frantz Fanon’s writings demonstrate how both an individual and a group use ‘trauma’ in search of, and as part of their identity. Furthermore, powerful actors in society can impose their discursive power onto the rest of society by using, and contributing to, trauma discourse. Therefore, in the process of the (re-)creation of an (collective) identity in a trauma culture, due to its discursive power, ‘trauma’ has become a discursive tool which has the ability to disempower people.

With regards to trauma discourse in South Africa, the TRC played an important, if not the most important role. I consider the Interim Constitution of South Africa to be the seed of the South African trauma discourse. Most of the vocabulary used during the transitional period and in trauma discourse and the *jargon* of the TRC, can be retraced to the Interim Constitution. Besides this linguistic element, the notion of Ubuntu was introduced in order to popularise the work of the TRC and reconciliation in particular. However, what it did was to create both a false sense of identity and a false sense of an imagined past.

Political cartoons are part of the media of which I argue should be considered historical records as they function like a set of closed time capsules within the 'nation's archive'. Having a number of cartoons of any given period is therefore like having an archive of historical documentation, as the themes expressed in cartoons are often universal, transcending time and place. However, the media is an important platform in the creation of a discourse. During the transitional period and particular during the hearings of the TRC, there existed a symbiotic relationship between the media and the commission.

A number of themes recur in the cartoons analysed in this dissertation. For example, Zaprio is highly critical of the value of the TRC and the way it operates. In his cartoons, Zapiro questions whether the TRC is capable of finding the 'truth'. He clearly questions whether the TRC has any power to do so. Zapiro addresses, stemming from the question of whether the TRC has any power to find the 'truth', the issue of members of the former apartheid regime who try to counteract the TRC. Therefore he questions whether retribution would not have been a better option. Lastly, the fact that the TRC became a media event is evident looking at Zapiro's cartoons. The majority of his cartoons focus on high profile political figures. Former members of the apartheid regime were ridiculed and ANC members (especially Nelson Mandela) were positively portrayed. This ties in with the fact that Zapiro was much more of an activist in the early days of the transitional period.

On the other hand, Madam & Eve focus on the continuation of ‘social and economic apartheid’²⁸. Parallel, in the same transitional period, the cartoons address the failing attempt to create one common South African identity, thus the ‘Rainbow Nation’. With regards to the domestic setting, the creators of Madam & Eve often address the social effect of political policies such as the Black Economic Empowerment Programme or the South African Labour Law. Furthermore, and the caricature of the white madam, Gwen, represents that, ‘white fear’, prejudices and ignorance of white, liberal South Africans is a constantly recurring theme.

Finally, Nanda Soobben questions the impact of the TRC on South Africa. In his cartoons he is very critical of the previous apartheid government and over the fact that member of the apartheid regime and government were not enough punished in according to him. Furthermore, similar to Madam & Eve, Nada Soobben also addresses the issue of unfounded ‘white fear’ and of an imminent ‘judgment day’.

Political cartoons have certainly contributed to trauma discourse of South Africa in the transitional period. Both Zapiro and Nanda Soobben look at current affairs and thus directly responded to whatever occurred at the hearings. They are more ‘political’ as they display the (failing) attempt of the creation of the imaginary national trauma identity by the state. They both question the work of the TRC, however, they do not address the creation of trauma discourse in South Africa. Furthermore their nature as political cartoonists demands from them a focus on high profile political characters. At times when cartoonists use ‘random’ subjects as characters, the message becomes stronger as it appeals more to the reader in terms of identification with the subjects portrayed. This is the case for Madam & Eve, which tackles social issues. The main focus for the creators lies in the continuation of social apartheid and the subsequent distorted economic and social power relationship between the maid and the employer. A reality that even remains today.

²⁸ ‘Social apartheid’ refers to the continuation of apartheid in post-1994 South Africa, on the basis of socio-economic classes. However, the nature of social apartheid is highly racial as result of years of political apartheid on the basis of ‘race’.

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