Memory, Trauma and Narrative in Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins* and Delia Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen &Me*

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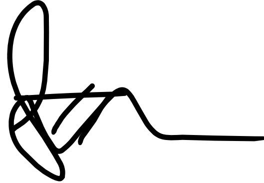
DECLARATION

I, Lutho Mtongana, declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in African Literature, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. I confirm that the work has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university**.**

Signature: 

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DEDICATION

To my sister, Alunge Mtongana, I love you, I love you, I love you. I am sorry for all the parts of you that never stop aching and all the invisible scars that keep difficult memories alive.

Then to the rest of my sisters, Nikita, Amandla, Xola, Nomvuyo and Vuyisanani the ball will get smaller and even if it does not completely disappear, we have each other to ensure a soft landing.

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ABSTRACT

The notion of memory is a core fabric of identity and navigating human life both at individual level and collective levels. Therefore, when everyday life is disrupted by traumatic events such as wartime conflict, individual and shared memory becomes highly contested, especially when subaltern voices compete with dominant narratives. This thesis explores the role and power of memory in narrating trauma and violence in Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002) and Delia Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me* (2005). By depicting how memory is at the centre of both texts, the study interrogates the ways in which the authors use memory as a narrative device to mediate healing, reconciliation and reintegration, or as a weapon of silencing survivors of traumatic wartime experiences. Using Sigmund Freud's argument that trauma manifests both at the moment of distressing event and at the moment of recall of that event, the thesis interrogates the ways in which Vera and Jarrett-Macauley narrate trauma by cross mapping the representation of the Gukurahundi civil war in Zimbabwe and the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone to the national politics of the respective countries. I argue that while the authors' approaches to historical conflict differ — with Jarrett-Macauley utilising an expatriate narrator who takes on the role of mediation while Vera draws on history, art and landscape — both authors are concerned with inventing alternative routes to stitching together forms of multidirectional memory.

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1. CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Focusing on Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002) and Delia Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me* (2005), this study explores the role of memory in narrating trauma and violence. Interrogating the ways in which memory can be both a tool for healing from the gruesomeness of war, as well as a weapon of silencing survivors of traumatic wartime experiences, the study demonstrates how both authors explore alternative ways of working through traumatic experiences. For Jarrett-Macauley, the narrator's expatriate perspective makes her distant from the frontlines of the trauma experienced by civilians and this in turn enables her to exercise a degree of empathy towards victim-perpetrators, effectively making her the right mediator for healing and reconciliation for her family and community. On her part, Vera uses metaphoric prose that links the landscape to its people, while healing and restoration is mediated through the historian figure's care labour and the reconstruction of the Lobengula's kraal as a gesture towards national recovery. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's (qtd in Ato Quayson, 2001) argument that trauma registers both at the moment of distressing event and at the moment of recall of that event, the thesis explores how both authors narrate trauma by cross mapping the representation of the Gukurahundi civil war in Zimbabwe and the decade long civil war in Sierra Leone to the national politics of the respective countries. In essence, the study interrogates Vera and Jarrett-Macauley's reflections on the power of memory in either subverting people's experiences of trauma, which in turn manipulates the details of the event, or empowering them to process the trauma thus mediating healing.

Although the portrayal of trauma and violence in Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002) and Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me* (2005) has previously been studied, existing analyses do not read the two texts comparatively; nor do they zoom in on the distinct roles of memory in both texts. Therefore, I argue that memory in all its forms is at the centre of these novels and is used as a critical mode in narrating trauma and wartime conflict by both authors. This prompts us to explore how Vera and Jarrett-Macauley use different forms memory in their respective narrative frameworks, and what the implications of this use of memory are. Secondly, the two texts offer women-authors' representations of trauma from the vantage points of women characters and children — two categories of people who are often marginalised from narrative authority in war novels, despite being the most vulnerable groups in wartime. I posit that by placing women and

children at the centre of their texts, without altogether excluding men, both authors reveal the disruptive impact of trauma on marginalised groups while showing their resilience in overcoming wartime atrocities, mediating healing in the aftermath. Lastly, my choice of these two novels is prompted by their narrative frameworks, which offer alternative ways of narrating horrific wartime atrocities without resorting to spectacle.

1.1. Warring Contexts

1.1.1. Seirra Leone and the SLTRC as a Cornerstone for National Healing

The decade-long Sierra Leone Civil War which occurred between 1991 and 2001 is well documented across media and academia. The war, which started when two political parties, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NFPL) joined forces to overthrow the government of Sierra Leonean President, Joseph Momah, killed over 50,000 lives, while 2.5 million other people were displaced, and tens of thousands were wounded or maimed. In the nation's attempt to promote post-war national healing and reconciliation, the Sierra Leone government established the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SLTRC) following precedents set by South Africa and Rwanda. The SLTRC was "designed as a set of public venues where victims could testify to their experiences of violence as a mode of release and validation; while perpetuators could confess their crimes and seek forgiveness without fear of legal prosecution" (Imma 129). Scholar Zetoile Imma notes that the Sierra Leone TRC project became the "cornerstone of national reconciliation processes to promote healing and peace" (130). With this history in mind, Delia Jarrett-Macauley writes *Moses, Citizen & Me* and centers her story around an eight-year-old former child soldier who is journeying towards healing and reconciliation following his experience of trauma and violence during the war. This study explores how Jarrett-Macauley uses different forms of memory to foster healing, reconciliation and reintegration from the gruesomeness of war borrowing from the ideology of the national project. Furthermore, it interrogates the alternative and unique interventions Jarrett-Macauley proposes to reimagine the future of Seirra Leone in the text.

1.1.2. Zimbabwe and the Loud Silence of the Gukurahundi Civil War

In Vera's case, *The Stone Virgins* (2002) responds to the Gukurahundi Massacre of 1983 - 1987 in Zimbabwe. The war is historically remembered as having begun with the two rival nationalist parties, Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) challenging the predominantly white government of Rhodesia but then ending up becoming a post-independence civil war that was driven by Robert Mugabe's desire to have a one-party state rule under him as president for life. The civil war saw the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) in 1983, enter Matabeleland and go on a killing spree. Matabeleland was home to Ndebeles and Kalangas who were mostly ZAPU supporters, and during the course of 1983 and 1984, people were raped, killed and detained. This war, which is riddled with controversies regarding its historical context and the chronological order of events, also has scholars and the media debating about the impact of the violence and the actual number of deaths (Mpofu 40). It is on the back of this historical context that Mpofu in his paper "Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: An Epistemicide and Genocide*"* notes that the *"*genocidal wish is in actuality a desire that other people, as individuals and organisations, did not exist. If they exist, as Nkomo and ZAPU did, the determined desire becomes not only murderous but epistem-icidal" (42). Therefore, when Yvonne Vera writes *The Stone Virgins*, similar to Jarrett-Macauley, she borrows from this controversial and mudded history to narrate the story of two sisters, Thenjiwe and Nonceba who find themselves in the middle of a civil war. The thesis explores how the author, through narrative, uses the incomplete, incoherent, emotionally chaotic and unreliable memory of the characters to reflect on the military assault by the Zimbabwean state which attempted to silence, suppress, and annihilate any knowledge and truth about the war. Furthermore, I examine how Vera uses different forms of memory to not only reflect the silencing of women who survived the traumatic experiences of war but also to offer a reimagination of the story of trauma and wartime violence in Zimbabwe through the lens of her main characters.

1.2. Mapping Existing Conversations on *Moses, Citizen & Me* and *The Stone Virgins*

Existing analyses of Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me* focus on re-writing the narrative of the Sierra Leone civil war from the perspective of the child soldier. Commentary from Stefanie De Rouck in, "*Moses, Citizen & Me* by Delia Jarrett-Macauley: A Novel about Child Soldiers, Dealing with Trauma and the Search for Identity" unpacks how *Moses, Citizen & Me* is also a story about identity, especially from the perspective of the woman narrator, Julia. De Rouck draws from Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory to explain Julia's pursuit of identity, noting how Julia's past memories of herself as a child and of her relatives from the previous generation influence her present and will change her future. Additionally, De Rouck also notes the use of postmemory in Moses' old photographs that have an image of a child solider holding a gun and posits that this has continued two generations later through Citizen who also becomes a child soldier. For the purpose of my focus area, I draw from De Rouck's insights on how Jarrett-Macauley narrates traumatic memory through the concept of postmemory. I also examine the narrator's role as an expatriate and how her reminiscing of childhood memories and past memories in general shapes her identity and enables her to mediate healing for traumatised victims such as Moses and victim-perpetrators such as Citizen and other child soldiers. Ken Junior Lipenga elsewhere notes that Jarrett-Macauley's second generation Sierra Leonean identity which she shares with her narrator, Julia, enables her to be both "fuelled by the desire for re-attachment" (97) to Sierra Leone while also maintaining an objective perspective about the country that is not "sanctioned" (97) by the country's dominant narratives. I borrow and build on this point highlighting that it affords the narrator, Julia, an integral and unique ability to mediate healing for her family and other child soldiers.

De Rouck's thesis unpacks the figure of the child soldier in Africa, its representation in the media and the global response to this humanitarian crisis. She also analyses the impact of trauma on the child soldiers and how they deal with it to achieve healing, reconciliation and reintegration back into society. It is acknowledged by multiple scholars, including De Rouck, that texts about child soldiers, whether fictional or autobiographical, operate in the context of and are consumed by Western audiences. Elsewhere, Allison Mackey notes that child soldier narratives are not only didactic in nature but they are also a tool for the Western audience to be empathetic about Africa

and Africans (192). For her part, Eleni Coundouriotis highlights that child solider narratives are categorised under the genre of war literature and even more specifically under the genre of human rights literature in pursuit of the recovery of the child soldier's innocence (192). Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me* can be read along similar lines. However, Mackey notes that if child soldier narratives are only viewed in this manner, then the reader would be exercising a linear approach to understanding the deep work that the authors are also doing. In the case of *Moses, Citizen & Me*, my research supports this notion that although such texts may be viewed as a human rights literary form to generate humanitarian empathy for the global South, the author through narrative is also critiquing unjust socioeconomic relations and stereotypes imposed by the West (105). In her paper "Troubling Humanitarian Consumption: Reframing Relationality in African Child Soldier Narratives", Mackey further argues that Jarrett-Macauley chooses to write in past tense and to narrate half of the book in the magical world of the protagonist's mind, Julia, because its only in the imagination that a "creative healing process" (114) can be forged and "alternative ways of working through trauma" (115) are successfully recognised. I draw on these ideas in examining the power of memory as a narrative technique the author uses to move between multiple spaces which in turn enable the characters to navigate experiences of trauma and wartime atrocities. I also examine the use of memory as a vehicle to reimagine a future where traumatised victims journey through healing and are reconciled with each other and reintegrated into the community.

Coundouriotis in "The Child Soldier Narrative and the Problem of Arrested Historicization" notes that war novels, such as Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me* have a representation of a child soldier that is both the victim and perpetrator but largely represented as the victim. For Coundouriotis, these texts are retrospective in nature, and are perceived as articulating liberation politics with postcolonial resistance (195). Therefore, when individualised, these war novels obscure the national context as they already sit outside of mainstream African literature, because they are identified with national audiences from the West and are taught there (192). She further notes that "child soldier narratives are symptomatic of an arrested historicisation in part because they become trapped in a rhetorical effort to restore the childhood innocence of their narrator and as a result produce a metaphor of African childhood that is politically limiting as a characterisation of the historical agency of the continent's peoples" (192). My reading of *Moses, Citizen & Me* is attentive to the ways in which Jarrett-Macauley overcomes these limitations by subverting the stereotypical assumptions of Africa and the African child through the use of memory and narrative

frameworks that become vehicles for producing alternative discourses on Africa and the African child.

In a slightly different direction, Cecilia Addei's "Reversing Perverted Development: Magical Realism in *Moses, Citizen & Me*" argues that the text by Jarret-Macauley is about restoring the childhood of the child solider through re-education and re-formation; and that magical realism as a narrative technique offers a therapeutic experience that represents a form of healing for child soldiers (68). Addei additionally notes that while some scholars touch on the novel as being a magical realist text, the significance of magical realism lies in presenting a "more ethical technique for conveying traumatic experience that could be sensationalised and turned into voyeuristic spectacle" (68). In agreement with this point, I propose that Jarrett-Macauley uses magical realism to endorse the work of memory which re-humanises child soldiers. Imma's afore-cited essay explores the multiple forms of memory with keen emphasis on the art of forgetting. She maps how individuals and communities with a historical experience of war and violence use re-membering to insert themselves back into community and life. She is also preoccupied with the subversion of masculinity, and how male figures in the novel do this by employing memory in intimate spaces (132-134). She describes how memory is used in this manner in the novel as a form of rejecting the project of the SLTRC and the nation in favour of a more intimate and safe space around community and family. In this research, I extend this discussion by looking at how characters in *Moses, Citizen & Me* resist perceptions of memory as one dimensional and rather create their own multiple and alternative history and memories.

While Jarrett-Macauley's text is seen to re-write the nation from the perspective of a woman and a child solider, Vera's work is known for its critique of Zimbabwe's colonial and postcolonial state. Vera's preoccupation with ordinary people's everyday experiences is therefore perceived as anti-nationalist, particularly with her narration of the Gukurahundi civil war in *The Stone Virgins.* In her essay "'The Body is His Pulse and Motion:' Violence and Desire in Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins*", Sofia Kostelac notes that Vera deliberately goes against the uni-vocal and patriotic national narratives forced by the state and in doing so, she reclaims the suppressed narratives that do not fit the dominant national discourses. Kostelac notes that women are used as scapegoats by the state; and women's bodies specifically have to carry the burden of the nation, becoming the sacrificial lambs that are "necessary for the re-establishment of natural and sociocultural order"

(79). I further this argument by proposing that the same women's bodies that are meant to restore social order, even as their stories remain unacknowledged in Zimbabwe's history, retain the embodied memory of the war and its gruesomeness. Kostelac emphasises that "Nonceba's lingering scars refute the narratives of post-independence nationalism which claim that colonised subjects have been restored by the new nation-state and the novel asserts that traumatic histories must not be concealed by idealised mythologies" (85). This reading invites us to delve deeper in examining other implications of the body as a form of resistance. I argue that Nonceba's wounds are a statement that ensures the remembrance of the war and validates the unacknowledged stories omitted from this history. For its part, Annie Gagiano's "Reading *The Stone Virgins* as Vera's Study of the Katabolism of War*"* notes that Vera is "less concerned about narrating the strategy and tactics of war, the male camaraderie or the demonstrations of endurance as most war stories are told but is more interested in recording the parts of war that will not be recorded on history books," (70) the more complex, more nuanced and not easily identifiable parts that expose the gruesomeness of war. Therefore, Vera's style of writing de-normalises war and reveals its complexities. I draw on Gagiano's insights as a backdrop to hone into the author's preferred multi-narration and explore how she uses this to blur simplistic lines between good and bad characters in *The Stone Virgins* yet also provide a voice to those that would otherwise not be remembered in history books. I interrogate the different uses of memory in the context of first and third person narration to reveal the silencing or healing of characters. I am also interested in how, through her often incomplete nonchronological narration, Vera depicts how women and other marginalised groups were silenced from sharing their stories of the impact of trauma caused by the war. An additional area of interest is how she uses memory not only as a tool to narrate the nation and stories of marginalised victims of the war, but also as a device to reclaim the landscape as well as women's bodies.

Lastly, I explore the narrative techniques employed in both texts to depict trauma, while interrogating the ways in which both texts invent alternative ways of working through traumatic experiences and memories in order to achieve reconciliation and reintegration. I also further draw parallels between *Moses, Citizen & Me* and *The Stone Virgins* with regard to how Delia Jarrett-Macauley and Yvonne Vera place marginalised groups (women and children) at the centre of their texts to interrogate the place of the marginalised in their societies and the role women play in mediating healing, reconciliation and reintegration for traumatised victims of war.

1.3. Memory, Trauma and Narrative

Grounded in literary theories that frame memory, trauma and representation, this research report interrogates the authors' choice of narrative frameworks and their implications. Being central to the narration of any story or experience due to its ability to transcend time and space, moving back and forth between past, present and future, memory offers a unique opportunity for both reader and writer to travel through temporalities and spaces in narration. Vera uses multiple narrators that oscillate between present and past tense narration while Jarrett-Macauley uses a first person narrative mode that tells the story purely in past tense. Therefore, utilising literary theories on memory, I draw from scholars such Maurice Halbwachs and Aby Warburg who offer a distinction between shared memory, collective memory and individual memory; and Michael Rothberg who coins the term multidirectional memory. Aby Warburg notes that memory is uniquely individualised and also "deeply relational" (qtd in Mueller- Greene), while Maurice Halbwachs in *The Collective Memory* notes that "we always carry with us and in us a number of distinct persons" (qtd in Mileveski and Wetenkamp). These perspectives point to the complexity of individual and collective memories co-existing and in the two novels, as I demonstrate later in the study. Using Michael Rothberg's theory of multidirectional memory, the thesis explores how Jarrett-Macauley and Vera interrogate one-dimensional notions of collective memory and dominant narratives of memory which seek to exclude certain memories and stories by creating a linear understanding of history. Rothberg notes that multidirectional memory is "not simply a one way street, its exploration necessitates the comparative approach" that ensures that other stories that carry histories of victimisation are equally necessary as the more dominant and public discourses of memory (6).

With regards to trauma theory, the research draws on Cathy Caruth's perspectives in *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) and *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) which attend to the complexities of traumatic experiences of survivors. Caruth foregrounds the impossibility of a comprehensible story, not because the trauma survivor's story is untrue, but because it is impossible to tell and the desire for comprehension is in itself obscene (154). She writes that "for the survivor of trauma, then, the truth of the event may reside not only in its brutal facts, but also in the way that their

occurrence defies simple comprehension" (154-155). The thesis uses Caruth's thinking as a launch pad to explore the ways in which the two authors narrate their characters' trauma and memory, with keen focus on Nonceba and Citizen's responses to traumatic experiences in *The Stone Virgins* and *Moses, Citizen & Me* respectively. While borrowing from Freud's argument that trauma pertains to the moment of traumatic event as well as the moment of recall, the research unpacks the narrative frameworks that both authors utilise for the representation of their historic traumas as well as their characters' individual experiences of these conflicts. I then draw on Marriane Hirsch's concept of postmemory and how fiction articulates intergenerational trauma. Hirsch coins the concept of postmemory as a cross-generational reconstruction of memory, where an individual has no direct experience of the trauma but rather through dominant discourses or storytelling or hereditary behaviours, stories are passed down by parents or grandparents or society, and the individual uses the memories imaginatively to document the story (21-22). I draw on this concept of postmemory to examine how Jarrett-Macauley uses photography and narrative to retrieve and retell multi-temporal histories of Sierra Leone through Moses who owns a photography studio. In this way I suggest, Jarrett-Macauley creates space within the text to archive and recirculate pre-war memories as a redemptive and communal method to healing. By capturing photographs for the next generation, Moses' photography mirrors the project of capturing stories of the civil war for the next generation of Sierra Leoneans.

Finally, throughout the thesis, I apply Lewis and Wawrzyniak's concept of regions of memory, to explore commonalities between Vera's *The Stone Virgins* and Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me*. The concept of memory regions speaks to memory in and between nations and aims to broaden the study of memory beyond geographical areas in order to identify conceptual spaces, whether cultural, historical, political or all of the above, that unite particular nations (Lewis and Wawrzyniak 2). This in turn allows multiple forms of dialogue across different jurisdictions to take place more broadly than national discourses (Lewis and Wawrzyniak 7). Therefore, although, *The Stone Virgins* and *Moses, Citizen & Me* have regions of memory that are geographically diverse, they can be thematically defined as postcolonial memory regions. Further to this, both texts associate particular memories of trauma with particular geohistorical regions. In *Moses, Citizen & Me*, the Gola Forest is the zone that witnesses traumas and it becomes central to the memories carried by the characters and subsequent attempts at healing, whereas, in *The Stone Virgins*, it is Kezi and the Gulati Hills in Matabeleland. I further reflect on the two victim-

perpetrator protagonists in the respective novels— Citizen in *Moses, Citizen & Me* and Sibaso in *The Stone Virgins* — and their possibilities for redemption. According to Simon Lewis and Joanna Wawrzyniak "societies that have historically strong ties or have been affected by similar historical events are more than likely to cultivate and exchange memories about the shared past" which in turn creates opportunities for chains of dialogue (8). In the case of the two texts, the concept of memory regions will be particularly helpful in examining points of similarities and divergences.

1.4. Chapter Framework

This research report is divided into four main chapters. Chapter one sets the tone for the study, providing the aim, rationale, historiographical contexts and the theoretical framework that underpins the study. In Chapter two, I interrogate how the two authors use the affordances of fiction to offer specific commentaries on actual historical contexts of traumatic violence. I examine their use of multiple narrative perspectives (Moses, Citizen, Julia in Jarrett-Macauley's novel vs Sibaso, Cephas, Nonceba in Vera's) to imagine the complex subjectivities that are meshed together in contexts of war, and that demand acknowledgment of traumatic events, as a precondition to piecing together the past and imagining a future where healing is possible.

Chapter three explores the tensions between individual memory and the multiple versions of collective memory in the two novels, and how the two authors problematise these as tensions central to the civil war in Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone. I also probe the authors' use of memory to articulate the forms of silence that trauma imposes on their characters. Further, I draw on the notion of postmemory to analyse the impact of trauma on its victims across generations in Jarrett-Macauley's text, while for Vera's novel, I unpack the use of photography as a means of remembering the experiences of ordinary lives and displaying the disruptive nature of war on civilians. Lastly, through the use of Moses and Cephas who play the role of archivists in Jarrett-Macauley's and Vera's novels respectively, I analyse the ways in which both authors memorise and memorialise their nations' gruesome histories.

In chapter four, I explore how Jarrett-Macauley and Vera showcase the promise of artistic practices as vehicles for memory-making and healing. Jarrett-Macauley depicts the use of photography, wood sculpture and drama to mediate traumatic memory, while Vera mobilises studio

photography, rock art painting and architectural art (Lobengula's Kraal) to showcase different forms of memory, cross generational histories and healing.

The concluding chapter hones in on the importance of women's voices in narrating trauma. It also illustrates that by making women the centre of the texts, the authors display both the disruptive impact of trauma and modes of mediating healing and reconciliation for national healing in collaboration with men.

2. CHAPTER 2: Memories, Memorising and Memorialising in *Moses, Citizen & Me* and *The Stone Virgins*

2.1. Contextualising History and the African War Novel

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which Delia Jarrett-Macauley and Yvonne Vera use memory as a narrative technique to articulate their characters' experiences of trauma and violence. By looking at the African war novel, I interrogate how the authors' narrative choices enable them to articulate their characters' trauma in ways that index their resistance to national memory and resilience. I further tap into the afore-discussed concept of regions of memory to interrogate how Vera and Jarret-Macauley use landscapes as key narrative sites in conversation. Here, I am interested in the respective landscapes of the Gola Forest in Sierra Leone and Matebeleland in Zimbabwe as both sites of atrocities and of reimagination for the possibility of livable futures.

As war novels, both *The Stone Virgins* and *Moses, Citizen & Me* are set against a backdrop of real historic conflicts, therefore although fictional, the reader cannot fully escape the historiographical contexts and the counter-discursive nature of the texts. As African war fiction, the texts are interested in a specific positionality of Africa and its people, which has at its core a critique of the postcolonial state. In *The People's Right to the Novel*, Coundouriotis notes that African war fiction authors are interested in highlighting the suffering of African people and their resistance and resilience to the trauma as well as the impact the war has had on community and everyday life (4). Jarrett-Macauley and Vera's texts exemplify this perspective.

The authors give an account of the people's perspectives during the historical events, focusing on ordinary and marginalised voices. Although narrating war in the form of suffering runs the risk of sentimentality that is largely seen in humanitarian discourses, the authors through their narrative styles and literary shrewdness, depict the gruesomeness and senselessness of war without making it a spectacle. Therefore, both authors use literary narrative to redress inequalities about Africa and national discourses about war and liberation struggles by highlighting memories that resist the flattening predilection of some forms of collective memorialisation. As Coundouriotis notes, African war novels often "treat with suspicion nationalisms that promote political myths of unity" or support democratic ideals of reconciliation without adequately addressing the trauma (4). Vera

and Jarrett-Macauley also push against such nationalist myth-making by showcasing their characters' traumatic experiences of war and their paths to healing and reconciliation with each other and their communities. While both authors' characters are poor, politically marginalised people, Vera and Jarrett-Macauley are delicate with the portrayal of their lifeworlds and use the affordances of narrative to bestow dignity and agency on them. This dignified depiction extends to victim-perpetrators too — Citizen and Sibaso — who are granted complexity that deepens our understanding of their horrific brutality beyond simplistic demonisation. As counter-narratives, the stories of the marginalised are then placed "at the centre of the nation's concerns" (Coundouriotis 11) and force the national audience to introspect on its social, political and cultural moments.

Both authors also write in the context of temporalities which order time in the chronological format of past, present and future memories. The use of the word "memories" even for present and future perspectives is rationalised by the Greek etymology of the word "mneme" or "merimna" meaning "care" or "thought," or the Old English word "mimor" which means "mindful." Therefore, memory can mean the "mindfulness" of time as either past, present or future. This narrative strategy renders memory central to both texts, particularly when memories are jumbled up following characters' traumatic experiences, to signal the impossibility of chronological unfolding of time in the aftermath of trauma. Here, Bhekizizwe Peterson's exploration of trauma on memory in post-apartheid South Africa is instructive. According to Peterson, survivors of apartheid brutality continue to grapple with the country's haunting and oppressive past and "do not always apprehend time as a neat and chronological sequence nor do they attach the same significance to the relation between time and experience as metaphors of the book and state ideologues do" (Peterson 227). I argue that similar pattens obtain for Vera's traumatised character, Nonceba in *The Stone Virgins* and Jarrett-Macauley's Citizen in *Moses, Citizen & Me*. Effectively, after a major traumatic event, one's perception of time becomes disrupted as memories are no longer ordered chronologically but are sorted by categories of before or after the life changing event. (The next chapter expands on the use of memory to narrate these individual's trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)).

2.2. Memory as a Literary Device in *The Stone Virgins*

The Stone Virgins is a story about the 1982-1987 Gukurahundi massacre in Zimbabwe. The conflict, barely two years after Zimbabwe's independence, was precipitated by the unsuccessful integration of two military wings of the anti-colonial resistance in Rhodesia — Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). At independence, integration of the two armies became challenging owing to deep distrust between them and perceptions of unjust distribution of political power, following Mugabe's ascent to power as prime minister under Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) party ticket. Subsequently, the Mugabe regime unleashed a special unit of the national army — the Fifth Brigade — on Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces, ostensibly to combat ZIPRA dissident soldiers who were threatening national stability; but in reality, civilians bore the brunt of the tensions between the Fifth Brigade and ZIPRA. *The Stone Virgins* follows the lives of the ordinary people of Matabeleland and focuses on two sisters, Thenjiwe and Nonceba, whose lives change in an instant when war erupts. While Thenjiwe ends up brutally murdered through beheading by Sibaso, a ZIPRA soldier who randomly intrudes into their rural home, Nonceba who survives, is mutilated and raped by Sibaso. Subsequently, Nonceba has to learn to live through her trauma by rediscovering herself and finding ways to heal, and literally re-discovering her voice, after Sibaso mutilates her mouth. Vera narrates this story from multiple character perspectives before, during and after the war. In the first half of the book which focuses on colonial Bulawayo, Vera uses a chronologically fashioned third person narrator, whose slow and steady narrative pace builds up to what is to come. She lingers on the mundaneness of life in colonial Bulawayo and rural Kezi, as well as the love story that builds up and then collapses between Thenjiwe and the itinerant Cephas, a Bulawayo-based archivist at the National Archives. Vera is especially attentive to how communities interact and respond to their surroundings. She showcases the difficult reintegration of former women liberation struggle soldiers who have returned from service at independence, spanning three pages to unpack their arrival and reception at Kezi, as a pre-curser to Sibaso's irredeemable acts that result in his incapability of integrating back into society. The community, fascinated by the phenomenon of women war veterans, "have read enough to know that these women are not mere pictures from newspapers folded under their arms" and "they could greet with care and respect. But they don't" (60). These women "carry this dark place in their gaze.

They are so impenetrable. The Bulawayo men can only wait for them to say something first but they meet a dead silence" (60-61). The women are so intriguing and mysterious to them that some started wondering: "did they kill doves and if so, how? If they started asking about the doves, could it not be that some other revelation would tumble out…?" (61). The men stared "and let themselves be enamored by the possibilities of freedom. Who would have thought that one day, within this confined place they would congregate with women fighters" (62). The sentences are long and the pace is slow, with the reader as intrigued by the women as the men are. However, once the war resumes:

> A curfew is declared. A state of emergency. No movement is allowed. The ceasefire ceases. It begins in the streets, the burying of memory. The bones rising. Rising. Every road out of Bulawayo is covered with soldiers and police, teeming like ants. Roadblocks. Bombs. Land mines. Hand grenades. Memory is lost. Independence ends. Guns rise. Rising anew. In 1981. (Vera 65)

Changing the pace and the tempo of her syntax to deploy short, precise, methodical and abrupt starts and stops, Vera mirrors how clinical, emotionless and invasive the war was to the victimised characters. The short sentences seem to mirror the rat-a-tat of gunfire while capturing the general panic and confusion in the air. She also starts switching between first and third person when narrating the traumatic violence Nonceba and Thenjiwe experience at the hands of Sibaso, showing the disruptive nature of war on traumatised victims' sense of time and identity. What follows as the traumatic events unfold, is a chaotic and incoherent narration that reflects the disrupted memories and lives of the community. Vera uses the phrase "the ceasefire ceases" to allude to the First Chimurenga in 1896 where an unsuccessful attempt at reclaiming land appropriated by white settlers led to the bombing of thousands by the Rhodesian government (Coundouriotis 197). It is as if the First Chimurenga was on pause all this time and now was picking up from where it had left off. The words "the bones rising. Rising" acknowledge the historic figure of Nehanda, the spirit medium associated with the First Chimurenga, who is reported to have said 'my bones will rise again' before being hung by the British. However, far from revitilising the spirit of Nehanda's anti-colonial resistance, in this instance, Coundouriotis notes that Vera is critical of the appropriation of Nehanda by violent patriarchal figures like Robert Mugabe and Sibaso who use her as an instrument for "suppressing" historical memory (157). As if the repetition of history was

not enough, Vera also notes that "the burying of memory" begins and that "memory is lost." This connection to memory is both a physical representation of the murder of people who die with their memories and the stories they would have told; and a symbolic one that references the violent repression of Zimbabwe's history and ZAPU's discontent with the Mugabe regime's handling of the post-independence transition. It alludes to the attempt to wipe them out of their history, memories and existence. At the time of publication, two decades after the onset of Gukurahundi, neither Mugabe nor the Zimbabwean government had formally acknowledged the Gukurahundi massacres. Coundouriotis notes that Zimbabwe's history is complex and carries a dualistic paradigm of colonialism and resistance therefore one must be careful not to attempt "to make invisible the complexities of internal political divisions" (158) and writers like Vera are careful to resist the "simplistic notion of a preexisting Zimbabwean identity" foregrounded by one party and one ethnicity.

In her narration, Vera also employs a poetic prose filled with metaphors and rhythmic style. We see this throughout the novel. Right from the novel's opening, Vera's portrayal of the landscape and the vibrancy of the people and the community offers a lyrical scene-setting of the conditions of living before the war broke out. Bulawayo's Selborne Avenue heads "all the way to Johannesburg like an umbilical cord" (Vera 5), the secluded bar has a black man whose "gaze on this woman, on this skirt, on these knees, is solid. He says nothing. He wants nothing. He lets her be" (9), Ekoneni is a place where "love soars or perishes when lovers meet" (13) and when Kwakhe River in Kezi swells following heavy rains, preventing the bus from crossing the bridge, "people have to spend a day and maybe half a night waiting on the other side, nestling their treasured wares gathered from the city, while listening to the river sulk" (Vera 19). These examples and others offer detailed memories of lives and livelihoods that fall apart when war erupts. Vera provides the detail as if to imprint a lasting memory on the reader that evokes a deep sadness at all that is lost when war erupts. Selbourne is not just any road leading to Johannesburg, Ekoneni is not just a corner of any building nor is Kwakhe River a random geographical feature. Vera inscribes each of these places with memories of people whose lives happen there. Additionally, the colour and the attention Vera affords her characters, demands insertion into the reader's memory, making us recognise their full humanity amidst the mundaneness of life, as a precursor to the gruesomeness of war's upheaval of these lives which we have come to care about. This invitation by Vera to remember becomes a microcosm for the nation to remember the violence of the Gukurahundi

massacre, which has been described as “uniquely humiliating, tribalistic and political” (Alexander et al 204); a collective memory that the Mugabe regime preferred to forget and mute out of official history.

2.3. Memory as a Literary Device in *Moses, Citizen & Me*

In *Moses, Citizen & Me,* Jarrett-Macauley pens a story about the aftermath of the 1991 civil war in Sierra Leone particularly on child soldiers and the communities impacted by war. She narrates the story from the perspective of Julia, a London-based Sierra-Leonian, who travels from London to Sierra Leone following news that her aunt, Adele, has died. When she arrives at her uncle Moses’ house in Freetown, Julia is confronted with news that Adele was shot by her eight-year-old cousin and child soldier, Citizen, who is also Adele’s grandson. Horrified by this, Julia has to find a way to mediate healing for her grief-stricken uncle, Moses, and his grandson, Citizen, all while navigating her own dual identity that has left her feeling displaced between two worlds, Sierra Leone and London. Jarrett-Macauley employs various narrative techniques that place memory at the centre of her story and her characters. First, she uses a first person expatriate narrator, Julia, who tells the story in past tense. Therefore, not only does the reader have limited access to the other characters’ viewpoints and is forced to observe thoughts and actions from the perspective of the narrator but, because of the past tense narration, the reader also has to rely heavily on Julia’s memories to piece together other characters’ identities and stories. However, as an expatriate narrator, Julia is able to walk the reader through the scale of the damage caused by the war from the landscape, the infrastructure and the people, all while using her memory to help the reader contextualise life in Sierra Leone before the war. This is seen in the below scene:

> The place is not like everywhere. Normally as you walk through the city, from Kissy by the harbour up to Murray Town at the top, you can hear various greetings; some say Indireh, others Buwa, occasionally you might get a Bonjour, and many people just say; Morning ma. It is a city where everyone speaks at least two languages and meeting and greeting is not necessarily a quick and simple thing. That is how different people have lived together there for a long, long time. But war came, and greeting near strangers became a fool’s pastime. (Jarrett-Macauley 1)

Although Julia is familiar with Sierra Leone as a person with memories of how it was before the war, she tells the reader: "I should make something clear. I have never been good at West African politics. I know that had I been there I would have interpreted the conflict differently" (5), flagging to the reader that she is no different to the reader who has probably only encountered the war politics of Sierra Leone in newspapers and on the television. This declaration signals to the reader that they can trust Julia's perspective as she will be a sincere and reliable narrator despite her poor knowledge of West African politics or how unreliable memories can be, enabling the reader to learn with and navigate Julia's journey alongside her. Ken Junior Lipenga notes that the ex-centric position shared by both narrator and author (Jarrett-Macauley, like Julia, is a second generation UK- based migrant), allows for a perspective of Sierra Leone's history that is not threatened by the dominant collective memory of war constructed by the nation: "in a way, that explains the emotion in the narrator's description of the land and its people - it is partially fueled by the desire for re-attachment to the country and shock at finding that the very fabric of society has altered" (Lipenga 97). Therefore, with the simple pleasures of greeting and chatting to neighbours gone, the landscape invaded by "darkness", homes "ransacked, torn down and burnt" and families uncertain of "who was a friend and who was not" (2), the reader starts to get a sense of the severity of the loss and mourns the life of Sierra Leoneans before the war, along with Julia.

As an expatriate narrator, Julia is not at the frontline of the trauma experienced by others. This enables her to exercise a degree of empathy towards Citizen and other child soldiers, which is impossible for those who bore the brunt of the war and those who inflicted pain and harm on others. This also allows her to be the perfect mediator for healing and reconciliation between Moses and his grandson, Citizen, who have not lived under the same roof nor spoken with each other since Adele was killed. That is why on Julia's arrival at Moses' house, "there was no one about, but a chicken came to look" (6). Citizen was outside the house next to a tree looking for something and Moses, after meeting Julia briefly, "left her standing alone in the kitchen" (13) and retreated back to his photography studio. After three days, Julia notes that she had not spent much time alone with Citizen and so "had no way of knowing what he was thinking, what he liked, what he wanted or what he would do next" (8) and so "silence cut" (8) between the two of them. As for Moses, she notes that he was at his photography studio where he lay on the floor and "has cried himself into the shape of a foetus. When he wakes in the morning, he will remember they said Adele is dead. Then he will remember how. He will return to the shape of a foetus in vain" (8). Here, the reader

sees how Moses' grief and trauma has reduced him to a state of utter dependency like that of a foetus in a mother's womb, unable to do anything for himself. Further, Moses' denial of his wife's death creates a repetitive cycle of the traumatic event that is in line with Freud's observation about the moment of recall as reiterating the trauma. Moses and Citizen have been elsewhere for the last three days and the trauma experienced by both had rendered them incapable of interacting with anyone, especially each other. Therefore, with Julia's arrival, over time Moses was clearer and stronger in voice and calmer; Citizen could utter a word or two (10) showing that Julia's presence was already making a slight difference.

Jarrett-Macauley narrates the story in past tense, focusing on the aftermath of the war. This enables her to use the shared past memories and experiences of her characters as a bridge to slowly reconnect, heal and reconcile them to one another. The reader first encounters these shared past memories and experiences when Julia and Moses are in the kitchen together for the first time since Julia's arrival; and they have difficulty speaking about what happened. After pulling a chair to sit next to Moses who was nibbling on "bread without any kind of spread" (14) and sipping tea, Julia joined in and so:

> for some time the two of us sat mashing bread in hot tea, like two toothless old people. It was something we had in common: the love of a good strong cup in the morning…In the three days we had not said anything much. It seemed enough to be coming through this in silent company, a hushed post-mortem. (Jarret-Macauley 14-15)

At this point, the trauma of Adele's death and how it happened is still hard to talk about, meaning Julia has to find other ways of connecting with Moses. With a shared past memory and experience of being tea lovers, the act of waking up to drink tea and nibble on bread together is enough to get Moses out of the studio and bonding with Julia again. The reader sees Julia use shared past experiences and memories and photography to reconnect and reformulate a bond with Moses after 20 years of being apart. Julia also uses reminiscences of her childhood to understand Citizen, and other child soldiers and help restore their lost innocence and navigate her own self-identity by grounding herself in the familiar while treasuring and archiving old photographs of Sierra Leone with Moses. The retrieval of past memories as a tool to heal and reconcile can also be read as the author's way of placing personal memories and experiences of the war alongside the national

objectives of Sierra Leone, demanding an insertion of other alternative stories into existing national narratives.

Jarrett-Macauley additionally uses dreams, visions and the magical to blur the lines between what is real and what is imaginary, enabling her characters to oscillate between spaces and temporalities in order to constantly retrieve from the past to contextualise the present and use the present to reimagine the future. Ato Quayson notes that "the world's liminality and changeableness is not asserted merely as an article of faith but is actualized in a literary form of writing that oscillates constantly between the real and the magical and thus seeks to obliterate the boundary between them" (162). This blurred boundary is what ensures that both the reader and the characters in the story perceive the narrative as a single story with no hierarchy between the real and the magical discourse, where the reader and the characters are acutely aware of the shift. The reader first sees Jarrett-Macauley use magical realism when Citizen has a nightmare shortly after Julia puts him to sleep after bathing him:

> Gently pushing to open his bedroom door, I was alarmed to see the room on fire. I rushed to his bedside. Citizen was deeply asleep with his head still on the pillow and his face pointed straight at the ceiling, his breath audible and clear. With my fingertips, I touched his brow. He was warm but not especially hot, although flames continued to lick the walls and swirl around the old dresser. But there was no crackle of burning wood, no sign of ash, no hissing of fire. The fire made no impact on the room. Outside rain was pouring more heavily and the night grew fiercer, but inside the house we were safe, dry and comfortable. A stray thought floated into my mind: A child's bedroom is adapted to his life, his imaginings, his dreams. Oh God, give him peace…Oh God give him peace. (Jarrett-Macauley 48-49)

Jarrett-Macauley deploys magical realism to grant the first person narrator Julia, access to Citizen's and other child soldiers' inner self (thoughts, dreams, nightmares, visions) in order to understand them better to mediate healing. Witnessing Citizen's mind in the grip of a nightmare enables Julia to see the extent of the trauma Citizen has suffered with greater immediacy. In seeing and getting a glimpse of the depth of Citizen's pain and suffering, she too is shocked by the severity of it and cannot utter anything more than to repeatedly say "Oh God give him peace" (49). Another reason for the author's use of magical realism is that *Moses, Citizen & Me* is a novel about Africa

and its people, who as part of their traditions, cultures and history have always viewed the supernatural, which sits under the genre of magical realism in literary art as very real, and often, even more real than what the naked eye can see. That is why towards the end of the story when healing, restoration and reconciliation takes place in Gola Forest, Julia acknowledges that they were not alone and that all this time, the ancestors were there with them (159). (I return to this point in Chapter 3 when analysing the role of memory in mediating healing and reconciliation). It is not long after this nightmare that Julia's imaginative mind opens her up to the multifaceted reality of child soldiers, their experiences and memories during war and the Gola Forest in Pandebu, where both the atrocities of the war took place and the journey toward healing begins for Citizen and the child soldiers, enabling Jarrett-Macauley to reimagine the place of ruin as a place of healing and reconciliation. As a result, Julia's next encounter is when Anita, Moses' neighbour offers to plait her hair noting that the braids she had on were done "so small-small" (50) but when Anita's done plaiting her Julia will "see things better" (51). Jarrett-Macauley uses Anita's plaiting as a ritual for reintegrating the expatriate Julia into Sierra Leone so that Julia can reconnect with Sierra Leoneans and start perceiving things from their perspective rather than in a "small-small" or narrow-minded view or through an expatriate's London lens. Therefore, while Anita was twisting the cornrows Julia notes that her head, "became a valley lying between green mountains. Downstream, circles organising themselves around my ears transformed into a ravine rushing over yellowed rocks. My head was a map of Sierra Leone, its farmland, diamond mines, mountains, ridges, people, soldiers, fighters, leaders" (51). The twisting of the conrows similar to the map of the country enables Julia to transcend into spaces that allow her to comprehend what Citizen and the other child soldiers have been through. Anita ensures that Julia learns and "see things better" (51) in order to "make a difference" (50) and mediate healing and reconciliation for her family and other child soldiers. Given that hair is seen as bearing sacred and spiritual potency in many African communities, it is noteworthy that Jarrett-Macauley borrows from this cultural knowledge and links it to the head and brain as sites of rationale and memory in Eurocentric science. This allows the author to point to Julia's recalibrated reliance on both indigenous African and Eurocentric scientific epistemes in navigating the traumatic landscapes of her family and her nation. Julia's ability to now perceive Sierra Leone, the landscape and its people better, Jarrett-Macauley then opens up a world of wonder and complexities for her to navigate and form a part of.

Some scholars consider magical realism as a literary device that offers a therapeutic experience and a form of healing for child soldiers. While this is accurate, Cecilia Addei adds that it also presents a "more ethical technique for conveying traumatic experiences that could be sensationalised and turned into voyeuristic spectacle" (68). African magical realism foregrounds the notion of memory as central to the text, often "the shifts between different notions of space-time within African magical realism are subsumed under the pressures of a national history or familial saga, thus converting the shifts between different modalities of space-time into an idiom of putative historiography" (Quayson 165). As a reader, one sees this on several occasions in the text when Jarrett-Macauley uses moments in the private and liminal spaces of the text to ping a critique to the nation. One such moment is when in the Gola Forest, Ibrahim, a violent 20-year-old lieutenant who is abusive to his wife and the child soldiers, shoots and kills Masu, the brother of another child soldier, Abu, because he had malaria. After shooting him in the head, Ibrahim utters, "That's the first good-for-nothing bastard!" (64). Abu lays his brother to rest and then in a circle of comfort the child soldiers collectively hold him, sharing his grief:

> Abu was crying. Dance, shouted Lieutenant Ibrahim, I say dance! He scratched his face, fingered his gun and pulled his khaki trousers out at the knees. He looked as though he would shoot another one of them. His wife scurried away and put on some thudding music, a dull boom, boom spiked with the clinking sounds of percussion. The child soldiers began to move, bodies mimicking those of people in delicious ecstasy of free movement. They danced as if with this performance of contentment they might at last banish the spectre of loss and grief from their lives. This is what had been commanded: to dance like gallant soldiers. Evening approached and the sun's insistent burn was waning, but the soldiers hurt. In a line, along with others, Citizen and Abu danced after a fashion. Citizen tapped his feet, cautiously deferring his sorrow for later, when he would lie alone at night. Lieutenant Ibrahim climbed on to the gnarled trunk of a tree, from which he shouted, Enough, that's enough. Not one muscle in his face moved but he emitted a long sigh with the final, Stop, enough. An ominous calm descended on the child soldiers as though the imponderable weight of his regime was a force they could not withstand. The lieutenant touched his wife on the buttocks and kissed her on the neck, indicating that it was time to move on. In eerie silence the child soldiers began to move about looking for their things. (Jarrett-Macauley 64-66)

This highly spiritual, highly supernatural and yet highly manic and psychotic scene may be analysed as mimetic of a struggle to be free from traumatic, repressed memories inflicted by war. The text depicts a moment of compulsive symbolism dubbed by Ato Quayson, as "the drive towards an insistent metaphorical register even when this register does not help to develop the action and define character or spectacle or create atmosphere. It seems to be symbolization for its own sake but in fact is a sign of a latent problem" (197) caused by a traumatic experience. Therefore, it is packed with symbolisation, metaphors and meanings that are a microcosm of the Sierra Leone war and a critique of the state's response to it. It is also a dialogue between complete opposites, Ibrahim versus the child soldiers or on a national level, the State versus The People; perhaps at the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) which was created in 2002 to "try those who bore the greatest responsibility for the decade of violence" (Connolly 15). When using this strategy of opposing dialogues, one can dissect the authority figure of Ibrahim being The State, while the child soldiers represent The People of Sierra Leone. Following the murder of Masu and observing how the child soldiers came together in support and comfort of Abu, Ibrahim sees Abu "crying" and acts out by abruptly putting an end to the mourning, shouting "dance", "I say dance!" all while the child soldiers were collectively working through the loss they had just experienced. Seconds before they obey, Julia tells the reader that Ibrahim gets in position by scratching "his face" and fingering "his gun" as if prepared to shoot anyone who disobeys him. However, in obedience, Ibrahim's shouting is met with song when his wife puts on "thudding music" and the child soldiers start dancing. So, while Ibrahim "shouted" the child soldiers "moved" as if they were people high in "ecstasy" in a state of "free movement." This signals that while Ibrahim was in a state of "command" therefore, authority and order, the child soldiers were in a liberating state, as if releasing any traumatic and repressed memories of the war. In that moment, the child soldiers were "banishing" their traumatic experiences and memories by dancing "with this performance of contentment" making them the "gallant" ones compared to Ibrahim who held on to his trauma like the child soldiers held on to his command. In this liberating moment that seems like the child soldiers were in a trance, charged by what Julia describes as "ecstasy" from the outside looking in, they may have seemed like they were out of control run by the energy of "delicious ecstasy" in them whereas, internally the mental state of a person who is high is a state of excitement which is caused by the overproduction of dopamine, the pleasure hormone that produces euphoria. Symbolically, where the State may think it has control of its people, it is actually people releasing

the bondage of State control on them. When "evening" came instead of "waning" like the sun was, or forcing the environment to suit their conditions, like Ibrahim did when he "climbed on to the gnarled trunk of a tree," the child soldiers collectively and "in a line" continued to "dance after a fashion." Therefore, while there are People like Citizen who "cautiously defer" their "sorrow for later" when they are "alone," publicly, they stand united in their goal, with the understanding that there are alternative paths to the desired goal. When Ibrahim (i.e., the State) has had "enough" of the song and dance, everything must come to a halt and so it reverts to using repressive war strategies to erase and forget the memory it gave permission to. At this point, experiencing an "imponderable weight" from Ibrahim (i.e., the State), the child soldiers (i.e., The People) embrace the "ominous calm descending" from the environment above and follow the next order from Ibrahim. This scene becomes a critique of the State for not allowing its people to mourn what they have lost from the war, the way they wanted to and for as long as they wanted to, rather it restricted them to the State- run process of the Sierra Leone TRC and as soon as the process was done, even without adequately addressing and acknowledging the suffering and impact of the war on its people, it commanded the people that it is "time to move on".

Ibrahim's refusal to join in on the process of mourning as well as the banishment of his traumatic memories and experiences through song and dance implies his system can no longer contain the trauma and suffering and therefore releases itself as a compulsive disorder that leads to him acting out, shouting, having inconsistencies in mental state and behaviour, probably exacerbated by the sound of the music. With Ibrahim unable to transcend to a state of calm and/or excitement like the child soldiers, he is left in a mental and psychological impasse that manifests as the need to erase and stop any interventions to healing and restoration that the child soldiers are in the process of. For the child soldiers, the dancing becomes a progressive step in the stages of mourning for traumatised people following the circle of comfort. The "thudding music," the "boom, boom" and the "clinking" not only sounds therapeutic but enables a trance into a different realm outside of reality that elevates them to collectively start working through their trauma. Magical realism is able to offer a reading of the war that pays attention to places and practices that sit outside of State authority or public spaces like the SLTRC or Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) and adult mediation of spaces such as the home. Elsewhere, Brenda Cooper also notes that magical realism tries to "capture the paradox of the unity of opposites" (15) and the reader sees this clearly come into effect in the above scene where questions of where the power lies, who benefits and, in whose

interest, does this scene work for between Ibrahim and the child soldiers? This magical "third eye" (16) subverts the notion of seeing this scene purely from the literal sense where Ibrahim holds the power and constructs a complicated viewpoint of the power dynamics at play between him and the child soldiers.

2.4. Memorising and Memorialising the Landscape

The use of memory as a mechanism for mediating healing and restoration while providing a discursive space for the reimagination of the future is palpable in both texts. In her analysis of *The Stone Virgins,* Coundouriotis notes that the landscape becomes a symbol of the nation, and this similarly resonates with *Moses, Citizen & Me,* when Coundouriotis notes that the landscape stands outside history, evoking a sense of identity for both the individual and the nation (28). I add that it is also this idea of the earth replenishing itself that lends the memory of the landscape enduring power beyond the gruesomeness of the war. The concept of regions of memory enables one to set Sierra Leone in dialogue with Zimbabwe, in an analysis of how specific landmarks within the texts memorialise the nation and its people. Both authors narrate their stories as a repository of historical memory, therefore the landscape additionally bears witness to the individual and collective trauma experienced by the country and its people. Jarrett-Macauley uses the magical space of the Gola Forest to not only mediate healing and recovery at the very place of ruin but also as a space where proper examination can be conducted objectively in order to reimagine a new future for Sierra Leone. The Gola Forest therefore becomes a safe haven outside of the city and villages of Freetown that are dilapidated or being burned down by the number-one-burn-unit which Citizen was a part of in the war. This is seen when Julia describes the damage caused by the war in Freetown upon her arrival. She notes that buildings, offices and school buildings were "evacuated" and "weeping" (Jarrett-Macauley 6). Then when Julia first teleports into the magical realm to get an understanding of the war, the burn unit and Citizen's involvement, Freetown was filled with "devastation on homes, land, people" (58), while in the magical Gola Forest everyone seemed to be shielded from the sound of gunfire heard from a distance (130). The historical memory of Freetown was even worse than how Jarrett-Macauley narrates it. According to Connolly, between the period of 1998 to 1999 during the decade-long civil war, there was "destruction of property in Freetown and its environs as a result of an operation referred to as Operation No Living Thing. An estimated 3000

people were killed, women and girls were raped, children were abducted and subsequently conscripted, limbs were amputated and much property in and around Freetown was destroyed" (13-14). The damage caused by the war, especially during this period, shows that livability in Freetown was close to impossible. Anita, Moses' neighbour in the text whose lean-to was "knocked down and burnt" tells Julia that they were lucky "the whole of Uncle Moses' house was still standing" (10). As for the Gola Forest which historically is at the centre of the war and recruiting children to the military force, David Rosen's *Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism*, notes that the extensive diamond deposits in Sierra Leone are found in the forested areas of the Gola Forest and everyone flocked the area where illegal diamond mining and lawlessness became rife - which in turn led to thievery, banditry, violence and bloodshed (74-75). Rosen adds that when the war intensified in the later years, a military group which was known to be populated with children and youth, also formed in forested areas such as the Gola Forest (88). Jarrett-Macauley uses the Gola Forest as a landmark site where devastation and ruin took place and turns it into a site of healing and restoration at a time filled with despair. Borrowing from Coundouriotis' observations about the importance of the landscape in *The Stone Virgins*, I assert that a recognisable landscape, such as the Gola Forest, "encompasses people" (28) and brings forth a "renewed sense of attachment to a place" (28). Therefore, when Julia teleports again into the magical realm and lands at the Gola Forest, the reader begins to see how the Gola Forest becomes a safe space for healing. Julia describes the Gola Forest as an "adventure" with an "intoxicating magical order; scrupulously structured and tinged with babble, unreliable clocks and tracks" (84) and that by the stream "the air was soft" and "children could become themselves again, soft-limbed, soft voiced and free" (130). In her description of the Gola Forest, Jarrett-Macauley reconfigures a historical place soaked with memories of ruin into a place of safety, signaling that it is only upon confronting memories of traumatic violence that national reconciliation and healing become possible.

For Vera however, the memory of the landscape serves a dual function. Unlike Jarrett-Macauley, whose landscape is mostly focused on safety and healing of victims of war, Vera's landscapes of Bulawayo, Kezi and Matopos, endure as sites of harm, memory, as well as the hope of healing. Therefore, these landscapes become closely attached to the identity of both the individual and the nation, aching and bending along with the pains of its people and blossoming and healing along with them. Standing outside its history and witnessing the atrocities of the war, the landscapes in

Vera's novel are also inscribed with the people's stories, memories and experiences. The reader sees this in the description of the landscape before compared with after Nonceba's traumatic experience. Before her traumatic experience "trees grow wildly," and Gulati hills are "the greatest heights, soaring above any of the hills or rocks of Kezi, swallowing the earth around them, beckoning" (18), illustrating a landscape that is growing and flourishing, mirroring the lifeworlds of the people living in it. However, following the traumatic experience, the landscape registers the annihilation of the war when the "hills collapse" and the rocks in Gulati are "plaint, malleable, insubstantial," they "turn into water" "stone dissolves like salt" and "rocks fade off" and "(139). The marula tree near the Thandabantu Store which the soldiers burnt down with the owner, Mahlathini, inside, on charges of allowing dissidents to convene there, goes into overproduction: "The skin of the fruit swells with the heat, then cracks, and the sweetness spills" (145) and this excessive the fruit registers the anomaly of the war and the spectacle of nature which has since tilted out of the ordinary due to the violence inflicted on victims and witnessed by the landscape. The narrator notes that Nonceba's "pain is higher than the hills" and just like a rock is "suspended in empty air, smoothly rounded, not falling at all. Simply waiting" (140), so is Nonceba. Just as the traumatised victim is tortured and violated, so is the landscape, as it bore witness to it. Nonceba who then departs for Bulawayo, leaves Kezi in a state that Cephas describes as a "naked cemetery" (159) depicting the lifelessness of the place following the horrific bloodshed witnessed by the land. Elsewhere, Buhlebenkosi Dlodlo in her thesis on an ecocritical reading of the landscape in Vera notes that even five decades after the civil war, "most Zimbabweans live as refugees in foreign lands and are only ferried back to the country as corpses to be buried in the land of their forefathers" (56).

2.5. Memorialising the Nation and its People

Both Vera and Jarrett-Macauley's narrative techniques therefore destablise the nation state's monologic view of trauma and how it can be overcome. The narrative strategies are not only committed to historical narration and imagining a reconciled collective future of the nations, but they also depict the power of a country's memory to renew itself and its people long after the war.

The narrative techniques place the responsibility and accountability for the war with the state, rather than the people who suffered from it. Moreover, these techniques interrogate the historiographic memories that are filled with contradictions, erasures, forgetfulness, containments and manipulations of the historical events, by showing how this same history of the impact of war is still manifesting long after the wars ended. Using Judith Herman's stages of recovering for traumatised people, which include 1) the establishment of safety 2) remembrance, mourning and reconnection with ordinary life, the reader can see how Vera and Jarrett-Macauley deploy the same strategies when narrating the road to recovery. However, recovery for the nation requires multiple alternative interventions, rather than a singular, state-led approach to "move forward." Vera through Cephas shows that even the restoration of the ancient kraal is a long journey but a start to community integration and requires more than the individual efforts to restore a nation. On her part, Jarrett-Macauley only makes intervention possible in the magical realm and the private space, as the SLTRC and the SLSC interventions did little to include the marginalised or explore other restorative interventions. She ends the text open-endedly with Julia who needs to decide whether she will stay in Sierra Leone or return to London. To echo Peterson who articulates the process of healing for traumatised victims of oppression in post-apartheid South Africa:

> there is no easy walk to healing and not all the paths commence from or lead to official interventions. Ordinary people have embarked on journeys in search of self-preservation and restoration, compassion and dignity, through establishing the appropriate relationships with the divine, ancestors, the land, self and community. (230)

Vera and Jarrett-Macauley's texts resonates with these sentiments by refraining from offering a pre-imposed route to recovery. Rather, they too depict that it is "no easy walk to healing" but healing is necessary for the reimagination of the future of the countries and Africa as a whole. By depicting the gruesomeness of war, its damage and disruption to people and community, both authors critique the nationalist stance of violence as a necessary means for progress, when indeed it is a senseless act that no history can claim to have progressed a nation by, but rather prolongs disaster and damage.

In this chapter I explored how the narrative techniques deployed by both Vera and Jarrett-Macauley in their texts were memory-making, memorising and memorialising. Through their narrative techniques, both authors flesh out the memory made by victims of war, memorise in

detail through literary form, their stories of resistance and resilience while critiquing the state for its lack of accountability in the wars or its inadequate attempts to address reconciliation and memorialise those whose lives were victimised by the state. Both authors' narrative techniques retrieve the traumatic experiences and memories of the marginalised, who would otherwise be excluded in history books. Both authors utilise the strategy of the introverted genre where they address their own national audience, ensuring that people's stories are memorised/remembered as victims whose stories of their suffering, are also stories of their resistance and resilience. In an interview, Vera notes that she found writing *The Stone Virgins* "emotionally difficult" not because of the scenes in the text but because the history was "even more macabre and gruesome" (Gagiano 71) than what she depicts in her novel. On her part, Jarrett-Macauley indicates that in the writing of *Moses, Citizen & Me* she borrowed from Paul Richard's detailed collection of anthropological essays which unpacked the Sierra Leone civil war and the degree of damage the war did to the country and people. Ama Ata Aidoo's review of *The Stone Virgins* considers the novel "a song about the author's people, and the tragedy of their lives and their loves" (Vera i) while *The Literary Review* describes *Moses, Citizen & Me* as "a foil to the bleak and disturbing subject matter…Jarrett-Macauley sensitively established Julia's family as a microcosm of the ruptured nation" (Jarrett-Macauley i). Effectively, the two authors pay tribute to their respective countries and their people by memorialising the victims whose lives were lost in wars. In the next chapter, I focus closely on the role of memory in the face of trauma and how narrative and memory are utilised to either subvert or empower an individual's experiences of trauma and violence.

3. CHAPTER 3: The Impossibility of Trauma on Memory

3.1. Contextualising History: Memory Tropes in Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe

On 26 November 2023, the current Sierra Leone government was attacked by several gunmen at its military barracks and at the prison in the capital city of Freetown. Al Jazeera reported that the gunmen shot and killed at least 20 people, among whom 13 were soldiers, and as a result of this, a countrywide curfew was implemented immediately. The initial communication by the government to the public was that this was just a “breach of security” (Al Jazeera) and that the issue had been contained. It was not until two days later that the state came out to say it was a “failed coup attempt” (Al Jazeera) intending to overthrow the recently re-elected current President Julius Maada Bio. This attempted coup was the second in five months following highly contested elections in June 2023. No organised political group has so far been linked to the attacks, and the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) came out to say that the attack “threatens the country’s peace efforts” (Al Jazeera).

Perhaps not calling the attack a failed coup attempt the first time the government came out was a result of needing to further investigate the issue. However, I propose that the state did not want to trigger the memory of another attack by the opposition political parties who wanted to overthrow the then President Joseph Momah, that resulted in the decade-long civil war in 1991, as this would have caused fear and panic in the country. It is the same civil war that Jarrett-Macauley uses to depict the power of memory in narrating traumatic experiences, whether individual or shared by a collective.

It may seem like a distant memory now but in November 2017 in Zimbabwe when the now deceased President Robert Mugabe was forced to resign and step down after 37 years in government, history had come full circle when the political rally at White City Stadium triggered the turn of events that led to his ouster was set in Bulawayo. According to Ray Ndlovu, author of *In the Jaws of the Crocodile*, Bulawayo is a city “that has never fully embraced ZANU-PF” (4)

Mugabe's political party, as it was always dominated by Joshua Nkomo's party ZAPU, which occupied Bulawayo and the rest of the Matabeleland region during the mid -1980s and post the Gukurahundi war in 1987. Ndlovu notes that it was the people in this region of Zimbabwe "who bore the brunt of the Gukurahundi campaign of the mid-1980s" (4). Therefore, "for Mugabe and other ZANU-PF leaders, venturing into Bulawayo became a decision not to be taken lightly. Bulawayo represented a political minefield where ZANU-PF and its leadership always had to tread cautiously" (4). Therefore, it came as no surprise that the site at which Mugabe was accused of war atrocities became the site at which his power was annihilated. It is important to note that Mugabe was 93 at this point, and at the rally he had started to position his wife, Grace Mugabe as his successor one day- because even at 93, Mugabe was not planning to retire or step down anytime soon. So, although the booing at the White City Stadium political rally started halfway through Grace Mugabe's speech, it was the White City Stadium gathering that expeditated the coup that led to Mugabe resigning as President of Zimbabwe on 21 November 2017, 17 days after the rally. Ndlovu notes that "during his final days in office, his fate was ultimately one of rejection. Rejection stared at him from his army, from ordinary citizens who staged street marches against him and from the ruling party, ZANU-PF, over which he had presided for nearly four decades. There was no longer any other option but for him to take his leave" (12).

Thus, when one reads Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins*, the reader engages the novel in a way that demonstrates the intensity of memory in all its forms to narrate a people whose marginalisation by the state under the leadership of Mugabe has been immutable and inannihilable. These memory tropes both in Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone set in motion an awareness of how traumatic collective memories, inadequately addressed, can continue to repress a people. In *Multidirectional Memory*, Rothberg notes that collective memory is like shared memory, "it integrates and calibrates the different perspectives of those who remember the episode into one version" (15). He further notes that it is also memories that may have been initiated by "individuals but that have been mediated through networks of communication, institutions of the state, and the social groupings of civil society" (15). Therefore, although the notion of collective memory resonates in these two countries' contexts, Rothberg outlines that collective memory's point of convergence into "one version" is overestimated. Instead, he offers multidirectional memory as a concept that encapsulates a memory that is shared by individuals and formed through mediascapes, but also "highlights the inevitable displacements and contingencies that mark all remembrance" (15-16).

In other words, multidirectional memory is collective and historical but disrupts the everyday as it juxtaposes two or more disturbing memories whose collective history is in and out of public consciousness, therefore does not converge into one version and rather, can allow for different or multiple possibilities of memory without being "simple pluralism", demonstrating how "all articulations of memory are not equal" in power or whether socially or politically but rather "psychic forces articulate themselves in every act of remembrance" (16). In this chapter I use the concept of multidirectional memory to explore the ways in which Jarrett-Macauley and Vera critique their respective nations' one dimensional notions of collective memory. In their critiques, Vera and Jarrett-Macauley explore other possibilities of imagining memory-making in wartime by drawing on individual memory to articulate their characters' experiences of trauma and violence to enable healing, restoration and reconciliation or repression.

The reader therefore sees how the trigger of a war memory in 2023 Sierra Leone can threaten "peace efforts" or booing in a Bulawayo stadium in 2017 following news that another Mugabe would be the next Zimbabwean president can trigger resistance against a system that had been determined to continue repressing its people. Individual memories, which occupy center-stage in the two novels, are uniquely different from collective memories. Aby Warburg who notes that humans are "deeply relational" beings, highlights that all memories are simultaneously individual and collective (15). By implication, there are shared platforms for which the individual can locate or articulate themselves. These shared platforms in the case of Vera and Jarrett-Macauley are located in private spaces such as the home, liminal places such as the imagination and intimate spaces such as thoughts. This chapter follows the individual memories of characters in the texts whose lives have been scarred by traumatic experiences and explore the ways in which both authors articulate memory.

3.2. Nonceba's Traumatic Experience in *The Stone Virgins*

In *The Stone Virgins*, a critical analysis of Nonceba whom the reader encounters as she is thrust into a traumatic experience when the reader first encounters her, depicts the brutality of wartime. Before the dissident soldier, Sibaso bursts into the two sisters' home and kills Thenjiwe in Nonceba's presence, the reader only knows Nonceba through Thenjiwe's perspective. Effectively,

our first direct meeting with Nonceba is in the midst of a brutal attack that will leave her deeply traumatised to the end of the novel. Nonceba at this point in the novel then becomes a symbol of those victims whose life stories are unknown, but whose experience and trauma of the war must be known. Vera shows the trauma of individuals whose lives get senselessly violated by perpetrators and disrupted from their everyday ordinary experiences. So, when the reader meets Nonceba, whose name means mercy — a seeming nod to the cruel mercy that Sibaso shows her by not killing her but letting her live with a deathly trauma — Vera allows the reader to get to intimately know, see and be present with her in her thoughts as witness to the violent murder of her sister, Thenjiwe. Through naming as a literary device, Vera foreshadows Nonceba's life for the reader long before Nonceba utters a single word. We learn from Thenjiwe that the sisters are very close and that Nonceba is a schoolteacher in another region of the country. On the ill-fated day of Sibaso's attack, she is at home with Thenjiwe. When Sibaso rapes Nonceba after beheading Thenjiwe, Nonceba's memory is disrupted and the reader is left to fill in the gaps to understand the violence inflicted on both her and Thenjiwe. The narration moves from coherent and clear third person narration, to a meshed up, broken, incoherent and incomplete narration that goes back and forth between Nonceba's jumbled up first-person narration and third person narration, we see this jumbled memory in the scene below:

> There. With him. He whispers over her neck, heated air. His words move slowly over her. He is close, she opens her eyes and conquers the darkness burning beneath them. She moves into the light. She is floating without direction. She lets her eyelids fall. Darkness descends. Light is sharp. It penetrates. On the other side of the doorway, where the wall curves and disappears, she sees her sister, Thenjiwe. A part of her. Thenjiwe fallen, breasts pressed to the ground, bare soles, blind eyes, bent arms folded, legs stretched out, a body pleading, a stillness visible. I am afraid to close my eyes. I am afraid of myself. I am darkness. He is an ordinary man, wearing a blue shirt with buttons, not white, not black. Gray. Short sleeves. Khaki trousers. A safe attire. A shirt you can trust, with buttons you can trust. Her eyes swallow him whole. (Vera 71-72)

In the above scene, Nonceba is left unconscious by Sibaso following the rape and when she wakes, she sees Thenjiwe on the ground and she recalls "I am afraid to close my eyes. I am afraid of myself" (72). Upon her waking, although the description of Sibaso's outfit is narrated in third

person, the reader sees it from Nonceba's point of view. The reader can therefore track the disturbance to her memory as a result of the violence and trauma when she moves from being afraid to close her eyes, as it would signal that she may die if she does and therefore to stay alive requires a fixation onto Sibaso's outfit. Keeping her gaze fixed on Sibaso's outfit, I assert, dissociates Nonceba from the live trauma, enabling her to repress the present memory and shelter her from the gruesome violence of Sibaso's actions. Caruth speaks at length about how the trauma and the individual's experience of it becomes like a person who is both witnessing a traumatic event while at the same time being the person the event is happening to. She makes the point that this simultaneous experience of being the witness while also undergoing the violence is what makes trauma inaccessible, as it comes at the cost of memory: "the force of this experience would appear to arise precisely, in other words, in the collapse of its understanding" (Caruth 7). The twelve- page stretch of narrative describing Sibaso's attack is slowed down by Vera, for the reader to track the traumatic experience as we move from witnessing Nonceba's rape to Thenjiwe's murder by beheading, and back to Nonceba, where Sibaso mutilates her lips, leaving her literally unable to speak. Vera makes the reader present to the blow-by-blow detailing of the brutality unfolding in order to cast what happens in the intimacy of homes during wartime, into the light in all its sickening brutality. However, because trauma is impossible to comprehend in itself, Nonceba cannot entirely possess it fully to capture every moment. We see this again when she wakes up at the hospital knowing that Thenjiwe is dead yet having her thoughts intertwined with her sister's. When she looks outside the window from her hospital room, she sees hibiscus flowers blooming and the author shares the below insight into Nonceba's disrupted memories:

> They have large petals. She does not like red flowers. 'Red flowers are the brightest flowers. You must like them'. Why is Thenjiwe saying that? Why is she saying that in her head? She, Nonceba does not like red flowers. They fill up the entire space in the mind. She does not want a flower to do that, to bloom in her head. She likes white and yellow flowers. When you place them in your hair or hold them in your arms, they look like flowers, not blood. (Vera 88)

A few scenes later this happens again when she imagines a screaming woman in the same hospital she is in, being suspended from a tree. Thenjiwe in her head responds with a question on whether the woman is indeed hanging from a tree. These two scenes are post the trauma Nonceba has just

experienced and occur a week after she gains consciousness. Then in a later scene, Thenjiwe tells her that she has picked the most beautiful flowers for her. In three of these scenes the reader sees Thenjiwe's thoughts being meshed together with Nonceba's, "making an absolute claim on her memory" (90), filling up an entire space in her mind (88) and Nonceba notices that "before this, she knew how to hold a thought in her mind. Now she is vanquished" (91). Her memory is disrupted to a point where, although she is aware that Thenjiwe is dead, she cannot get her out of her own head. In fact, "she feels sad when Thenjiwe has given her the most beautiful flowers" (93) This is because of her traumatic experience where now the red flowers remind her of blood — Thenjiwe's blood—, and the woman who is as tall as a tree, registers as a woman hanging from the tree rather, similar to Thenjiwe hanging on Sibaso's shoulder following Thenjiwe's beheading. Caruth notes that on the one hand, the traumatised person's "dreams, hallucinations and thoughts are absolutely literal, unassimilable to associative chains of meaning" because trauma is "purely and inexplicably, the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits" (5). The reader sees this clearly in Nonceba's case, hence reality in the hospital room and the traumatic images of blood and the dangling of Thenjiwe's body by Sibaso are still intertwined into her memory. When she returns home briefly after being discharged from hospital, back at the site of her trauma where she is faced with the impossibility of remembering to recover, Nonceba knows she cannot. The narrator describes her as "without words" (93) "trapped by her silence" (93), maintaining "a deep silence" (95) having "died together" (96) with Thenjiwe. Caruth notes that "many times the silence is the only proper response" (154) as both speaking or not speaking is impossible. Scholars note that Nonceba's silence shows the form of repression the state imposed on its people to claim patriotism and national unity, and the patriarchal violence inflicted on the female body during war: "her inability to speak is emphatically repeated throughout the four chapters that comprise her narrative and Vera continuously returns to the image of Nonceba's mouth as an inarticulate wound" (Kostelac 84). Nonceba's silence is, however, different to Citizen's silence in *Moses, Citizen & Me*.

3.3. Citizen's PTSD in *Moses, Citizen & Me*

With Citizen, his repressed memories of the war are an intentional and voluntary silencing that act as a coping mechanism but show up in a disordered manner when triggered in the mundaneness

of everyday life. Freud's observation that trauma manifests at the moment of encounter and at the point of recall is evidenced on multiple occasions with Citizen's character. One moment is when, after the silence between him and his grandfather has thawed enough for them to relate normally, Citizen plays hide and seek with Moses where he hides behind a curtain and when caught by Moses, he screams:

> Moses hid first in his studio, throwing an old net curtain over his head, then by the door of his bedroom. Next, it was Citizen's turn. Citizen hid again in the studio. But on being found the child let out a scream so soul tearing that it cut through the house and, they say, threw down the servants' quarters at the rear. It was Elizabeth alone who responded to that scream. She ran over to Moses' house and moved through to the studio where they were. She lifted Citizen at the waist, pressing his small frame up close to Moses, so the old man could feel the boy's breath. Mister Moses, look into the child's face. (Jarrett-Macauley 78)

Given the nature of hide and seek and the memory of being in constant hiding at the forest as a soldier, the reader can see that Citizen had a traumatic episode that even he could not control or comprehend. In explaining the moment of recall of a traumatic memory, Caruth notes that trauma "does not simply serve as record of the past but precisely registers the force of an experience that is not yet fully owned" (151). The reader can see this vividly with Citizen who seems to be as frightened as the reader and other characters of what he may have seen or heard when Moses caught him hiding. Therefore, when Elizabeth presses Citizen onto Moses, I suggest that it is an attempt to help Citizen return to the current reality of seeing his grandfather rather than someone/something scream-worthy. On Citizen's traumatic symptoms, Ken Junior Lipenga notes that for Citizen:

> The most obvious are his muteness; his distrust of others; and the nightmares he endures. His reticence is a mark of deeply repressed memories, the first of which is undoubtedly his killing of his grandmother. Indeed, one of the central endeavours of the narrator is to unearth Citizen's story. But, as the novel illustrates, this is a narrative of violence and tragedy that can only be revealed through patience and by some rather surprising methods. His uncommunicative demeanour is in itself a scar on his ability to vocalise his violent experiences, which nevertheless seem to plague his sleep (99).

So, while like Nonceba, Citizen's memories are repressed because of the trauma, his silence and wordlessness are not a depiction of state repression or patriarchal violence, but rather a depiction of internally working through his traumatic experience, in an intimate space, therefore requiring patience from those around him until such a time he can find a method of expressing it. I assert that Citizen, although unaware at this stage, works through his trauma to prevent further harm to those around him, therefore choosing internalising and seclusion as a form of coping. This is because the text notes that he is hardly at home and when he is, he is sitting under a tree in the yard alone (41). Imma notes that "both victims and ex-combatants routinely decided against testifying in the public venues set up and designated by the SLTRC" (130) in favour of dealing with the memories in private spaces. She adds that this decision is also rooted in the Seirra Leonean local culture where people felt "public truth-telling lacks deep roots" and "in certain circumstances ritual might be more important than truth" (130). I argue that despite his age, Citizen leans on the same belief system because although he does not speak. He also relies on his routine engagements with family and his neighbours as an attempt to reconcile. This is also why it is only in the teleportation to the liminal space of the magical Gola Forest that he finally overcomes his trauma. Although his grandfather's house is not a public space, Moses initially treated it as such, particularly when he invited people over to try to help Citizen; and so, the reader sees Citizen reject this form of mediation: "no one was able to coax him from under the table. The boy looked at everyone and everything with suspicion" (79).

Citizen's silence has also been read as underscoring his lack of voice and agency. Scholars suggest that this positionality enables the reader to see Citizen solely from the perspective of an innocent child who needs help and therefore Jarrett-Macauley fails to fully explore whether Citizen acknowledges his wrongdoing and feels guilty from it. Annie Whitehead notes that the author "uncritically replicates the discourses of abnegated responsibility…which allow the child soldier to be reintegrated once more into social and familial structures but which are notably deployed by the adults rather than the children within the novel, leaving the former child combatants lacking in both social agency and political insight" (250). In Whitehead's view, Jarrett-Macauley fails to fully explore whether Citizen acknowledges his wrongdoing as he was compelled by a soldier to shoot his grandmother Adele, thus absolving him of any fault and extinguishing any behaviour of perpetrator. However, I argue that Jarrett-Macauley resists the urge of making Citizen fall into the simplistic binary categorisation of victim or perpetrator but rather demonstrates the victim-

perpetrator characteristics to her readers. She reveals this by depicting on one moment, Citizen being an eight year old child who is unable to speak, gardens with his neighbour and is bathed by his aunt Julia and yet in another moment, the same Citizen is holding a knife to the same aunt Julia who bathed him a few chapters earlier:

> I moved right up to him and looked down to see that he was holding a knife with a short blade. You know weapons are not allowed. He was silent, a sphere of distrust moved between us. Give it to me. At that moment he turned, gripping the knife more tightly and pointing the blade in my direction. It was all but dark now. A sudden fierce terror billowed inside me but my feet were rooted to the spot. Citizen held on to the knife proving he was in charge. A boy soldier to the last, he stared at my anxious face, knowing that I wanted to run but could not. (Jarrett- Macauley 161-162)

From Julia's perspective in the above scene Citizen is no longer a child when Julia refers to him as "a boy soldier," indicating a maturity and awareness of his actions. She notes that Citizen held the knife "proving he was in charge" or stared at her "knowing" that she wanted to run but could not. However, from Citizen's perspective this may be another traumatic episode and he is therefore not in control of his actions. Although this may be the case, the reader shares Julia's terror because Citizen seems persistent in pursuing Julia with a knife. It is only when Citizen whispers "Wait…He spoke again: Please wait" (162) that the reader assumes that it may have been a traumatic episode he may have been unaware of. I assert that Citizen was unaware because although he does not apologise when he snaps back into reality, his whispers and pleas signal that he senses Julia's fear and feels guilty about it. At this point, Jarrett-Macauley has complicated the reader's analysis of Citizen who in this scene can be viewed as both victim and perpetrator. Not long after, Julia reverts to calling Citizen "child soldier" again. Scholar K Thomason who unpacks the concept of guilt for child soldiers in autobiographical and fictional texts, notes that "their guilt is appropriate because it reaffirms their commitment to morality and facilitates their self-forgiveness" (1) and furthermore it "presupposes both their moral agency and the moral agency of their victims" (11) highlighting that without guilt there's no responsibility or accountability for wrongdoing, which would then make re-integration into society impossible. I assert that this resonates with Citizen's guilt. His guilt demonstrates his moral compass and in turn makes him restorable and redeemable.

Additionally, Mackey notes the narrative intent of naming deployed by Jarrett-Macauley. With Citizen named as a civilian of his country- Sierra Leone- Mackey notes that fictional child soldiers "are meant to represent no one real person, while at the same time representing many" (107). Jarrett-Macauley uses Citizen's name as a critique of the state, that to be a citizen of Sierra Leone as a young child, is unfortunately, to be a child soldier. Citizen becomes a representation of all child soldiers who, because of the atrocity committed that led to their being child soldiers, are redeemable. Furthermore, the survival of the nation-state is dependent on the healing and reintegration of the Citizens. Contextualising the child soldier in a broader sense outside of *Moses, Citizen & Me,* Thomason notes that these child soldiers who feel guilt and are redeemable, usually have a story of being coerced into soldiering. She notes that they are children who are kidnapped, whose parents were killed in front of them so that they are unwanted, are drugged and are severely punished if disobedient (4), similar to Citizen's story and those of other child soldiers in the Gola Forest. Gagiano notes elsewhere that "this kind of conscription rite of young children was (or is) not limited to Sierra Leone or to the African continent but Jarrett-Macauley demonstrates by means of her text how, the continent's people with the gratefully accepted help of some committed foreigners can find methods of healing and of societal and familial reintegration" (LitNet Argief). The reader also finds out that Citizen used to be called George. However, as the novel is written in past tense, from the perspective of Julia, who has in retrospect facilitated and mediated an environment of healing for Citizen, I assert that Citizen becomes the new name given to him following the process of healing from his trauma. Therefore, by the time Julia narrates Citizen's story to the reader, Julia already perceives Citizen as a healed child whose innocence has been restored and his reintegration into society has been successful. This is because, as Alicinda Honwana who speaks broadly on the healing of child soldiers in Africa notes, some African cultural rituals for cleansing returned soldiers "resembles a rite of passage, in which the person making the transition from the military to the village is purified of pollution and given a new place in the family and community" (108). I posit that this mirrors Citizen's reintegration; he is given a new name by Julia and his community rather than a new place, thereby redeeming him from his crimes as a child soldier. However, this is not the case for Sibaso in Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins*. Through regions of memory, where Citizen is redeemable for reasons mentioned above, in *Moses, Citizen & Me*, Vera's Sibaso character, although also a victim-perpetrator, is irredeemable.

3.4. Sibaso and the Spider Effect in *The Stone Virgins*

Sibaso, whose name means a flint to start a flame, is first introduced to the reader in violent dialogue with Nonceba. Vera thrusts him to the reader in the same way Sibaso thrusts himself to Nonceba when he sexually assaults her and decapitates Thenjiwe. The reader immediately views the rape scene from Nonceba's perspective as Sibaso "presses his hand down on her limp arm" (67) and looks "for something in her he can still break" (67). It is clear to the reader from the "cruel embrace of his arms" (67) and how "he enters her body like a vacuum" (68) with "all the fine instincts of annihilation" (69) that Sibaso is a perpetrator inflicting harm on Nonceba. I posit that it is easy to read the scene for what it is — a rapist and murderer comes into the Gumede home, rapes and mutilates Nonceba and murders Thenjiwe. However, Vera is purposeful not to narrate the violence like an ordinary scene of rape, mutilation and murder where the reader can neatly categorise Sibaso as the perpetrator that he is. Instead, the reader has to slow down the tempo of reading, in the same manner that Vera delicately slows down the act of violence and in some instances, one has to re-read the scene to distinguish the rape and murder. I assert that Vera complicates the violent scene for her reader to mirror the complex and controversial discourses of the war portrayed at the national level. Similar to the war, the violent scene leaves clues behind, that mesh up and complicate the reader's perspective of Sibaso. In the text, it is as if the same rape scene could be a dialogue between two people dancing or lovers involved in a different kind of intimacy. Gagiano notes that as "frightening, terrifying as Sibaso is shown to be, it is impossible to ignore the delicately conveyed poignancy with which Vera simultaneously endows and depicts this man" (69). Therefore, to ignore it, is to remove the part of Sibaso that makes him a victim and an ordinary man who too has had harm inflicted on him by another.

While made witness the violence Sibaso inflicts on the sisters, the reader is also made aware of the parts of Sibaso that make him a victim, all throughout the rape and murder chapter. The reader sees this when Vera lets the reader into Sibaso's thoughts and describes Sibaso's movements as careful (67), or his arm "waiting" (68) or his patience being like "an entire season" (71). There is

a steady, nurturing patience that he exercises with Nonceba, reminiscent of a mother's handling of a baby. Vera also describes Sibaso's contact with Nonceba as a touch he returns, as if he is conscious that he touched her "without permission, guiltily, yet like a kind act" (68). When Sibaso holds Nonceba's neck, Vera notes that it is "as though she were a child he would raise in kindness" and that he "cradles her like a wounded child" (71). Vera's depiction of Sibaso evokes a mother's cautious handling of a baby. Sibaso's dissonant enmeshing of gestures of care amidst devastating harm in this moment, is thrown into sharp relief when we later learn that Sibaso's mother died before giving birth to him and Sibaso swam out of his mother's womb. Vera further describes Sibaso's actions with Nonceba by how he attaches his body to hers through his breathing. The text notes that "his breathing is her breathing" (70) and when he talks, Sibaso "whispers over her neck, heated air" (71) and lets "his words move slowly over her" (71) and the narrator notes that Sibaso means it when he wants to be held by Nonceba or responds to her with "your fingers are warm. Touch me with these smooth hands. Move your arm this way" (72). I assert that Vera reveals Sibaso's actions to depict his deep need for connection given his lack of a mother's nurture and his experience as a soldier, which isolates him from social integration and connection.

The narrator also notes that "Nonceba almost believes him, in him" (71) and that this violent and cruel man is also "an ordinary man" (72) wearing "a safe attire. A shirt you can trust, with buttons you can trust" (72). These phrases meshed up in the gruesome act of violence disrupt the reader from seeing Sibaso in a linear way. Terence Ranger notes that Vera does not make a spectacle of his violence or merely co-sign to his "motiveless wickedness. Instead she enters into his innermost thoughts" (209) to reveal to her reader how an eighteen-year old boy who was enthusiastic about life and dreamt of fighting for his country's liberation dropped out of his first year of university and became what he now is, "a person whose own humanity was killed and whose nature was violated and distorted by his engaging in what initially seemed a sacrifice of self for the ideal of national liberation"(69-70), Gagiano notes. She adds that by doing so, Vera grieves both the dissident combatants such as Sibaso for having their humanity and lives crushed by the anti-colonial war as well as the lives the same combatants took because of both the anti-colonial war and the subsequent post-independence fall out between ZANU and ZIPRA, which is partly the ostensible reason for Sibaso's unhinged attack on the sisters, amidst the Fifth Brigade's bombardment of Matabeleland, apparently in search of malcontented ZIPRA dissidents like him.

Sibaso seems to be acutely aware of his victim-perpetrator position. He sees himself in the spiders with which he is fascinated. He notes the spider that changes colour when it is mating "devours its own partner and rolls him into a fine paste. With this it courts its next partner" (84) and then in another spider with thin long legs he notes, "it knows how to live on a margin, brittle, like shard glass. Who would want to eat such an already-dead thing? In the future there will be no trace of it" (85) and lastly regarding the venomous spider, umahambemoyeni, he notes that it has "made an art out of inflicting harm" (85). All three spiders mirror Sibaso as either the victim or the perpetrator. For the spider "devouring" its own partner, Sibaso is either "devouring" the Gumede sisters or the nation-state of Zimbabwe is "devouring" him – a ZIPRA soldier who started off fighting for liberation on the same side as the ZANLA soldiers that now want to devour him and those like him who question the Mugabe regime's political moves at independence. Comparable to the spider with thin, long legs, Sibaso is either erasing the "trace" of the Gumede sisters as they already live on the "margins" of society or he too will be erased by his country in the future because he too, like the Gumede sisters lives on the "margins" of society. Therefore, in the same way that he inflicted harm on the Gumede sisters as if it is an "art" form, he too experienced the same fate from his country. Coundouriotis notes that Gukurahundi war atrocities "require a focus on both the harm and the wrongdoing. Suffering and wrongful action must be discussed in relation to each other, but they must also remain distinct" (176), highlighting that Sibaso is both a liberation fighter who was not a hero but a "pawn, doing the violent bidding of those in power," (178) pinging critique and responsibility of Sibaso's behaviour to the Zimbabwe nation-state. This dominant discourse of a liberation struggle rooted in patriotism is what Vera pushes against when she subtly presents Sibaso as both the victim and the perpetrator to the reader. Crucially, going by the ethno-nationalist logic of the Mugabe government's attack on Matabeleland, Sibaso's name ethnically locates him on the same side as the Gumede sisters; but his anger at the Mugabe government's betrayals is displaced onto the sisters, who, like him, are at the mercy of a violent state that unleashes terror on its freshly liberated citizenry. In doing so, Vera challenges the reader to make space for the possibilities of multidirectional memories present during war and challenges us to question the simplistic narrative based on a notion of Zimbabwe being a one identity, one ethnicity, one party country. Rather she invites us to explore the more complex narrative that offers a history that does not repress a memory of an entire people in favour of what is and wants to be dominant.

As a perpetrator or the devouring and venomous spider against the Gumede sisters, Sibaso is unhinged, without restraint, and commits horrendous and irrevocable harm. He calls himself a war instrument, showing awareness that he cannot come back from his actions; and recognising that re-integrating back to society post-independence is impossible for him. He is the traumatised veteran who does not belong to independence. I suggest that this is less because he is unable to integrate back into society but more because this post-independent society would rather forget a past he seems to not only be stuck in but remembers vividly. He notes "I am a man who is set free, Sibaso, one who remembers harm. They remember nothing. They never speak of it now, at least I do not hear of it" (97). Not only does he remember the history the country wants to bury and move on from, but he is haunted and traumatised by it both mentally as he feels "an explosion" (121) in his head and holds on "to the fence of the school, like a prisoner" (121), and physically as his "entire left arm stopped moving, or moved but I did not feel it - it dangled" (97). Sibaso's whole being, body and mind has recorded the war atrocities that his country has swapped for joy. His arm now dangles and hangs loosely like Thenjiwe's beheaded body dangled on him when he carried her. Sibaso's trauma lies in his inability to forget while others do and his body just like his mind, remembering all of the trauma. While reconciliation and reintegration are impossible for Sibaso, Vera however, resists easily mirroring him to the spider with thin, long legs, that lives on the margins of society and will be soon forgotten without a trace in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Rather, she ensures that some see and acknowledge the role he played in the war when the tenant pities his involvement in the war and a few weeks post-independence is "cynical in the midst of the loudest joy", failing to understand "what people have been doing waving miniature flags in the air for weeks" (120). This tenant, like Cephas, is a new kind of man that Vera introduces in the novel who practices restraint, unlike Sibaso, and approaches the future critically. Like Jarrett-Macauley does in *Moses, Citizen & Me,* Vera cautions her reader that the nation is currently the only recognised system of inclusion for selected people who are assumed to hold shared memory and are expected to submit to this memory. In Vera's view, it is therefore important that this system which holds so much power is critiqued when it abuses its power and people and reminded of its responsibility to multidirectional memories and perspectives.

3.5. Cephas' Mission Impossible

Cephas' trauma situates itself differently to that of the other three characters', namely, Nonceba, Citizen and Sibaso. This is because Cephas does not actually experience trauma directly but through witnessing. The experience of trauma through witnessing is going to be the same for the next two characters, Moses and Julia, that I unpack later in this chapter. As traumatised victims/victim-perpetrators, Nonceba, Citizen and Sibaso display a negative coping mechanism that leads to compulsive disorders. While, as witnesses, Cephas, Moses and Julia's trauma plays out differently. Their trauma leads to a positive coping mechanism as it propels them to memorialise trauma victims through either archiving or listening and mediating healing for those who were in the frontline of violent traumatic experiences. Returning to Cephas, when he is introduced to the text, the reader knows Cephas as this man who had a short but deep romantic relationship with one of the Gumede sisters, Thenjiwe. That is why he is devastated; and his devastation prompts him to visit Kezi when he learns what happened in Kezi from a newspaper. Cephas is deeply hurt because of the bond he shared with Thenjiwe but also feels deeply guilty for not being present to protect her. This propels him to help Nonceba, who is both related to Thenjiwe and holds her memory, heal. In helping Nonceba, Cephas hopes that he will get closure from Thenjiwe's death and heal from the guilt. The reader sees this when Cephas visits Nonceba at her home in Kezi and tries to persuade her to come with him to Bulawayo:

> After what has happened here, you should be afraid. It would be wise to be afraid, he insists. Here, he says. Here. Does he know exactly on which patch of ground she, Nonceba, experienced her loss? Does he know where Thenjiwe died? On which spot of ground she was killed? Here, he says, as though he knows exactly what happened here. He knows nothing about the here of it. The feel of that here. The sight of it. The moment so full of here. He has no memory of her here in which her sister died, not like a living thing, but trapped in the arms of a stranger. She wants to laugh, curiously and maddeningly, at his coming here and talking about Thenjiwe and saying all he has to say about his own version of events, of here. Nonceba feels removed from him, sold in her own memories. Her pain is her own, untouchable, not something to be revealed to a stranger who just happened to follow his past here. Here, he says, knowing nothing about it at all, the past, which has vanished. (Vera 156-157)

In this scene, Cephas encounters a traumatised Nonceba whose memory is triggered to recall a past memory she would rather forget because all this time "her effort has been to separate herself from her loss" (151). The reader sees that although Cephas is asking his question out of concern rather than poking for the story of what happened to Thenjiwe, Nonceba's repressed memory of the traumatic experience rushes compulsively in her defense, to protect her from a pain and loss repressed since regaining consciousness. The reader is also aware that when the traumatic experience occurred, Nonceba was not entirely present, because she was in and out of consciousness. Vera demonstrates to the reader the tension of Nonceba living in both the known and unknown memories of her trauma and her response to both. Therefore, the above scene can be interpreted in one of two ways; either as Nonceba being defensive as she too cannot completely say what really happened "here" or her self-doubt of a memory she is unable to access.

Cephas's gentle character, which knows not to force her for an explanation, allows Nonceba to accept uncertainty. Rather the gaps in Nonceba's memory challenge Cephas into a new kind of listening, "the witnessing precisely of impossibility" (10) as Caruth notes of traumatic experiences which always carry the impossibility of knowing. Vera depicts Cephas accepting Nonceba's story when he lets Nonceba pace around the house without disturbing her and when she settles herself again, he says "I think you should leave Kezi" (157), showing that whether he knows the full story or just the parts she is willing to share, he still wants to help. Also, in helping Nonceba, in a way Cephas gets to retain the memories of Thenjiwe that made him feel like "loving her was like living in the stars" (155). This is because when Cephas visits Nonceba and tells her how he knows Thenjiwe, not only is he reminiscing a lost love but he is able to connect with Nonceba on a deeper level due to their shared memory of Thenjiwe, and memory's ability to be "deeply relational" as Warburg notes. The narrator notes that although they both acknowledge the shared memories of Thenjiwe that each of them hold, "the nature of their friendship is in the elimination of detail, of the specific, in order to free her. They cannot yet discuss matters that concern the cause of their despair" (172) and like Nonceba, Cephas misses Thenjiwe and grieves her like Moses grieves his wife Adele in *Moses, Citizen & Me*.

Therefore, although Cephas is indirectly affected by Thenjiwe and Nonceba's trauma, he carries a pain that can either propel him to avenge the Gumede sisters' trauma or to restrain him into protecting Nonceba. So, when he chooses to help Nonceba heal, Vera presents to the reader a

different man from Sibaso. She provides the reader with an alternative masculinity that has restraint and guilt unlike the unhinged Sibaso who is an "instrument of war" (141). Gagiano notes that Cephas "although so tellingly contrasted with Sibaso for his ability to retain passion and compassion despite hurt, is shown to have been damaged (like the rapist-killer) by the exclusionary practices of colonialism" (66). That is why the narrator notes that he has a look of "despair" (172) as the past still exists and he still has "nightmares" (175) that make him worry about Nonceba and whether she is still around, in the two bedroom house they then share later on in Bulawayo. Elsewhere, Meg Samuelson notes that Cephas's restraint is one that depicts a man who wants to help sustain Nonceba rather than contain (28) her like Sibaso did when he inflicted harm on her. Cephas's love for Nonceba is unlike the one he experienced with Thenjiwe where he noted that if she would die, he would hold on to her bone; rather, it is the kind of love that does not need to control her (30). Moreover, scholars note that the rationale for Vera to counterbalance Sibaso's irredeemable character with Cephas is to offer a reimagining of a nation that produces a different kind of man to Sibaso.

The reader sees this when Cephas corrects Sibaso's traumatic actions with Thenjiwe and Nonceba. When he visits Nonceba in Kezi where Sibaso thrust himself into the Gumede sisters' home, Cephas does not follow Nonceba into the house, but rather lingers at the entrance and "seeks her absolute permission before walking in" (151). Where Nonceba was maimed and was unable to speak or let out any sound in the presence of Sibaso, with Cephas, Nonceba is able to tell him: "if I raise my voice, all my uncles can hear me" (156), as a warning should Cephas try to hurt her. Where Sibaso was taking life from Thenjiwe and Nonceba, Cephas sits in front of Nonceba "offering some kind of life after everything is buried" (159). Again, where Sibaso broke her bones, saw her as a "dot in his mind" and cut her mouth and "thrusts [her] body to the ground" (70-78), Cephas finally takes "her right hand and cradles it in his as though he is counting each of her fragile bones...holding her as if she were the most precious thought in his mind, not wanting her to leave his mind at all" (162). Then lastly, where Sibaso was inflicting harm and creating scars on Nonceba, Cephas "shields her from the invisible ones" (172). By doing this, through both Sibaso and Cephas, Vera raptures the dichotomy of tribalism or political affiliation so that she constructs a more inclusive society which goes against the dominant Zimbabwean ethno-nationalist views, as in the text Sibaso is Ndebele and Cephas Shona. The reader sees this when Cephas's desire to help Nonceba heal also plays out in a broader level which is symbolic to the rebuilding of the

nation when he ventures into the project of restoring the ancient Lobengula Kraal at the Museum of Zimbabwe.

As a historian and archivist, his restoration of the ancient Lobengula Kraal, which was the precolonial seat of the Ndebele kingdom, is a memorial space for the Ndebele people and a restoration of history to a state of multidirectional memory. The beehive-shaped Lobengula Kraal becomes a collective space and a symbol of the state project of reconciliation and solidarity. However, Cephas had to evolve to be able to reconstruct a new nation. Ranger notes that at first, Cephas seemed to set aside "any kind of analysis" and was "yielding to an obsessive love" but with his task of restoration, he "draws on history for healing and is a man "whom history is not foreclosing…It allows choice and variation and embraces everybody." (215-216). Rothberg, when unpacking multidirectional memory in the context of the Holocaust, notes that "multidirectional memory has been written under the sign of optimism. Because the structures of individual and collective memory are multidirectional, they prove difficult to contain in the molds of exclusivist identities" (19) as such while memory is "at least as often a spur to unexpected acts of empathy and solidarity, indeed multidirectional memory is often the very grounds on which people construct and act upon visions of justice" (19). I posit that the same views resonate with Vera's *The Stone Virgins*. In offering the reader Cephas's character, Vera chooses an optimistic outlook when reimagining Zimbabwe's gruesome past war and strips out the dominance of one version of history that centers around one identity, one ethnicity and one people, in exchange for a diverse, more complex narrative that is inclusive of all the people of Zimbabwe regardless of ethnicity or political affiliation. When she uses the art of crafting the Lobengula Kraal at the museum through Cephas for archiving, she too uses storytelling in the form of a novel as her artistic tool to archive the multidirectional memory of the nation of Zimbabwe.

3.6. Moses's Traumatic Experience and Julia's Baton in *Moses, Citizen & Me*

Likewise, in Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me*, Moses like Cephas is a historian and an archivist, recording the gruesome past of the country and memorialising the victims of Sierra Leone's civil war. However, before Moses becomes an archivist who together with his niece Julia,

"will build [Seirra Leone] again" (192) he has to first contend with his trauma and the devastating grief it has caused him. I assert that Moses's trauma is three-fold: first, is the trauma of his wife, Adele being killed in an inhuman way during wartime. The narrator notes that Adele's body was in "a bulky shape, twisted and distorted, strange in colour and horrific to smell. It was a woman. Her hands were tied behind her back and her legs were bound together. There were several bullets in her back" (Jarrett- Macauley 2). The second, is the trauma of learning that his wife Adele was killed by his grandson, Citizen. Moses's friends eventually confirmed that "it was indeed Citizen, Moses's grandson, who one dazzling morning that March had led them to the mangrove swamp to show what the big soldier man had made him do" (2) and pointed at Adele's body. The third is the trauma of losing his only daughter, Agnes and his son-in-law Kole who were both killed execution-style at the farm, where Agnes and her husband stayed with Citizen. When Citizen was captured by soldiers, forced to be a child soldier, he returned to his grandfather's house after escaping from the forest. In this three-pronged trauma, I posit that scholars fail to fully explore the horrific trauma that Moses goes through and has had to witness. Although the focus on Citizen by scholars is valid, I argue that Moses has to deal with the horrors of the war and also carry the weight of archiving Sierra Leone's gruesome war history. Jarrett-Macauley is intentional in putting this weight on Moses, to depict the impact of war on ordinary civilians who, in the midst of trauma and violence, also carried the burden of witnessing and remembering, for themselves to heal but also for the nation and its future generations to adequately heal. The author adds this burden to also depict ordinary civilians' resistance to the war and their resilience amidst the suffering they experienced because of it. Moses does not just carry the responsibility of archiving the history of Sierra Leone before the war and the impact the war has had on its people, but I assert that Jarrett-Macauley creates a character in Moses that executes this role of archiving this war history in a complex and delicate manner, that does not perpetuate views of Sierra Leone and Africa that show a people who lack agency or are blindly patriotic. The reader sees this in the following scene when Moses contextualises how life has been in Sierra Leone since Julia's mother, his sister, went to England. The siblings, while in conversation, erupt into an argument about Pa Collins, a politician who passed away and whose funeral was coming up. Pa Collins seems to embody the complexity of having done some good for Sierra Leone but with the country still a long way to go before things were good for its people, Julia's mother notes that Pa Collins's was concerned with an extravagant lifestyle rather than improving the country's prospect:

> That must have been a terrible blow to his wife and children. Not just to them, but to us all, to us all, said Moses. I think there are many who could have helped our country to develop but they just left it to the few to struggle on and do what they can. Perhaps they are too cowardly to face up to the responsibilities. Cowardly… that's going too far. Anyway, things don't improve just because a few people make a big show of themselves. So, who said anybody is making a big show? People have to have a chance to enjoy what they have put in. Yes, what they have put in. Time and time again is people enjoying what they have not put in. So much Mecedes Benz! People just drinking and congratulating themselves and for what? For what eh? You talk as if these men- good, solid people like Pa Collins- have led the country astray. But they haven't, they've shown what can be done. They've led the way. I for one will want to be there and show my respects. And you should too. Me? No, I don't think so. I'm not saying I'm glad the man is dead. No, not that kind of wickedness. But what has he really done to improve things? Any little something and you want to clap the man on the back, like he's some saint. Are you so stupid you can't see the mistakes they're making? (Jarrett-Macauley 71).

The scene above depicts how Moses both acknowledges the country's pitfalls whilst not letting those who do not reside in the country perpetuate European stereotypes about African governments, as corrupt. Rather he notes that it is people who are willing to also participate in rebuilding the country in whatever small way, who make a big difference rather than those who choose to escape to go live elsewhere. Jarrett-Macauley therefore uses the argument between Moses and Julia's mother to reveal the tension of African politicians and Moses' maturity recognising both the improvements made and the current shortcomings. Jarrett-Macauley uses Moses' perspective to depict that progress requires a contribution and a collaboration by all the people who live in the country. In this scene, Jarrett-Macauley also reveals the tension from the perspective of the expatriate narrator, Julia, who, in her self-discovery journey finds herself split between the two worlds of Sierra Leone and London. Through Moses, Jarrett-Macauley resists being partial by choosing either the African or the European perspective in this conversation. Rather, she highlights the tension that both progress and lack of progress can co-exist and through Julia, refuses to fall into binary categorisations that box expatriates into choosing either to reside in Africa or elsewhere- as in the ending of the text, the reader is left wondering where Julia is located (I unpack this in the next chapter). Also, through Moses' character, the reader sees that

Moses does not project views of masculinity that are hard, suppressive and insensitive to trauma and violence. Moses' character rather holds a delicate balance of being honest about the horror of the war on people, critiques the nation for its complacency in it and yet remains hopeful that through memory-making and adequately addressing the wounds of the nation, a reconciled future of Seirra Leone can be reimagined. Moses can be described as depressed when grieving /his wife and the loss of his daughter, especially after the narrator tells the reader that Moses and Adele did not know if they could have a child three years after marriage with so much "fuss" (95). However, his grief goes beyond the familial space, it is a grief that reflects a national grieving of a people who lost lives and a past time where "there was no sign of despair, death, war and mutilation" (44) that they can never go back to.

Anita, Moses's neighbour notes that other families think former child soldiers are ruined and they do not take them back in but Moses takes Citizen back, noting that "he needs care" (16). I posit that Moses does so for two reasons: firstly, out of a sense of duty and care as a relative. Since Citizen also lost and is grieving his parents, Moses recognises that Citizen needs "someone who would care" (16) particularly because Citizen feels guilty for killing his grandmother, as suggested by his inability to articulate the trauma he experienced, that now also haunts him. Secondly, I propose that Moses takes Citizen in because, the older man understands that his healing is attached to Citizen's healing from his grief and trauma. As an archivist, he understands the nature of memory as deeply relational. Jarrett- Macauley uses Moses to show that navigating, rather than avoiding a memory of trauma and violence in a safe, familial and or communal space, although difficult, will lead to healing and reconciliation at both individual and collective levels. Through Moses, Jarrett-Macauley highlights that this journey does not require one to enjoy it but it is necessary to ensure adequate addressing of the wounds. In an attempt to fast-track addressing the trauma, Moses even brings his friends over to intervene, although Citizen rejects this (79). However, after working through the trauma with the help of Julia as a mediator, the journey towards healing the trauma begins. Jarrett-Macauley achieves with Moses, Citizen and Julia in the familial space what she faults the Seirra Leonean government for failing to achieve. Granted that at first, Moses's trauma leads him to avoid Citizen- suggesting that working through trauma, especially when you have to do so with the party who caused it to begin with is no easy task. However, what Moses meant for avoidance (photography), actually helps him remember Citizen as his grandchild and the importance of family and community in fostering healing.

The photography studio therefore, enables three things for Moses' trauma. First, the studio becomes a place to avoid Citizen. Secondly it becomes a place to escape from the present by reminiscing about the past, which in turn then ends up becoming a place of remembering the past in order to deal with the present. Then thirdly, the studio becomes a place for archiving both personal lived experiences and memories and those of the nations before and postwar. Ken Junior Lipenga notes that Moses's studio is both a shrine and a studio "dedicated to preserving the memories of his kin as well as the memories of his country" and "through the collection and restoration of these photographs, Moses begins to find himself again" (172). However, none of this is possible without relationship and Jarrett-Macauley is intentional in showing that Moses's healing from his trauma lies not in reminiscing and going down memory lane but in doing so ritualistically, with Julia, in a place where he feels safe, such as his studio. Jarrett-Macauley contrasts this reality with that of the nation, critiquing the process of the Sierra Leone TRC (SLTRC) which Imma notes, was said to have been rushed and did not garner the locals' support because culturally in Sierra Leone, "ritual might be more important than truth" (130) and intimate spaces offered "complex constructions of African masculinities" (131) than hegemonic discourses in the public space. Therefore, Moses' navigation of the trauma he experienced required him to first remember and re-build his forgotten relationship with his niece, Julia, before re-building the nation, then secondly, with Julia's help, to remember that Citizen is a child who too is a victim of war, which enables a pathway for Moses to be able to archive Sierra Leone's past and present while also passing the baton of the future of Seirra Leone to Julia to continue the work of archiving. The reader sees this in the text, through Jarrett-Macauley's naming of Moses. Moses in *Moses, Citizen & Me* takes on the biblical story of Moses.

Moses in the bible is called by the Lord to lead the Israelites into the Promise Land, but he does not enter the Promise Land. Rather, the Lord allows him to see it and then Moses has to handover the baton to Joshua who is entrusted with the history and memories of the people of God to ensure that the people always remember their memories in order to remember God. In the text, Jarrett-Macauley chooses Moses to lead Sierra Leoneans, which includes his and Anita's family into the future Seirra Leone that he will build again together with Julia. Unlike in the biblical story, Jarrett-Macauley's Moses enters and builds the reimagined Sierra Leone but, has to handover Sierra Leone's history and memories to Julia because he will not see it to completion. The reader knows

this because the 76 year old Moses, with his "manly frame stooping, his toenails hardened and yellow" (22), is going blind:

> They say his sight is not good. He can't go on with that photography business again. She paused. But Citizen is here for now, Julia. She'll make sure he is all right. Not so, my dear? His sight isn't so bad in any case. I was earnestly explaining that I was dispensable. Older people need to be assured that the young care, said Miss Ida smiling confidently. (Jarrett-Macauley 142)

The scene above shows that although Moses is still doing photography and archiving of the nation's history, it will not be much longer before he needs to hand over to another who cares about archiving, and Miss Ida directs this role to Julia, the narrator who is also Moses's niece. Miss Ida raises the same concerns as Moses when she tells Julia that she is looking for young people who "care." The text later on points out that Julia actually used to take some images as well, although not of people like Moses does, but this is enough for Jarrett-Macauley to situate Julia as the next archivist for her generation and Moses can always teach Julia how to take pictures that "help ordinary people see themselves the way they want to" (94). When Julia takes the baton, hers is to carry it forward to Citizen, therefore, where Moses was using past memories to deal with the present realities, Julia who is also in a self-discovery journey uses the past memories for self-identification and mediating healing and, for forging a reimagined future both for her family and for Seirra Leone. This reimagined future is one that holds multidirectional memories which provide alternative ways of creating inclusive societies where former child soldiers like Citizen can be redeemable and reconciled and reintegrated back into society whether they decide to use the arts such as, theatre or song, or photography or other possibilities. It is also a future with hybrid communities where Julia can be both local and transnational, where past memories can be constantly accessed and tapped into to heal from the present ones and reimagine future ones. With regards to hybrid communities, Homi Bhabha unpacks how there's no one central point of logic for culture as different cultures mix and are fluid- offering an opportunity to go beyond the linear understanding of the notion of the nation and allowing an appropriate narrative authority that accommodates the meshing of cultures that form the site of writing the nation. Effectively noting that "national memory is always the site of hybridity of histories or cultures and the displacement of narratives" (169). I suggest that through Julia, whose identity and culture is across both London

and Sierra Leone, Jarrett-Macauley constructs a narrative authority for the future of Sierra Leone that is hybrid and multidirectional.

4. CHAPTER 4: Imagining Healing, Reconciliation and Reintegration

4.1. The alternative forms of journey towards healing in *Moses, Citizen & Me*

All the literature on healing, reconciliation and/or reintegration pertaining to Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins* and Jarrett-Macauley's *Moses, Citizen & Me* cited in this study emphasises that the process of postwar healing is difficult, non-linear and multifaceted. Scholars highlight the open-endedness of the healing journey as one that does not have a final destination, while a few add that the final destination can look like reintegration back into society for both the victims and victim-perpetrators. Both Vera and Jarrett-Macauley close off with endings that suggest that the journey of healing is not only ambiguous, but also long with an unknown destination if at all a destination can be imagined. In *The Stone Virgins*, Nonceba has been discharged from hospital after her last facial surgery which required a skin graft from the mutilation she experienced from Sibaso and as Cephas replaces an old bandage with a new one, the bandage clings to the skin, showing that the scars from her traumatic experience are yet to heal completely. Nonceba's scars are also testament to a post-independence state that, despite achieving liberation from British colonial rule, is yet to heal; the visible and invisible scars will always be a remembrance of the oppression. In *Moses, Citizen & Me*, Julia who plans to repaint her uncle's house and set up a photography archive is also daydreaming about Citizen swimming in London, leaving the reader uncertain about her permanent location. Therefore, if the destination of healing is unknown, the question posed by both authors is how does one reconcile oneself with a traumatic warring past when the journey of healing has no definitive destination stands?

A widely shared social media post on grief (Lauren Herschel, 2017) uses metaphor to describe how grief is like a shrinking ball in a box that has a pain button: "in the beginning, the ball is huge. You can't move the ball without hitting the pain button. It rattles around on its own in there and hits the button over and over. You can't control it – it just keeps hurting. Sometimes it seems unrelenting" (Herschel). Then gradually over time, the ball gets smaller. Hitting the pain button less and less as it shrinks because there is some room to move around but it still hurts excruciatingly

when the ball hits the pain button. Herschel notes that even over time, "for most people, the ball never really goes away. It might hit less and less and you have more time to recover between hits, unlike when the ball was still a giant," but it never disappears. Rather, as author Nora Mclnerny notes in a 2018 TedTalk, you "move forward with it" because maybe it is a wound that should not heal so that it reminds us never to forget. I cannot help but believe the same is true for trauma. Trauma is the ball in the box with a pain button metaphor. Like grief, trauma never fully disappears, one never fully arrives at a destination. Rather, one learns to move forward with it and weave it into their ordinary day-to-day life as they continue to integrate and engage with society. I propose that this is at least true of the traumatised characters in Vera's and Jarrett-Macauley's novels. These victims or victim-perpetrators are on a journey of healing and do not get closure from the violence they have experienced but have to find ways to move forward with it. Therefore, if the self is constantly on a journey towards healing and is sometimes triggered by a bump against that pain button, what might this tell us about the cycle of trauma and healing from one generation to another, whether directly or indirectly experienced? In this chapter I return to Hirsch's concept of postmemory to think through Jarrett-Macauley's critique of the complacency of the Sierra Leone government during the war. Furthermore, what does it look like to try to manage this cycle using reconciliation in order to address or redress the trauma rather than to fully heal from it?

The holocaust sets a notable example of this with many similar reconciliation commissions borrowing from this framework, including the Sierra Leone TRC, which Jarrett-Macauley indirectly acknowledges but critiques in *Moses, Citizen & Me*. Extrapolating a scene from the text, I look at how Jarrett-Macauley explores the processing of traumatic memories through testimony and nationally endorsed public reconciliation commissions such as the SLTRC in order to heal and reconcile in the magical world of the Gola Forest. Using the character of Bemba G and how he responds, Jarrett-Macauley depicts ways in which confession and testimony in safe spaces can be convened:

> He had begun to move about now, stopping in front of each child as he spoke, examining each face for signs of contrition. Eventually, he flopped down on Black Rock and addressed the group as if they were local elders: We said to come back in two days and you cannot reach Black Rock before the time you say. It is strict on time. But I have things I want to tell you. I raised my palm: Now they are here, the children need to rest and to have some

> food before we go any further. He nodded and was gone. Although they hardly budged from their positions, the child soldiers relaxed, knowing that dinner was on its way. (Jarrett-Macauley, 127-128)

This scene follows confessions and testimonies by child soldiers who speak of their traumatic experiences during wartime. The children in their testimonies mention how older soldiers forced them to kill and hurt people and how they too were beaten up and abused when they refused to obey. The stories the child soldiers tell are so horrific and gruesome that Bemba G, the Gola Forest leader "bowed his head in silence" (127), his eyes were troubled, his face was "creased with anguish" (127) and he was "distraught" (127) from the stories, while the narrator, Julia started apologising profusely and regretted asking the children to recall the horrible things that had happened to them, "I kept saying I'm sorry, I'm very sorry. It did not seem that anyone was accepting my apology even though I repeated it several times," (127) she said. This scene as well as the reaction of both Bemba G and Julia depict how the gruesome and traumatic stories of wartime impact both the storyteller and the listener; so much so that the stories cannot all be taken in at once without inflicting harm on both the storyteller who is recalling the traumatic memories and the listener who is absorbing the abnormal and senseless atrocities of war. Jarrett-Macauley uses this scene to assert that the narration of the acts of violence during wartime cannot be rushed because healing cannot be rushed, and following such confession and testimony, both the storyteller and the listener need to take a break and sufficient time off before sharing some more. She uses the scene to caution that when rushed or if done incorrectly, with a lack of patience, and without empathy, healing cannot take place but rather the pain and trauma of it is carried from one person to another or one generation to another as depicted in the photography of the child soldier in Moses's photography studio. Imma notes that Jarrett-Macauley's novel recognises the ways in which survivors of war create spaces for themselves that go beyond sanctioned spaces such as the SLTRC, to contend the difficult memory and the many truths of war. She notes that *Moses, Citizen & Me*, offers alternative ways of "considering the spaces and contexts where truth telling and forgetting might lead to closure" unlike the SLTRC (146) and Jarrett-Macauley "creates and centres the complex lives of men and boys' intimate spaces to render the impact of violence on individuals and their communities and to situate the subjective and diverse practices of memory and forgetting" (146) outside of the national reconciliation project.

These alternative ways of truth telling also produce alternative ways of healing or dealing with trauma, and the reader sees this in the text when the child soldiers explore various activities that help them move forward despite the debilitating effect that trauma can cause. Following the storytelling, Bemba G nourishes them with food and melodious music played with traditional musical instruments, which helps them sleep soundly. During the two-day break administered by Bemba G, he implements a ritualistic routine that all child soldiers have to follow. This routine which is a mixture of education and fun enables the children to learn about traditional herbs and their healing effect, dance, play games such as hide and seek, learn mathematics and conduct recitals of *Juliohs Siza* – a Krio adaptation of Shakespeare's Julius Ceasar translated by Thomas Decker from c1599 to c1995. Through these activities, they all learn how to work through their healing journey. Addei notes that "restoring former child soldiers to normalcy is at the core of *Moses, Citizen & Me*" (71). These alternative forms of healing, reconciliation and reintegration to societal practices and rituals, depict how confession and testimony can work hand in hand with alternative practices that achieve the same goal. Rosalind Shaw notes that post the decade long war in Seirra Leone most youth "wanted to complete their secondary education and earn an income, what they hoped and prayed for, they replied: For schooling. To go through my education. Learn a job" (75-76) showing the desire to reintegrate back to society and return to normalcy.

Therefore, when the healing journey takes place in the magical Gola Forest, Jarrett-Macauley depicts the possibilities of changing a site of violence and war into a site of healing, reconciliation and redemption for Sierra Leone. With magical spaces either being places that can be haunted by nightmares or enchanted by dreams and imagination, Jarrett-Macauley depicts the Gola Forest as a place of imagination. Addei notes that the Gola Forest "makes it possible for children who have formerly engaged in adult violence to allow themselves to be told stories, obey instructions from adult civilians and play games like children" (71); adding that the Gola Forest is therefore a place "where one can freely imagine what the child soldier has gone through in order to imagine recuperative methods which are not limited to ordinary realities but transcend what is seen" (71). In the same way that Jarrett-Macauley uses a place of ruin as a place for healing, she revisits the site where harm is inflicted on the child soldiers' bodies to redeem the places of hurt, whether through massage or medicinal herbs or cleansing rituals. The reader sees this play out in a variety of ways after the children finish sharing their testimonies. Some of the child soldiers simply go to

bathe in the river (160), Victor, a child soldier who had a hard time narrating his traumatic wartime experiences is soothed when he receives a massage from Julia who rubs his feet (154), and Citizen carves out the 439K child soldier identification number branded on his back onto a piece of wood. With Julia's help, Citizen buries the piece of wood, as a symbol of burying the traumatic wartime memories that have no answers or closure for him but instead hold him back from moving forward (163-164). Elsewhere and unrelated to *Moses, Citizen & Me*, Honwana writes at length about the different forms of healing child soldiers and soldiers in general engage in upon their return from war. She notes that these healing rituals or practices by communities on its victims or victim-perpetrators are an "important means of conflict resolution, reconciliation and social integration of war affected persons" (106) adding that "healing is achieved through double strategy: divination which diagnoses the social causes of the patients' affliction and prescribes the rituals to repair it and healing which addresses the suppression of the bodily and mental symptoms through the use of herbal remedies" (108). In borrowing from these traditional and ancient rituals and practices for *Moses, Citizen & Me,* Jarrett-Macauley emphasizes and reinforces the notion of healing being multidimensional and therefore in need of multiple forms of recuperation which could be performed specifically, in the context of the community. She makes this critique of the Sierra Leone nation-state to also depict that outside of the state organised SLTRC, the community of Sierra Leone is not looking to be rescued by the government but rather cultivates its own safe spaces of healing, reconciliation and reintegration that are tailor-made to its own cultural practices to deal with traumatic memory. The reader sees this tailor-made approach to healing with Moses's traumatic memory and how he uses his photography and the studio to heal past his trauma. However, it is also in the photography studio, through the image of the child soldier standing behind the president's frame, that Jarrett- Macauley cautions against avoiding addressing national ills that lead to generational traumatic memories.

4.2. Postmemory, Reconciliation and Community Reintegration in *Moses, Citizen & Me*

Marrianne Hirsch notes that postmemory is "a structure of inter-and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike PTSD) at a generational remove" (106). She notes that the access to the previous generation's traumas or traumatic memory is mediated by photography as photography is a powerful medium that transmits these horrific events from one generation to another at the exact point of where and when it occurred. The reader sees how Jarrett-Macauley exposes the inadequately addressed traumatic memory of Sierra Leone when they see the image of the child soldier standing behind the president's frame in Chapter 6 as Moses and Harris go through the images Moses took following the election campaign that was meant to showcase the good work and the progress that the government had made in the country:

> Moses stepped closer to the prints and picked up a couple of them. Then he saw a faintly sketched figure hovering over the head of the president. It was a figure of a small boy holding a gun. In each print the figure appeared- distinct but soft like a breath. What shocked Moses was that he felt neither horror nor surprise. Yet, knowing Harris's eyes were upon him, he uttered a low Oho. (Jarrett-Macauley 118)

This infamous scene in *Moses, Citizen & Me* of how unaddressed past traumatic memories show up in the present is Jarrett-Macauley's critique of the dominant narratives constructed by the nation-state, that although dominant and censored narratives exist in public platforms, the hidden traumatic memories also have an ever-present and refusing-to-go-away shadow that follow the dominant ones into the present and demand to be addressed. Although the above scene is of Moses's life in the 1970s Sierra Leone and the civil war broke out two decades later, the figure of the child soldier is a symbol of a hopelessness and a despair in the country that was there long before the civil war began. The reader knows this because the narrator earlier in the chapter depicts the dire living conditions of Seirra Leone which included unreliable electricity supply, dark streets and roads with potholes, and a town which smelt of "rotten fish" (116-117). The narrator also notes that people were constantly anxious about whether or not they will receive an income for work done because teachers would see pay day come and go "without the pay coming" (118) and during

the president's election campaign Moses witnessed "chiefs and officers, shake-hands men with their neat bribes, drink sellers and talkers" (119). Shaw notes that even before the war, Sierra Leone was experiencing economic decline, which meant that "most of these symbols of the good life were unattainable even for those with a good education and white collar jobs, teachers, clerks, civil servants" (69). Therefore, with this backdrop imagery of Sierra Leone, it becomes a satirical moment when Moses's perfect images of the president "shaking hands, admiring babies, engaging with teachers and nurses, patting a small boy on the head, laughing heartily at a cultural evening" (118) is contaminated with a figure of a young boy holding a gun in his rearview. Hirsch notes that the "pre-established forms in large part take the shape of photographs-images of murder and atrocity, images of bare survival and also images of before that signal the deep loss of safety in the world" (108) and we see the narrator let the reader into this deep loss of safety when she exposes the inequality of Sierra Leone long before wartime. The narrator notes that Moses "felt neither horror nor surprise" (118) depicting how normal and everyday these unhumaning and exploitative scenes had become and therefore, just like Moses, the reader is not shocked when Harris does not pay Moses following all the work he did and rather tells him that he "brought in another photographer" (119). However, the reader also gets insights on the build-up to how Julia then many years later, finds herself on a plane to Seirra Leone postwar. Through this scene, the reader sees how Jarrett-Macauley critiques the masking of reconciliation and healing by the nation-state and rather calls for adequate redress and address of traumatic memory in order to heal from it.

Therefore, when Julia acts as a mediator of healing and reconciliation for Moses, Citizen and the child soldiers, it becomes important that when she carries the baton from Moses's photography, she too learns to take images "that help ordinary people see themselves the way they want to" (94). Through Moses and Julia, Jarrett-Macauley pushes against the amnesia and masking of a country that wants to demonstrate and depict perceptions of unity and reconciliation when people are still impacted by traumatic memories of wartime atrocities and inequality and rather challenges the nation-state to "help ordinary people see themselves the way they want to" (94). The reader sees how through adequately exploring alternative ways of healing in the Gola Forest, at the end of the recital of *Juliohs Siza*, the child soldiers become clear about who they are and the role they play with each other and in society. Following the recital of the play, Julia notes that,

> The child soldiers held their positions, the life of the forest continued, but something else was being transmitted. Call it an ending of amnesia, if you like, or some collective unconsciousness that I did not know existed. But the child soldiers got it, meeting themselves in the play. They understood their place in the scheme of things. I suddenly felt that we could not be alone in this: Bemba G and thirty five child soldiers and me. Ancestors must be looking on-generation of men, women and children who had led us to this place, this moment. I shouted out: we are not alone, there are other people here watching us, listening- can't you feel them? (Jarrett- Macauley 159)

This scene shows child soldiers who through the work of alternative forms of healing and mediation of traumatic events, and learning to remember recall rather than forget, finally know where their place is in society and can comfortably be reintegrated knowing that even though healing is a journey, they are fully equipped to navigate it. De Rouck notes that "by performing the roles of ancient characters in the play, the child soldiers get to identify with the trauma entrenched in other histories and have a chance to process their own experiences" (58) and through that are able to locate themselves as citizens of Sierra Leone. The connection of ancestors becomes another confirmation within the magical realm that would not be successfully acknowledged under the confines of the nation-state's SLTRC or the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and Jarrett-Macauley again pushes against a linear framework of navigating trauma and traumatic memories, specifically in the Sierra Leonean cultural context where according to African belief systems, ancestors are both part of the natural and the spiritual world and play a mediating role for their loved ones. Contextualising the role of ancestors and the supernatural in mediating healing for soldiers in some African cultures more broadly, Honwana notes that the role of ancestral spirits includes intervening in the daily life of living human beings, "They protect and guide communities…in short, the spirits care for the wellbeing of families and communities" (106). Therefore, when Julia can feel the presence of ancestors in the Gola Forest, it marks as a symbol of being welcomed and reconciled back to one's community.

4.3. From Ruin to Restoration in *The Stone Virgins*

For Vera, similar to Jarrett-Macauley, healing is a journey with an unknown destination. In similar fashion, Vera challenges the forced state of amnesia and myth of unity and national patriotism practiced by Zimbabwe. Like the Gola Forest is to *Moses, Citizen & Me*, Kezi is to *The Stone Virgins* a site of ruin. However, the text shows that although Kezi becomes a site of ruin, unlike the Gola Forest, it does not become the site of recovery and restoration, because Cephas goes back to Bulawayo with Nonceba and there, Nonceba continues her healing journey. I assert that, although this may be the case, Vera concludes by signaling that rural homelands need to be reconstructed for the nation and its people to heal. I revisit this point towards the end of this chapter. Unlike in *Moses, Citizen & Me* where the reader follows the journey of healing for multiple child soldiers and witnesses to traumatic experiences, in Vera's novel the reader follows the journey of healing through Nonceba's perspective Nonceba therefore, becomes a representation of the repression of many wartime victims who grapple with their traumatic experiences during war. The reader sees this especially when Nonceba is in the hospital and hears the woman who lost her husband by being forced to axe him to death, next door to her room screaming, she, after initial avoidance decides to listen and hear the other victim's cry. Coundouriotis notes that "her self-protective gesture reveals that she understands her subjection to the screams of a victim of torture to be part of the terror inflicted on her" (25). It is as if the woman's external scream is linked to her internal screaming and so the woman's trauma and pain intrinsically becomes hers, only unlike the woman, she is unable to release the pain in the same manner. Nonceba's resilience through her suffering and pain is commended by Vera, not because having a high threshold for physical and psychological pain should be celebrated but because of her courage to survive despite "wounds of war which no one can heal" (Kostelac 84). The reader sees Nonceba's resilience when firstly, Sibaso spares her life because Vera metaphorically links Nonceba's life to the San women in the metaphysical world (Mabura 99) who are also painted in the rock art in the caves. This results in Sibaso associating Nonceba with the virgins drawn on the rocks. Lily Mabura notes that by strategically positioning Nonceba in landscape, and using it to help her, Nonceba not only manages to overcome that which seeks to oppress her but she is able reconnect with herself therefore starting her journey to healing (99). Secondly, the reader sees Nonceba's resilience when the narrator gives the reader insight into Nonceba's birth. When Sihle,

her father's sister, finds Nonceba unconscious on the floor after being assaulted by Sibaso, she reminds Nonceba of the circumstances of her birth as a source of strength, because her mother gave birth to Nonceba suspended between stone and water. Sihle cradles the unconscious Nonceba enroute to hospital, urging her to stay alive: "How could you be weak when you are made of the two most stubborn elements of the earth?" (Vera 115-116). In this scene, the reader sees Nonceba as deeply linked to the landscape. In *The Stone Virgins,* Vera connects healing to the landscape and landscape to women. Therefore, in this scene Vera allows Nonceba to carry the same characteristics of endurance that the landscape carries. It is as if the landscape trades places with Nonceba.

Again, the reader sees the relationship the landscape and Nonceba when Nonceba starts finding strength and gradually starts the journey of healing and recovering; in exchange, the landscape gives in to the trauma it witnesses and overproduces to the point where fruit spoils and rots (145). It is as if Nonceba's self-discovery and recovery is sourced from the very landscape that was once able to endure violence and war atrocities. This link to the landscape again appears when Nonceba utilises the landscape as a place of refuge post her traumatic experience. When she is out of hospital and back in Kezi, she goes to visit the house she shared with Thenjiwe and the narrator tells the reader that Nonceba was sitting under the shade of the mphafa tree enjoying a cool breeze "in its shelter, she feels the heat drain off instantly from her armpits and her entire body, but only the heat moves off her and not the marula flavour, which clings to her, which clings to everything, which is the air itself" (Vera 145-146) and it is under this same tree that she "listens to the smooth calling of doves" (146) depicting that a closeness to nature and one-ness with the landscape offers her an opportunity of "tranquility" (145) from her traumatised mind. Similar to how postmemory and the use of photography in Jarrett-Macauley's text is used as an umbilical cord that connects the past traumatic memories of the previous generation to the present one, Mabura notes that Vera's use of landscape is "an umbilical cord connection between people and place" (88) and especially women utilise the landscape by mapping where they fit "inside the landscape and how she can position herself to be helped by it" (92). Therefore, when the landscape in Kezi can no longer sufficiently offer Nonceba a place of refuge and recovery, as it has been contaminated and overexposed to war atrocities, Nonceba has no choice but to escape to the city for healing, restoration and reintegration. In a similar vein, when Cephas takes on a project to reconstruct the Lobengula kraal, the nation is

dependent on the mythical ideas about ancient past and the landscape then fosters that sense of continuity (28).

4.4. Restoration and the Reintegration in *The Stone Virgins*

In Bulawayo, Vera depicts a landscape that is filled with opportunities. Not only is there love and romance in Bulawayo but the city also offers healing and an escape from confinement and containment that Kezi as a place of ruin, now is. However, under colonial Rhodesia when a newly wedded couple and their entourage emerge out of a vehicle and they "circle the fountain and the groom" (4) and "the photographer bends and shifts and shields his lens from glare, from spray but not from the blooms" (4) the city is still confined to colonial rule and in turn limits the possibility of romance and freedom for black city dwellers to specific sites. The reader again sees this when another romantic couple is choosing between which two photography studios to enter, they finally settle at the photography studio called Star Photo Studio where there's "a backdrop of sailing ships" (15) that teleport them into a journey to Europe's modernity showing an illusion that "you are not landlocked in this city as everywhere else in the country" (15). Post-independence, Nonceba comes into a free, unrestraint, vibrant and uncontained city for healing, restoration and reintegration and so through Cephas's assistance whose love and romance for Nonceba is contained in order to afford her healing, Vera reveals to the reader, a different kind of love post-independence that is not romantic. It is a restrained love that puts Nonceba's healing ahead of personal desires and it is a kind of love that even Vera notes, in an interview about *The Stone Virgins* that she too "learnt something about the possibilities of love" (85). Kostelac notes that "in the absence of a coercive masculinity Nonceba is able to embrace a future despite the wounds of the past," (85) and Cephas recognises that even in all the support he has given Nonceba, there's no amount of restrained love and support that he can give that can ever completely heal and restore her, "she has endured the worst" (183). Therefore, even though her scars will get to a point where they are completely healed and she can eat, the scars will always hold the space between the two of them that reminds them both of "how much more important — vitally important — deliverance is" (Gagiano 74) and I add, healing is, to personal desires.

With the kind of relationship that Nonceba and Cephas have formed, the reader sees that Vera pushes against a typical romantic love story ending that recreates the past, as if one can return to it like nothing has changed and offers rather alternative forms of love and alternative forms of healing that are linked to an alternative kind of human being. In this relationship, even though they live together and Nonceba has grown on Cephas they "avoid touch" and they "let their feelings exist separate from each task, from their tremors" (172). That is why Cephas becomes the new kind of man, who is different to Sibaso. Where the city now offers freedom and liberation, again, Cephas does to the city, what the landscape does to Nonceba. Cephas trades with the city. The city takes Cephas's freedom in exchange for restrained self-desires. However, unlike the Rhodesia city that restrains people while giving them an illusion of freedom through photography in photography studios, Cephas by choosing to restrain his desires, frees Nonceba and offers himself an opportunity to explore and recognise other forms of love outside of romantic love. The reader sees this again, when Nonceba decides to take a job as a florist rather than opting to be a librarian which has similarities to her previous job as a teacher. Vera through Nonceba's character, makes room for victims whose trauma is intense and long-lasting that it changes the trajectory of their whole lives. Nonceba's pain is excruciating that the narrator notes that it "is higher than the hills. This she knows. Her grief. This she accepts" (140). Therefore, because Cephas too knows this, he does not force or convince Nonceba to take the library job he found for her, because he knows how important it is that she finds her own path and that that path does not have to mirror her past life as a schoolteacher.

Therefore, because of this hard truth, and the need for healing and reconciliation at a broader level than the private and/or familial space, Cephas decides to focus on reconstructing the Lobengula Kraal. The unspoken conversation about the trauma that both Nonceba and Thenjiwe experienced, that Cephas and Nonceba never talk about, I suggest, shows that one does not need to articulate trauma in order to heal from it but rather, other forms of healing such as reconstructing the Lobengula Kraal and taking a job as a florist can form part of an alternative kind of healing. During her traumatic encounter, Nonceba hallucinates about Thenjiwe who once described the black and grey hair that Sibaso has as "cemetery flowers" (Vera 77) and when she regains consciousness at the hospital and starts hallucinating conversations with Thenjiwe, as mentioned previously, Thenjiwe questions Nonceba's flower choices. Therefore, I suggest that Nonceba's choice to work

at a flower shop (163) and the framed images of yellow daises that hang on the wall of the two-bedroomed apartment she shares with Cephas (170), as well as the large yellow roses she comes home to place in a glass vase next to the telephone table noting that “this sort of flower could never grow on Kwakhe sands (173) is her way of staying close to Thenjiwe while also finding ways to process her grief, cope with the traumatic experience she went through and find ways to blossom and integrate into the city life. In doing so, Nonceba not only reclaims and holds sacred Thenjiwe’s memory and their memories together but also reclaims the beauty of flowers in the exclusive botanical gardens seen at the beginning during the Rhodesian government. Through Nonceba, Vera reclaims the Zimbabwe landscape under the Rhodesian government in the city as well. Arts and crafts and its connection to memory-making plays a crucial role in Vera’s healing process. For Vera, the Lobengula Kraal becomes a reimagination of stitching the nation together while reclaiming the land that was subjected to both colonial rule and war atrocities. However, this time the landscape cannot replenish by itself or endure further harm, it requires a working together with people who are historians and archivists like Cephas and victims like Nonceba to stitch it back to health. In the text, through the reconstruction of the Ndebele site, which includes the rural homelands of Kezi, Vera is preoccupied with the reconstruction for the nation to heal its people in a collective and inclusive manner because when she makes the decision of not showing Kezi after Nonceba starts her healing journey in Bulawayo, she demonstrates to the reader how important it is to heal Kezi and “the indelible memory of how public violence can wipe out private attainment and of how the death of individuals can destroy community” (Ranger 212). I assert that in the instance that the land remains neglected or resembling a “naked cemetery” (Vera 159), then like Mugabe and ZANU-PF, it will always be difficult to return to a place where atrocities were committed and never fully addressed as seen with the booing of the Mugabe’s at Bulawayo’s White City Stadium. Mabura notes that “Vera focuses on Bulawayo. Her novel opens and closes in Bulawayo” (101) and I posit that similarly Mugabe’s term as president opened at the site of Matabeleland as a site where violence was inflicted, and as a result, closed in Bulawayo White City Stadium, back in Matabeleland.

5. CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

In *The Stone Virgins* and *Moses, Citizen & Me*, women are both at the sites of conflict and also participate in mediating healing, in collaboration with men. This marginalised group, one of the most vulnerable during wartime — after children — are depicted by both Yvonne Vera and Delia Jarrett-Macauley as resourceful, having a voice and agency and an integral part of mediating healing and reconciliation in their communities. While many scholars describe Vera's *The Stone Virgins* as an anti-nationalist text, Jarrett-Macauley's text *Moses, Citizen & Me* is seen as a human rights war novel concerned with the impact of war on child soldiers. In addition to these framings, the research examined how both writers centralise women in their texts. They do this by revealing women's plight in society during wartime while also demonstrating their value and contribution in moments of crisis, by mediating healing, reconciliation and reintegration for nation formation in close concert with key male characters such as Moses, Bemba G and Cephas.

By demonstrating the different narrative techniques utilised by Vera and Jarrett-Macauley, the thesis analysed how both authors used memory as a literary device to push against simplistic and dominant narratives of unity and reconciliation constructed by the two nation-states. Both authors criticise the inadequacies and failures of Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone nation-states and point to the ways in which multidirectional memory theory can be utilised to address collective amnesia, foster inclusivity and mediate healing at a national level. The research further focused on the impact of trauma on its victims' memories and the contrasting ways in which memory then became a weapon of silencing survivors of traumatic wartime experiences or became a tool for healing, reconciliation and reintegration back into society for them. To achieve this, the research foregrounded Freud's theory that trauma manifests both at the moment of distressing event and at the moment of recall of that event for the traumatised victims. The study depicted how both texts cross map their representation of the Gukurahundi civil war in Zimbabwe and the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone to the national politics of the respective countries.

The research also interrogated the tensions and dynamics between victims and victim-perpetrators and how this motif plays out in the two novels. Furthermore, it outlined how the concept of regions of memory theory can be deemed useful and appropriate in thinking through victim-perpetrators

that are either redeemable or irredeemable in the context of the two texts or exploring how geohistorical sites of conflict can be reimagined into sites of reconciliation.

Quayson notes that a comparative literary analysis of texts such as Vera's and Jarrett-Macauley's is less about what is true or false between the literary or historical account than how different historical configurations can enter into a dialogical relationship with other contexts and conditions so as to allow a calibration of literature for social analysis. He sees this as ultimately an "attitude of lending our strength to the improvement of a confusing and painful reality that should justify the critical paradigm we deploy and not the critical paradigm for its own sake" (214). It is on this basis that I hope the study demonstrated not only how women authors can offer tolerable ways of narrating intolerable acts, but that whether in Sierra Leone in the 2000s or Zimbabwe in the 1980s, war remains senseless and has a damaging impact on ordinary civilians despite inventive and alternative ways of dealing with traumatic experience and violence. Additionally, as Judith Butler notes concerning the politics of relations in a world haunted by violence that dehumanises the marginalised, nothing depicts how relational beings humans are like loss and grief. Vera and Jarrett-Macauley not only demonstrate this, but like Butler, they argue that true relationality and living in community in a reconciled and integrated manner requires us to master how tied and connected to each other we are; and to achieve this means our own barriers must yield (36). The authors demonstrated this by narrating how traumatic experience must be worked through using multiple alternative pathways in order to foster reconciliation and reintegration because therein exists multidirectional memories to a people, a nation, a place, and a culture rather than a dominant nation-state narrative approach that is bent on censoring marginalised perspectives.

The study also depicted how both authors consider a collective and inclusive approach that does not only give voice and agency to marginalised groups but also utilises memory for the purpose of "acting upon visions of justice" (Rothberg 19) and renewing hope to the nation. The research examined the strategies used by ordinary people to navigate trauma and violence in order to enable healing, reconciliation and reintegration — strategies such as arts and crafts, photography, storytelling, music and dancing, education, and African traditional and cultural rituals and practices. For Jarrett-Macauley, the study highlighted how these strategies are distinct from formalised, censored, nation-driven mediation initiatives such as the SLTRC and SLSC while for

Vera, it emphasised how sites for mediation only operate at individual level, and a reimagination of a new kind of person, who is both critical of the state, yet hopeful for the nation would be needed to foster healing at a national level. Effectively, both authors emphasise that different forms of restorative and reconciliation strategies would need to be invented to reimagine the nation. Overall, what I hope that this thesis demonstrates is how both authors mediate healing by using storytelling and imagination to invent new ways of dealing with traumatic experience and violence.

In conclusion, while the research demonstrated the role of memory in narrating trauma in the context of war, the study of memory is broad and ever evolving which lends itself to several ways in which memory can be explored further either in both texts or in other texts and/or authors that contextualise traumatic experiences. Cultural memory for example, which infuses factors such as history, religion, law and myth is another way of comparatively analysing memories that are passed down or compete with one another across generations or geographies. Another interesting opportunity would be to analyse the texts using a gender lens by delving deeper into the multiple roles that women take on during wartime to navigate war and negotiate their survival.

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