MEMORY, EXILE AND IDENTITY: A NEGOTIATED POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA IN JOHN KANI'S *NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH*

Busuyi Mekusi (PhD)

Department of English Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *Memory, exile and identity are part of the psychical configurations that embody the experience of man within the spatial location he occupies and that in which he achieves rigmarole of the performances of different activities akin to the idea of the 'Waiting for Godot'. Exile has precipitated memories which invariably mould and reconstruct identities, rendering them fluid and malleable. This paper examines the invention and reinvention of memory in John Kani's Nothing But the Truth (2002) as it affects how justice is perceived and how reconciliation and forgiveness are issued. It also investigates how Kani's characters navigate the murky waters of a conflated experience in dual identities, informed by exile, and how shifts and adjustments are made to accommodate the products of crossed borders to achieve a resounding reconciliation, having blurred, repressed, or better still, obliterated the dictates and vestiges of the wounded past. It is inferred, therefore, that the reconstruction of the unpalatable past will engender concrete cohesion beyond all existing divides in a new South Africa provided remorse is shown for past deeds and individual identity subsumed under the national identity.*

KEYWORDS: Memory, Identity, Spatial Space, Remorse, New South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Man, as Homo sapiens, has as part of his physiological make-ups mental composition through which he makes access to phenomena and assesses such to determine logic or systematic interactions which set him aside as rational when compared to other beings. Memory defines the retention of the avalanche of experiences from which, often times, identity is formed or remoulded to absorb a new impact that provokes the dynamism of culture. Quoting the classical view of Alcuin, Paul Ricoeur (2004:64) simply defines memory as "treasure-house of all things'. Memory is further seen by Paul Ricoeur (2004) as a discrete form "with more or less discernible borders, set off against what could be called a memorial backdrop, which can be a source of pleasant occupation in states of *anamnesis*", linking the relationship between events and memory to a paradigmatic definition which makes memory to be as representational as possible to "the extent that it is the phenomenal equivalent of the physical event" (23). This equivalence, when recollected or imagined, is not devoid of the act of reconstruction, repression and disintegration, as such recollections are mediated by other social, political and psychological events strange to the event(s) already internalised in form of memory. Filip De Boeck(1998: 49) corroborates this when it is argued that "it is through the combination of subjective and objective, or private and public, registers that memory obtains its discursive and performative power". It should also be mentioned that memory is malleable to the individual who decides what to remember and how such remembrance should guide either his present or the future. Exile experience has hitherto turned out to be a major element that does doctor identity with a tremendous significant proportion. Thus, identity has been fluid, tender and flexible by the feeling and experience of exile precipitated

by varying factors. Culture, as a concept, maintains a close affinity with identity as the former provides the platform for the evolution of the latter in a given spatial order. The formation of identity by an individual therefore is a function of the available socio-political indexes that adorn the location he is privileged to be.

This corresponding relationship between culture and identity is best illustrated by the discourses on the formation of identity. Culture has been conceived by anthropologists as "the way of life of a people" (quoted in Gordon Mattews 2000: 6). This implies that the identity an individual prides himself on is a product of the general one that characterizes the life of his people. It should be noted, however, that cultures all over the globe are gradually impinging on one another owing to the spate and wave of globalization. However, the construction of identity, the acceleration of globalization notwithstanding, still responds to the location the player finds himself at a point in time. Reaffirming the view of Stuatt Hall, Linda Martin Alcoff (2003:3) posits that "identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past", concluding that "they are both imposed and self-made, produced through the interplay of names and social roles foisted on us by dominant narratives together with the choices families, communities and individuals make over how to interpret, and resist, those impositions as well as how to grapple with their real historical experiences". Gordon Mattews (2000:16-17), after a review of the dictionary definition of identity and that given by Stuatt Hall, succinctly defines identity, according to him, after Anthony Giddens, as "how the self conceives of itself, and labels itself". The constituent parts of identity are found in the submission of Manuel Castells (2004:7) who argues that "the construction of identity uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations". These invention, negotiation, internalisation and remoulding of identities shall be made bare in the construction and existence of characters in the text under study.

The idea of exile encompasses the physical displacement or disjunction one suffers in spatial location and metaphorically, the feeling and sense of estrangement that accompanies it. When viewed as displacement within the definition of physical space, the idea of exile ranks close to migration. Mobility in spatial order has turned out to be one of the arrestable benefits that man can enjoy as far as circumscribed existence can offer him. Migration then appears to be as important as air is to man. Human migration can either be intra or inter, depending on the stimuli, and can be voluntary or forcefully induced, depending on the actors and the elements they are responding to. For instance, intra migration could be achieved when individuals move from one location to another within a particular mono social, political and economic milieu while that done to complement a far removed one will give us inter migration. Migration, movement or displacement can be informed by social, political or economic reasons. Arguably, migration entails the crossing of one border or the other and a disconnection with a hitherto status quo. This is captured succinctly by Edward Said, whose view was reiterated by Iain Chambers (1994:2), that 'migrancy', and exile border on a "discontinuous state of being", thereby bringing us "against the limits of our inheritance" (115). Edward Said (2000:173) at another point captures exile as "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted". This forced severance from one's root and past, however unpleasant it might appear, therefore creates in him or her the unquenchable longing for restoration and reintegration that is often time either elusive or precariously delivered.

Quoting Shu-Yun Ma (1993), Mark Israel (1999:7) reveals that exile consists of three elements which are: "forced exit, dissenting voice and struggle to return". Migration, in the view of Andrew Smith (2004: 245) has indeed given postcolonial study its novelty and authority as it is argued that "as people move, the cultural center also moves, not in any specific direction, but in a diffusing, outward spread".

For instance, most settings in pre-colonial African nations revealed the necessity for hunting and agrarian expenditures as well as communal or clan clashes to appropriate or dispossess land and other booties to achieve economic and political aggrandisement. These forms of migration were defined by the demography of the conquered and the conqueror, whose geographical proximity must have contributed to the lurking of their horns. A new vista was introduced to these movements in the African continent when it was pillaged by the Europeans whose economic and material avidity, propelled by the industrial revolution back home, was the driving force. The details offered by history show that this one acts too many interrupted and interfered with the sequence of activities in the 'dark continent' which produces valuable and efficiently productive human and material resources.

Therefore, the capitalist-induced migration of the Dutch, English, Portuguese, French and the later to be imported slaves into the Southern African region of the Dutch east India Company of the cape, interrupted the lives of the San/Bushmen and the Hottentots, the latter that were engulfed with the annexation of arid land for their herds and hunting expenditure, respectively. The consequence of these different migrations to the area later to be known as the Cape produced high complexity as identities strive to survive and dominate others leading, invariably, to a cultural melting pot similar to that witnessed in the New World. One sharp contrast life in the Cape had with that in the New World was that the heterogeneous cultures in the former emphasized exclusiveness while the latter promoted inclusion and emerging oneness. The exclusion became desirable by Afrikaners who were determined to protect the purity of their culture against 'contaminations'. Apart from the repression of Blacks' apartheid (apartness) helped to achieve, the segregation of races in South Africa was meant to perpetuate inequality in all spheres of life and ensure what G.H.L. May (1995:225) calls the "maintenance of Afrikaner racial purity". Leonard Thompson (1990:162) submits that the Afrikaners were "adamantly opposed to the missing of the races", even as he reiterates one of the many religious justifications adduced to this, in the view of Reverend T.F. Dreyer, who holds that God "has willed that we must be a separate, independent people". The link between the policy of apartheid and the far cry on cultural miscegenation is captured aptly by Donnarae MacCann and Yulisa Amadu Maddy (2001:87) when they write that "the meaning of Apartheid was symbolised most powerfully in the Prohibition of Marriages Act, the law that ensured no loss of 'nation' as the white supremacist purists perceived it". One would have thought that the consciousness of the purity purportedly legislated by God should suffice a good reason to dissuade the beneficiaries from leaving the spatial location God originally gave to them.

Identity in the Cape was variegated along the divides of race and colour pigmentation leading to identifiable groups like the Natives, Europeans (Afrikaners and English), Indians and Coloureds. The last group emerged as a result of the break-down or infiltration of the different blocs instituted to forestall sexual interactions across the borders of race and colour. In a recent study Helene Strauss (2004:34a), quoting Lueen Conning, enthuses that "mixed people" or 'coloured people' would have been "God's answer, people who would form the bridge and prove that unity is possible", between the white/black compartmentalization that

defines most racial discourses. It should be noted that these people were treated as outcast in order to perpetuate the sacrosanct nature of the discourse of race relations in an apartheid sensitive nation state. Writing on this racial fragmentation and disintegration Arlene Grossberg et al 2006:54) submit that "as a result of apartheid, South African society has been characterised by a plurality of groups who have either been 'named' in terms of specific identities by others, or have 'claimed' exclusive identities for themselves". The conclusion was drawn that the various tensions created be identity categorisations were those based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender and language. The institutionalisation of apartness and the deceptive programme of separate development precipitated different forms of repression and human degradation. The deployment of the power by the state engendered a corresponding resistance from the oppressed. This attempt at resistance elicited a more annihilating response from the state, leaving people maimed, traumatised, incarcerated, and ultimately 'eliminated'. The final overthrow of the state power of the apartheid government in the turn of the twenty-first century gave rise to the emergence of a democratic government which saw the need in talking about the violations of the past in order to achieve reconciliation, reconstruction and nation building.

John Kani's *Nothing But the Truth* parodies the Truth and Reconciliation Commission instituted after the inauguration of the first non racial democracy in South Africa. The duty of the commission is multifarious in nature but can be captured and is encapsulated in the views of people to be examined presently. For instance, Michael Ignatieff (2001:15) writes that "the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission has become a model for other societies seeking to rebuild their ethical order and reckon with the past". The foregoing implies a charred or chattered past leaving a great ruin, pains and disenchantment, and the possible retrieval of the painful inglorious past to achieve a juxtaposition from which a model for the future will emerge. Writing on the relevance of the TRC, Sarah Natall and Caril Coetzee (1998:1) submit that "the task of the TRC has been to delve into South Africa's past; the records of the hearings of the TRC are the repository of South African memory". The apartheid rule manifested several lethal features that afflicted, tortured, dehumanized and dislocated blacks who had to pay for race and colour. Kadal Asmal et al (1996:2) see apartheid as "a terrible evil which treated the majority of the people of South Africa ─ and by implication the world ─ as inferior beings … Its implementation bred lawlessness and brought a culture of felony into the driver's seat of a country", while they see the important goal of the commission as the need to "act as a catalyst for swift and thorough disclosures of past horrors, in order to accelerate ─ and so eventually end ─ the steady and corrosive drip of past pathologies into the new order" (26).

This paper investigates how John Kani explores the relationship between two brothers, and in the words of Zakes Mda (2002:vii), "sibling rivalry, of exile, of memory and identity, to achieve "reconciliation and justice" needed for a New South Africa devoid of racial discrimination, political oppression and economic exploitation. *Nothing But the Truth* is the story of a man, Sipho Michael, who nurses the tall dream of becoming the Chief Librarian of a government library and his younger brother, Themba, who suffers special dislocation as a result of exile induced by the threats from perpetrators of apartheid. Sipho's daughter, Thando, works without satisfaction with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for being toothless, and its regimented indiscriminate granting of amnesty. Thando expressly bemoans her loneliness, occasioned by the death of his brother, Luvuyo, and the disappearance of her mother following her extra marital relationship with Themba. Themba also bears the guilt of

the death of Luvuyo, an adherent of political struggle, the damage of a lorry wire toy and the special preference his late father gave to him over Sipho, hanging on him menacingly.

The death of Themba in Britain leads to great misunderstandings on vital issues of culture and identity, most especially, form of burial and the social consciousness Mandisa, Themba's daughter exudes, having 'benefited' from the exile experience of her father. The play drives the reader through these controversies of culture and identity to the end when a sharp contrast is introduced to the already tensed relationship. This is achieved by giving expression to the repressed memory of Sipho, leading to the confession of the past and its centrality to the deployment of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Memory, no doubt, retains those tropes that help define one's identity. Identity is constructed based on the ingredients that consciousness offers in terms of norms, culture, tradition, beliefs, and even stereotypes. This accounts for the position of Zakes Mda (2002: viii) who opines that "memory loss leads to loss of identity, because who we are is fundamentally linked to memory". *Nothing But the Truth* opens momentarily with the unfolding of the memory of Sipho as it bothers on his desire to emerge as the Chief Librarian of a government library and thereby revealing one of the deep-rooted policy of the post-apartheid government aimed at restructuring the perceived lopsidedness in jobs and economy to favour the previously disadvantaged people who were mostly blacks: affirmation and or black empowerment. But in this case necessary skills are taken to consideration as against an unguarded open application of empowerment at the expense of effective performance. Rhoda Kadalie (2000:110-111) has decried the ruthless application of affirmative action positing that "competence, delivery, performance and merit are no longer the key determining factor in appointments. Ethnicity is, followed by other criteria". As much as we know that the apartheid regime precluded blacks from acquiring the skills required in performance, this wrong should not be righted by bastardizing the already frayed structure. Sipho grapples painfully to inscribe blacks existence in one of the post-colonial instruments used to configure man, the baptismal certificate. This record inadvertently becomes a metaphor that reminds of the memory of blacks who will only cease to be an earthen after the rejection of his past, culture and tradition, and assumed the whiteness that is always far removed from him. To show that he has a firm control of his memory, Sipho carefully audits the content of his memory by choosing to determine what should be examined and those to be shot out as far as convenience and comfort are concerned. For instance, he chooses not to talk about his wife. Luvuyo and Themba for the haunting feeling such remembrance inflicts on his person.

For Thando, the picture her father took with her mother becomes a symbol of the real, standing in the vacuum that would have been created in her memory. Another retention of memory is achieved in dream which is an unconscious reconstruction of the psychological make-up of the individual. Its imperfection as a form of configuration is made bare in the haziness of the dream experience of Sipho about the past and the building of a wire bus which forms part of his deep hatred for Themba. The process of recollection in memory is said to be vulnerable to different forms of interference. Interference theory, according to Ebbinghaus, cited in Allan Baddeley (1990:243), assumes that forgetting is induced in memory because "the earlier images are more and more overlaid so to speak and cover by the later ones". It is concluded that "dreaming might be a form of reprogramming whereby the brain sorts out and catalogues the files of the previous day's memory…" (245). In spite of the dislocation Themba suffers in physical space, the olfactory memory of Port Elizabeth remains a solid link between him and the land he loves so well. This however sounds scatological to

Mandisa who prefers the 'good' smell of England or London to that of the repulsive shebeens, rubbish, unkempt gardens and other elements that define the life of the people in South Africa. One fact becomes very clear in this process: that the location an individual finds himself has a great influence in inscribing on one's consciousness. The presence of an individual in a socio-cultural environment requires the negotiation and renegotiation of certain attitudes, norms, beliefs and other elements that ultimately culminate in the formation of identity.

Exile in *Nothing But the Truth* becomes a source of conflict as individual characters in the play strive to retain the identity that time and space have helped them to form. It has been foregrounded earlier in this paper that the society plays a very vital role in the building and reconstruction of individual identity. This is apparently demonstrated in the stiffness and tenacity with which Sipho and Mandisa uphold their respective belief system and practice. Themba carries in him the love and attachment to his land but does not see himself making a homecoming following the evolution of respite for people in exile because of the many problems associated with such return. A return involves a process of uprooting and traveling across many borders when the once glorious greenish personality could wither or die. This desired return however forms the only negotiation Themba makes with his wife when he requests that his body should be buried close to those of his ancestors at home and that an ox should be slaughtered to clear the passage/journey to the ancestors. Some exiles taught of returning following the crumbling of White rule in South Africa; while some made it, some, like Themba could not. This return process to the ancestral land has been described by Es'Kia Mphahlele, as "not just a reconnection with space, a physical movement, but reconnection with a time before departure, and a chance to heal the wound of the long displacement" (quoted in Mark Israel 1999:213). However, we are not sure of what a departure from this order would cause Themba. Possibly the format of cremation adopted would place him on another metaphysical path entirely different from that known to his culture. We should also be reminded that the space the urn allows Themba is grossly reduced to that which a coffin would have offered him. This request made by Themba is reminiscent of the affinity Africans have with their land and the ancestors. The land to them forms the base where their umbilical cords are buried and the base that abhors the bodies of the dead ancestors. Little wonder that libation is poured on the ground as a form of evocation of the spirits of the ancestors. Sarah Nuttal and Carli Coetzee (1998:14) have argued that a distortion of land in Africa by any method would alter one's relationship with the ancestors, concluding that, "once one is forced to leave the land where one's ancestors are buried, the link is severed". The idea of the living-dead has been well implanted in Thando who reminds her father of this in an attempt to achieve forgiveness for, and reconciliation with, Themba:

> You have always told me that the dead are
>
> living. They are among us all the time.
>
> We can talk to them any time we want. (*NBT*, 56).

The eroding power of exile notwithstanding, conscious efforts are made to preserve the identity of the individual, and by extension, the society. This personal attempt at preserving one's identity through memory is made possible because, according to Kadiatu Kanneh (1998:118), "personal and collective histories survive mortality and repeat, through the aegis of geography and descent, a returning of unspent emotion". Mandisa reminds us in this play of the wish of his father that she should get married to an African for the people, like the

Afrikaners, have a deep fear for the extinction or disappearance of their race. An attempt to ensure the purity of the Afrikaners' culture led to the waging of several wars and the institutionalization of the apartheid policy. Mandisa and her mother become a metonym of the English tradition in the burial process of Themba, who is cremated for preparation for burial with some ashes in the urn as a signifier of the body of Themba that should be buried close to his ancestors. The return of Themba in ashes is reflective of the transformation that has taken place in him culturally and physically, against his wish and what Mark Israel (1999:136) calls "the loss of a difficult past and the promise of an uncertain future marked by a series of dilemmas". A shocked Sipho and the undertaker suffer a high degree of trauma before a compromise is reached to accommodate the idea of "ashes to ashes" to which the Judeo-Christian religion subscribes. The granting of this concession offers the new South Africa the need to allow for the erosion of some of the individual and collective identities shared by people for there to be an emergence of the metaphoric 'rainbow nation'. The melting of the various identities, no doubt, will eradicate the policy of ethnic endogamy because, according to Jean Pierre Camberfort (1999: 116), "hierarchical and bipolar structure has caused the different groups to have rigid perception about other groups".

This evidently illustrates the change that dynamism enforces on culture and absorption of elements hitherto strange to it. The process of the transformation of the body of Themba from earth to ashes is analogous to the process of hybridization or creolization going on in the face of the interaction amongst cultures all over the world. A transportation of identity across borders, after boundaries have been rendered fluid, engenders transposition precipitated by those things that the society has inscribed in the minds of the people who invariably become custodians of such manifestations. As cultures interact in the 'culture industries' or supermarket, negotiations are made and new applications achieved in the fluidity of interactions. This notion is underpinned by Tim Edensor (2002:13) who argues that "cultural meaning cannot be pinned down but is negotiated over, applied in different wildly different contexts". The reduction of Themba to ashes in the vase is resonant of the dislocation and displacement space and time confer on emigrants. An emigrant, according to Kerryn Goldworthy (1996:53), "is someone in whose life those vulnerable margins have suddenly begun to shift, to yield, to stretch, or to disappear from the coastlines of their countries and the barriers of class, right down to the skin of their bodies and the limits of the family, the boundaries of people's lives begin to change from the moment they begin to move". Mandisa also becomes a representation of the English culture as she advocates a new independence and freedom for Thando who leaves for her father's permission and comfort. Freedom is however painted as having the potentials for excitement, and possibly, abuse. Although one expects that Mandisa should be conditioned by the gene contributed to her biological configuration by her African culture loving father, her character reveals the influence of the 'genius time and space'. This process is captured as 'prison of experience' and 'political geographical socialisation' by Dijkink (Arlene ibid, 56). As a furtherance of the influence locations play on an individual Hein Viljoen (2004: 12) argues that "the very space we occupy form our identities, and these identities determine our perceptions and representations of those spaces and varying spatial experiences". The foregoing indicates the implications of the movements of people across territorial divides most especially as they affect the retention of individual, collective and national identities. For instance the collective identification shared by Themba, Sipho and the ambulance driver of the "memory, history, myths and symbols and allegiance to their 'homeland' " is threatened by the homogenization of "cultural convergence through the removal of territorial separation between people" which make access to the cultural supermarket possible (Garth Pere & Kato Lambrechts 1999: 15-18).

Andrew Smith (2004: 245) argues that retention of a "closed national culture" is no longer possible because of the refusal of the migrant to remain "in place" as a result of the mobility which allows him/her escapes "the control of states and national borders *and* the limited, linear ways of understanding… which states promote in their citizens".

Race is identified in this text as one of the many factors that militate against national integration and social cohesion. As it has been pointed out earlier in this paper, the fear of blurring racial boundaries and the purity of the Afrikaner led to the introduction of Marriage Act that prohibited sexual relationship across the different racial groups in Apartheid South Africa. However, the assertion made by Mandisa reveals that racial suspicion also characterizes the conduct of black people from West Africa and West Indies in London who preach ingroup interaction with a passion. The formation of this position on racial sanctity could be an attempt at self preservation and a reaction to the past of the groups that produce the individuals who suffer invasion and violation at different points in their interactions with the North. It has been observed that the formation of identity is psychosocial and that the society influences the process of identity development of individuals making materials available from the political, economic and historical spheres. Eliria Bornman (1999:46) submits that "events in the external environment are stored in the internal environment in the form of memories and history" and that "once social categorization has taken place, an individual tends to internalize membership of the ingroup as part of his or her self-concept".

This portends a great danger to the new South African where the history of the past potently lives in the minds of the people who treat people from other racial groups with distrust and suspicion. The insignia and ostracism of products of marriages across racial divides in apartheid South Africa is a vestige that needs to be obliterated. However, some obvious lessons are contained in the assertion made by Mandisa to the promotion of mixed marriages among people of different colours. To the query of Thando on whether "there are successful black and white relationships in England", Mandisa declares that "Of course there are. People are people" (24). Apparently, this makes a cursory comment on the dehumanization that defined the coexistence of different colour groups in apartheid South Africa and the general views held by the centre that the peripheries were inhabited by savages and barbarians. Writing on part of the Afrikaners' effort to justify the institutionalization of apartheid Donnarae MacCann and Yulisa Amadu Maddy (2001:12), quoting Dubow (1995:182), ascribes to the Boers that "[it is] scientific to hold yourself aloof from a race with a lower civilization and… more limited intellectual powers…". One is tempted, however, to query the rationale behind the avoidable infiltration made by these people on strange lands. This smacks of absolute insincerity and the smart way of eating one's cake and having it at the same time. The glamorization of the deeds of Piter van Meerhoff, a surgeon who married a Hottentot woman and Freek Bezuidenhout, who lived with a coloured woman and had a half-caste, respectively, would serve as a reference point to potential individuals who will want the various colour lines in sexual relationship and marriages blurred or dissolved (G.H.L. May 1995:15-16, 41).

 "Is life fair?" (NBT,22), forms the response of Thando to the position held by Mandisa on the unfairness inherent in the refusal to make Sipho the Chief Librarian on account of age. This philosophical statement reopens some other spots of violation and brutalization revealed at the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The commission was put in place to achieve 'peace, stability, reconciliation' (28) based on the different wounds inflicted during the obnoxious apartheid regime in the quest for evolving a 'one nation' devoid of

racial discrimination. Kader Asmal et al (1996:12, 26) have warned that "for the new South Africa to abandon accurate remembrance in these early years of its birth would be the most cruel self-slaughter," and that "an important goal of the commission is to act as a catalyst for swift and thorough disclosures of past horrors in order to accelerate ─ and so eventually end ─ the steady and corrosive drips of past pathologies into the new order". However, this process comes under a fierce criticism of Mandisa and Sipho at different times. The preposterous activities of the commission are summed up by Thando who gives the comment below as a reaction to the probing of her father on how her day at the commission hearings looks like:

> Oh! The same grind. Former soldiers, policemen
>
> and security people applying for amnesty. Saying
>
> they are sorry. Sometimes I sit there translating,
>
> interpreting, and not even feeling. It is easy to get
>
> numb you know (*NBT*,6).

Thando makes some frantic efforts to educate Mandisa on the project of forgiveness and true reconciliation. The requirements and rules of amnesty are true confession and total disclosure. According to her more efforts are to be channeled towards the rebuilding of the nation, mostly the provision of schools, houses, clinics and hospital, etc., rather than seeking a revenge that would breed more violence. It is also stated that some people are denied amnesty because of the nature of their crime. The position of black leaders is reflected on to the effect that the struggle against apartheid was fought by both blacks and white alike, and that Africans have the spirit of 'generosity' and 'humanity' to deploy forgiveness at will. This remark is instructive in view of the opinion formed by some that apartheid was a creation of all Whites, having benefited from all the opportunities created by it. Revelations at the TRC hearings revealed that some Whites suffered from the maiming, exile, bombing and killing carried out by the agents and perpetrators of the apartheid policy.

However, Sipho has another idea of forgiveness altogether. Traumatized by the killing of his son Lovuyo, he desires that the culprit be made to go to gaol as a form of punishment before forgiveness and amnesty could be granted. Sipho's position on the dispensing of justice is akin to the tenets of retributive justice. Retributive justice favours the deployment of criminal mechanism which requires that at the end of the process compensation or punishment be awarded for the harm done. Kiikpoye K. Aaron (2005: 130) has argued that "the idea of punishment or compensation… not only compensates the victim but it serves the additional purpose of being a disincentive to those who may contemplate committing similar offences in the future". This position is reflective of the position maintained by many people at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings where frantic efforts were made to stall the granting of amnesty to certain individuals whose activities under the apartheid regime were considered barbaric. In such cases, such people displayed no remorse for what had happened but instead would try to explain it away as political acts carried out on instructions given by a superior. Ironically, these superiors dissolved into the new democratic intelligential group and order without any inhibition. Robertson (cited in Kiikpoye K. Aaron 2005) commenting on the granting of amnesty in the South African TRC has argued that "the real purpose of an amnesty statute is not to diminish in a new democratic society the debilitating desire for revenge, it is to enable government officials and military and police officers to escape

responsibility for crimes against humanity which they ordered and committed". However true this may sound, a total disregard for the opportunity for restorative justice will continually blow the ember of discord and animosities. The application for amnesty in the cases of murder against Dirk Coetzee, David Tshikalanga, Almon Nofomela for the death of Griffiths Mxenge and that of Craig Williamson and Brigadier Willem Schoon for the death of the wife and daughter of Marrius Schoon, were opposed by Mhlele Mxenge and Marius Schoon respectively. Justifying his refusal, Jillian Edelstein (2001:113) quotes Mhlele Mxenge as saying: "my main objection is that amnesty promotes the interests of the perpetrators, as once they are granted amnesty they are not criminally liable and no civil action can be instituted against [them], and that is totally against the interests of the victims". This realization could have accounted for the civil case and litigation sought in a constitutional court by the family of Steve Biko.

However logical this might appear, it should be noted that the carriage of justice as desired by Sipho will not reverse the negative trend of the past but could at least serve as a deterrent to individuals who are still engulfed by the spirit of violence, crime, rape and arson that the apartheid institution has greatly enhanced. It can again be deduced that the denial of justice has the potentials to attenuate the sensibility of individuals who would want to take solace in alcohol, thereby receding to more delirium and angst. Sipho's momentary decision to explode and burn down the library is a travesty of the probable way through which people could give vent to their anger, most especially when justice is perverted or not seen to have been done. Recent activities of wanton destruction of lives and property on slight provocation in the new South Africa call for a great concern. Such acts of recklessness, however, deserve an unequivocal condemnation considering the freedom of speech allowed by the instruments of rules of law the democratic South Africa offers. Kani appears to make juxtaposition (retributive and restorative) of the dual ways by which justice could be sought when Sipho offers to write a letter to President Mbeki to bear his mind on the things that affect him. This does not end without carrying out a review of the failure of government to meet its social responsibilities to its citizens, mostly the underprivileged majority. Sipho's declaration is instructive:

> I am going to write a letter to President Mbeki.
>
> I want to remind him that I voted for him.
>
> I put them in power. I paid for this freedom.
>
> I paid with my son's life. My brother died in exile…
>
> We want the better life for all, now! Today!
>
> It's our time now. (*NBT*, 58)

One is wont to wonder, at times, how the death and other evils people suffered during the dark days of the apartheid rule are freely negotiated for one form of comfort or the other by the relations of the victims. The emphasis placed on things like the provision of shelter, job, and general socio-political transformation of individuals, negotiated on the platter of the bereavement suffered by people at the hearings of the TRC is inhumane and a flagrant violation and commodification of the sacredness of the supreme sacrifices the departed made. Those things being requested for fall within the purview of what the government should provide. It should be observed that the enormity of the bastardization of the existence of the

people requires a double accelerated spirit and resources to effect a noticeable change. This is made bare in the effort of the government to build houses as part of the Reconstruction and Development Plan, when the attempt made so far is still dwarfed by the squalor and homelessness of the people who live mostly in the locations.

Nothing but the Truth ends in a relaxed tone after Sipho has dispensed forgiveness for his brother in spite of all the wrongs done to him, even though Themba could not stand to ask for forgives from him. However, the fact that he finds it easy to forgive his brother after making a vicarious confession and refuses to forgive the white policeman responsible for the death of Luvuyo leaves much to be desired. No doubt, this portends a negative reaction on the part of the violated to denigrate the forceful repression of certain forms of memory prescribed by the state. Richard Werbner (1998: 8) has warned that people "try to commemorate what the state suppresses in buried memory". Sipho is an epitome of the silenced voices who were once taught not to express their losses. This attempt to cover the truth is counter-productive because as observed by Njabulo Ndebele (1998:22) "the silencing of voices through various forms of brutality, torture and humiliation induced anger and bitterness". The telling of the 'stories' of the past turns acts of deep human violation to mere attempt at imagination. No doubt, *Nothing but the Truth* has investigated the activities of the TRC, the idea of exile and negotiations between identities on stage; it has also revealed that the nature of some confessions and the attitudes of certain perpetrators of past dastardly acts would make the process of true reconciliation difficult if not impossible. Memory should be recollected, imagined and confessed for the potentials of identities to be fully integrated for the building of a new South Africa. Kader Asmal et al (1996:51) have warned that "there is a risk that privileged South Africans, if they forgo the opportunity to reconcile themselves with the uncomfortable historical facts, will find themselves in a kind of psychological exile, or an escapist historical dungeon", even as it has been suggested that "the post-apartheid South African identity should not be homogenized, but broadly inclusive; … it can have no legitimate place for apartheid or the various contending neo-apartheids". The new South Africa should be devoid of schisms occasioned by ethnicity, race and colour to avoid a nationalism that is based on ethnicity that Scheff (quoted by Manuel Castells 2004: 9) proposes "arises out of a sense of alienation, on the one hand, and resentment against unfair exclusion, whether political, economic or social". The proliferation of identities will, no doubt, stall the construction of a national one needed in an all-inclusive democratic nation like South Africa (W. A Fawole & Charles Ukeje 2005:4). The success of the formation of a national identity required for nation-building in the new South Africa could be tested by the research conducted by the Human Science Research Council where it is revealed that voting in the last generally elections was race and ethnic based. The research however noted that identity formation is now based on other mappings outside race and ethnicity. The most promising development to building a national identity is the recognition given to the place of the individual and the family. Amoateng and Richter (in Arlene Grossberg ibid, 66) concludes that:

> the family in all its diversities appears to be alive and well
>
> in South Africa. Even though forces of modernisation, such
>
> as industrialization and urbanisation have brought about certain
>
> obvious changes, the resilience of family forms as a key social

unit is demonstrated by the persistence and continuity of

certain elements of family life. Worldwide,

governments are increasingly developing policies to strengthen

family life in recognition of the fact that the family plays

irreplaceable roles in society.

Obviously, the healing that the spatiotemporal order achieves in Sipho for Themba could be replicated in his evaluation of the case of the policeman responsible for the death of Luvuyo. Time and space, therefore, would aid the process of true reconciliation provided no new bad seeds capable of reopening old wounds are planted.

REFERENCES

Aaron, Kiikpoye K. "Thruth Without Reconciliation: the Niger delta and the Continuing Challenge of National Reconciliation". *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in West Africa: Identity, Citizenship and Conflict*. Eds. W. Alade Fawole and Charles Ukeje. Dakar: Concil for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2005. pp.127-137.

Alcoff, Linda Martin. "Introduction Identity: Modern and Postmodern". *Identities: Race, Gender, and Nationality*. Eds. Linda Martin Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Bornman, Elirea. "The Individual and the Group in the Social, Political and Economic Context: implications for South Africa". *Identiy? Theory, Politics, History*. Eds. Simon Bekker and Rachel Prinsloo. Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 1999. 39-66.

Asmal, Kader et al .*Reconciliation Through Truth: a Reckoning of Apartheid Criminal Governance*. Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1996.

Boeck, Filip De. "Beyond the Grave: History, Memory and Death in Postcolonial Congo/Zaire". *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power*. Eds. Richard Werbner. London: zed Books, 1998. pp .21-57.

Cambefort, Jean Pierre. "Dynamics of Identities in a French Multi-Community: Reunion Island Comparisons with south Africa". *Identity? Theory, Politics, History.* Eds. Simon Bekker and Rachel Prinsloo. Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 1999. pp. 113-133.

Castells, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*. Second edition. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Chambers, Ian. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Edelstein, Jillian. *Truth and Lies: Stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.with an introduction by Michael Ignatieff and an essay by Pumla.* London: Granta Books, 2001.

Edensor, Tim. *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002.

Fawole, W. Alade and Charles Ukeje. Eds. "Introduction". *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in West Africa: Identity, Citizenship and Conflict*. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2005. pp.1-16.

Goldsworthy, Kerryn. "The Voya South: Writing Immigration". *Text, Theory, Space*. Ed. Kate Darian-Smith. London: Routledge, 1996.pp.53-63.

Grossberg, Arlene et al. 'Multicultural National Identity and Pride". *South African Social Attitudes: Changing Times, Diverse Voices*. Eds. Udesh Pillay et al. Cape Town: Human Science Research Council, 2006. pp.54-76.

Ignatieff, Michael. "Introduction". *Truth and Lies*. Jillian Edelstein. London: Granta Books, 2001.

Israel, Mark. *South African Political Exile in the United Kingdom*. Houndmills: macmillan Press LTD, 1999.

Kadalie, Rhoda. "African Renaissance: Interviews with Sikhumbuzo Mngadi, Tony Parr, Rhoda Kadalie, Zakes Mda and Darryl Accone". *Senses of Culture: South African Culture Studies.* Eds. Sarah Nuttal and Cheryl-Ann Michael. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. pp.105-121.

Kani, John. *Nothing But the Truth*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2002.

Kanneh, Kadiatu. *African Identities: Race, nature and Culture in Ethnography, Pan-Africanism and Black Literatures.* London: Routledge, 1998.

MacCann, Donnarae and Yulisa Amadu Maddy. *Apartheid and Racism in South African Children Literature.* New York: Routledge, 2001.

Mathews, Gordon. *Global Culture/ Individual Identity: Searching for Home in Cultural Supermarket*. London: Routledge, 2000.

May, G.H.L. Le. *The Afrikaners: an Historical Interpretation.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.

Mda, Zakes. "Introduction". John Kani. *Nothing But the Truth*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2002. pp.v-ix.

Ndebele, Njabulo. "Truth, Memory, and narrative". *Negotiating the Past: the Making of Memory in South Africa*. Eds. Sarrah Nuttal and Carli Coetzee. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998. pp. 19-28.

Pere, Garth and Kato Lambrechts. "Globalisation and National Identity Construction: Nation Building in South Africa". *Identity? Theory, Politics, History*. Eds. Simon Bekker and Rachel Prinsloo. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1999. pp. 11-38.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pallaver). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Said, Edward. *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*. London: Granta Books, 2000.

Smith, Andrew. "Migrancy, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Studies". *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies.* Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. pp.241-261.

Strauss, Helene. "Living the Pain of Creolisation: Shifting Contexts of Subject Formation in K. Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* and Lueen Conning's *A Coloured Place*". *Under Construction: Race and Identity in South Africa Today*. Eds. Natasha Distiller and Melissa Steyn. Sandton: Heinemann, 2004. pp. 26-37.

Thompson, Leonard. *A History of South Africa.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Viljoen, Hein. Et al. 'Introduction: Learning About Space─ and About Ourselves". Eds. Hein Viljoen and Chris N. Der Merwe. *Storyscapes: South African Perspectives on Literature, Space and Identity*. New York: Peterlang, 2004. pp.1-22.

Werbner. Richard. Ed. "Introduction". *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power*. London: Zed Books, 1998. pp .1-17.