Оригинални научни рад
811.111(680)-2.09 Fugard A.
DOI 10.46793/LIPAR76.093T

Lena Tica[1]
Univerzitet u Kragujevcu
Fakultet tehničkih nauka u Čačku

TRAUMA AND TESTIMONY IN ATHOL FUGARD'S *PLAYLAND*

Abstract: The plays of Athol Fugard, one of the most influential contemporary South African playwrights, focus on ex-centric and marginal characters who strive to establish meaningful identities in the midst of absurdity imposed by the apartheid. Despite the fact that the apartheid, as a type of colonialism, defined whites and blacks as superior Others (colonizers) and subordinate others (colonized), Fugard's plays tend to show that this system ruins all of its participants irrespective of their skin color. This paper analyses *Playland*, in which the conflict between a white and a black person is particularly prominent, through the characters of Gideon le Roux, a former white soldier who comes to the amusement park wishing to forget the murders from the war, and Martinus Zoeloe, the Playland's black night watchman, who is haunted by his own trauma related to the murder of a white man he committed in his youth. Relying on the theoretical concepts of trauma studies defined by Felman, Laub, Caruth and LaCapra, we will try to show how the protagonists' perceptions of the self are largely determined by these traumatic events. The aim of the paper is to show how the confrontation of Martinus and Gideon leads to mutual testimony, which, according to the theory of trauma, is the only way to externalize trauma and rebuild the traumatized self as a dialogic construction. In the act of testimony, both Martinus and Gideon move from the position of colonial O/other to the position of the other as a listener necessary to transform traumatized memories into a meaningful narrative. Despite the imposed happy ending, the oblivion that would bring the final healing of the protagonists is questionable, which alludes to the long-lasting consequences that the apartheid left in the years following its abolition.

Key words: trauma, testimony, witness, self and other, apartheid, memory, identity

INTRODUCTION

In the paper entitled 'Trauma, Absence, Loss' (1999) Dominic LaCapra, one of the key figures in trauma studies, mentions a conference at Yale that gathered intellectuals working on the Holocaust and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The elevator in the hotel in which the majority of the participants stayed had initials TRC indicating the floor which operated as Trauma Recovery Center. Although at first glance the acronym "created an uncanny impression", LaCapra realized the coincidence was more than convenient since "the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was in its own way a trauma recovery centre" (LaCapra 1999: 696). The Commission was set up in 1995 after the

1 lena.tica@ftn.kg.ac.rs

end of apartheid with the aim of recording the testimonies and bearing witness to gross human rights violations committed during the apartheid era. TRC offered reparation and rehabilitation to the victims who were invited to give statements about their experience. But the Commission also established a register of reconciliation so that ordinary South Africans could also express their remorse for past failures. However, it transpired that statements from both parties were more often than not implausible traumatic testimonies, so LaCapra rightfully identified TRC with trauma recovery center. Apartheid was indeed officially recognized as one of the historical collective traumas of the twentieth century, along with the Holocaust, colonization, nuclear catastrophes and countless war crimes (see Felman and Laub 1992: 5).

Apartheid is a temporal, spatial, cultural and ideological context of almost all of the plays written by Athol Fugard, who is widely acclaimed as South Africa's "greatest ever playwright" (Smith 2014). Many of his plays were written during the harshest period of apartheid and Cohen praises him for playing "a critical role in vivifying a once non-existent theatre which has had to struggle for its very existence against absurd odds" (1977: 75). Directly opposing the segregation laws imposed by apartheid Fugard had the temerity to put blacks and whites together on stage, as well as in the audience. Irrespective of the extensive scope of topics, which range from apartheid laws and betrayal to more recent ones such as AIDS and homesickness, his plays always centre on a small cast of two or three characters who struggle to find the meaning of life in the face of absurdity and irrationality of everything that surrounds them. Fugard's protagonists are mainly disinherited, desolate and marginal characters, in other words – they are ex-centrics. It is precisely suchlike characters that the postmodernism of the second half of the 20th century thrusts into the limelight (see Hutchion 2004: 57–73). Although in apartheid the group of ex-centric and the neglected mostly included blacks who, paradoxically, made up the majority of population, the protagonists of Fugard's plays are not exclusively black, but also coloured (like the Pietersen brothers from *Blood knot* or Boesman and Lena from the eponymous play), poor whites (like the Smiths from *Hello and Goodbye*), as well as women (sad librarian from *Statements* or distracted Gladys from *A Lesson from Aloes*). In apartheid, their identities were solely determined on the basis of their difference from the center of power (that is, the rich whites) that marginalized them precisely on account of that difference (whether it was linguistic, racial, gender, etc.).

In trying to figure out who they are in such circumstances, almost all Fugard's characters, as if by default, turn to their past. However, what they find is never a simple truth, but impenetrable memory labyrinths. What is surprising is that traumatic memories turn out to be a key factor, or rather, a hindrance, in the attempts of Fugard's characters to establish their own beings irrespective of their skin colour, which was also

corroborated later by TRC, as mentioned above. Nowhere is this more obvious than in *Playland* (1992), which portrays a direct confrontation between a black and a white person, who both turn out to be 'wounded' and traumatized in their own way. However, the attempt to portray both sides can at times be dangerous as it can lead to the equalization of the traumatic experience of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. It is something that LaCapra warns of when discussing the concept of collective trauma, where he differentiates between structural and historical traumas. While a historical trauma can be precisely located within certain temporal and spatial frameworks (as the 20th century traumas mentioned earlier), structural trauma implies a cruel generalization of historical losses, leading to the dubious idea that everybody is a victim and that the whole history is a history of trauma in which we all share one pathological public sphere, or 'wounded' culture (LaCapra 1999: 712).

The play has been the subject of analysis of a number of critics. Holloway (1993) analyzes the play as an example of Fugard's liberalism[2] which he sees in a rather negative light. Colleran (1995: 393) also argues that Fugard's liberalism is what "approves uprooting historical context" in *Playland* (and in *My children! My Africa!* (1989)). She vehemently accuses Fugard of equating the trespasses of the play's black and white protagonists (402), which, on a broad scale, leads exactly to something which LaCapra refers to as structural trauma. Shelley (2009), on the other hand, analyses politics inherent in Fugard's work (including this play) but sees it as positive literary activism. As part of a comprehensive study, Wertheim (2000) perhaps offers the most thorough analysis of *Playland*, pointing to the universal aspects of the play, in spite of its ostensible regional context. In this "intense regionalism", as Fugard puts it (Fugard 1992: 12:21–14:18), one may look for the reason for the well-nigh complete absence of this author and his work in Serbia. However, this comes as a surprise when one comes across the fact that in the United States Fugard is, after Shakespeare, "the English-language playwright most frequently performed" (Barbera 1993: xiv), and critics generally acknowledge him as "one of the best dramatists of our time" (Walder 2004: ix). Wertheim rightfully seeks to find a universal echo in Fugard's plays since Fugard is essentially an existential writer, the fact that he himself gladly admits (Fugard 1992: 14:18). His plays, with their small casts of two or three characters, always focus on the "question of what do I do to you? And what do you do to me?" (1992: 16). *Playland* is not an exception. As Wertheim observantly notes, *Playland* is in fact a *play* land in which protagonists „can act out and play out their guilt and interpersonal dynamics" (Wertheim 2000: 190).

2 Fugard was a member of South Africa's Liberal Party, which represented an alliance of all racial groups committed to the implementation of freedom and equality. During the 1960s, it suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of apartheid and was forgotten for a time as a 'noble failure'. For further discussion on Fugard's liberal position, which is apparent in some of his other plays (most notably in *A Lesson from Aloes* (1978)) see Dubrah 1989 and Colleran 1995.

The play first appeared on stage in July 1992 in Johannesburg, but its plot is set on New Year's Eve two years earlier, when Gideon le Roux, a former Afrikaner soldier, comes to the amusement park from the title in search of a new beginning in order to forget the traumatic murders he committed in the war. His character is contrasted with the character of Martinus Zoeloe, a black guard of the amusement park, who relives his own traumas related to the murder of a white man he committed in his youth night after night. The confrontation of black and white that encourages their recollections of the past that both men must experience during the night they spend together in order to get rid of the events that haunt them will be analysed in this paper in light of the trauma studies to which none of the above-mentioned critics has devoted meticulous attention, and which appeared almost concurrently with the play.

THE THEORY OF TRAUMA

Although the word 'trauma' itself originates from the Greek language and implies a wound, in terms of physical injury, in the second half of the twentieth century the meaning of the term quickly extended to the psychological injury that brings with it strange symptoms and presents a challenge for both victims and doctors (see Caruth 1996: 3). From 1980 onwards, this phenomenon has been officially accepted as a medical condition under the name "Post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD), which is defined „as a delayed and/or protracted response to a stressful event or situation of an exceptionally threatening nature and likely to cause pervasive distress in almost anyone" (Kumar and Clark 1999: 1134). It is frequently followed by typical symptoms such as flashbacks, emotional blunting or numbness, a sense of detachment from other people, marked anxiety and depression, and, occasionally, suicidal ideation (Ibid). According to Caruth, trauma has since begun to be understood as a wound in the mind, as "the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world" (Caruth 1996: 4) which, unlike the wound of the body, is not a "simple and healable event, but rather an event that … is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (Ibid). As Buse (2001: 173–174) points out, the works of Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Dominic LaCapra laid a solid foundation for the theory of trauma which emerged primarily as an American phenomenon in the 1980s. However, both its intelectual and historical roots are connected to the European continent. While the intelectual background can be found in the psychoanalysis of Froyd and Lacan, the historical origins are related to two (primarily European) historical events "which take on a paradigmatic meaning: the experience of the Holocaust and the experience of colonization" (Assmann 2011: 95). Although fundamentally different

in the purpose and manner of implementation, these experiences were parallel in their retrospective treatment and gave rise to a completely new phenomenon – the discourse of the victim of a traumatic event, in which historical trauma was articulated for the first time by those who were silenced. Their forgotten histories have penetrated "into the present in the form of memories on which collective identities are based" (Ibid), and such memories could not be processed with the help of known semantics. Their suffering and death made no sense, and therefore they had no form of representation.

Accoring to Caruth, "inherent latency" lies at the heart of a traumatic memory: "The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all" (Caruth 1996: 17). Forgetting is immanent to a traumatic experience precisely because it is so extreme that consciousness would assimilate it, that is, that it would enter the regular paths of memory. In order for a traumatic event to survive, a psychic defense mechanism that psychiatrists call "dissociation" is activated: "It is an unconscious strategy of rejection, due to which the threatening experience remains far from the consciousness of the affected person" (Assmann 2011: 114). The mechanisms of recording and memorizing in the human mind are temporarily blocked and put out of function. Although the event is registered, the bridges to consciousness collapse and the event remains "encapsulated", in a state of latency, where it resists both memory and oblivion and where it can remain inconspicuous for a long time, until, for some reason, it re-emerges with the "language of symptoms" (Ibid).

Laub (Felman and Laub 1992: 69) insists on the timelessness of trauma. A traumatic event, although "real" (since it can be located in terms of time and place), is an event that takes place outside the parameters that characterize reality: causality, time, place, sequence. The absence of such defining categories gives this event the quality of strangeness or "otherness". The delayed effect of trauma leads to the impression that "trauma lasts", it cannot remain in the past, but extends into the present, trapping the victim in eternal omnipresence. The only way to get out of that trap is by constructing a narrative. According to Laub, this can only happen if the victim of trauma manages to "articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself, and then take it back again, inside" (1992: 69). The problem lies in the fact that trauma is not only a crisis in the memory of the traumatized subject, but also a crisis in representation and narration. When discussing the problem of articulating, but also accepting an essentially unimaginable traumatic experience, Felman and Laub propose a new method that they call "testimony". This is not a simple statement like the one given in court, due to the fact that the traumatized person does not "posses or own the truth" which is simply available to them, but that it is rather a "mode of *access to*" the truth

(Felman and Laub 1992: 14–15). This act always requires two participants – the witness of the traumatic event and the one who is a witness to the witness: “Bearing witness to trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener. For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other* – in the position of one who hears” (70). Only in the act of witnessing and in the possibility of an (accidental) encounter with another, the traumatized Self can be dialogically constituted as a speech act, where the emphasis is not on the stories that the Self already possesses, but on what happens in the act of witnessing, on the yet untold and unconquered stories. In other words, the focus shifts from the traumatic event itself to the “place of transmission” – as a place where the knowledge of trauma is acquired for the first time, where the notion of a traumatic event is “*belatedly* ‘given birth to’” (Levine 2006: 5). It is here as well that a new *other* emerges – the listener, who becomes a co-owner of the traumatic event and must take responsibility for it (see Felman and Laub 1992: 57–64).

THE PLAYLAND AS A FANTASY OF ESCAPISM

Both the temporal and the spatial framework of the play focus attention on the themes of healing and repentance through the memory and oblivion that the protagonists seek. The amusement park[3], with all its attractions, stands as a symbol of escapism, i.e. a space for escaping from the reality in which people, like Gideon, come to forget their worries and problems, deny the truth and avoid the consequences of their actions. This is emphasised by Martinus at the very beginning:

> Playland is Happyland! Pretty lights and music. Buy your ticket for the Big Wheel and go round and round and forget all your troubles, all your worries [...] And when we switch on the lights and the music, they come. Like moths they come out of the night – the old uncles and the fat aunties, the young boys and the pretty girls, even the little children. They all come to play because they all want to forget. (Fugard 1998: 262)

New Year’s Eve 1990, on which the play takes place, raises this oblivion from the individual to the collective level, since less than two months later, on February 2, 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison, which slowly led South Africa into a new socio-political system that finally, in 1994, replaced apartheid. Holloway rightly notices that “not only

3 The Playland that traveled through Karoo and Eastern Cape was familiar to Fugard since his childhood. He mentions it in his autobiographical novel *Cousins: A Memoir* (1997: 41), as well as in his *Notebooks*, when he took his daughter to it (Fugard 1983: 145). The idea for the play sparked from that occasion, when he saw a black guard who was the inspiration for Martinus. Gideon, the white protagonist, was based on Fugard’s cousin Garth who was a soldier and who suffered from PTSD (Fugard 1997: 150).

are the characters (and the audience) faced with the prospect of a new decade, but they stand at the brink of an epoch of tremendous significance in which the past must be accounted for and the future shaped" (1993: 38). In this sense, Gideon and Martinus can be seen as remnants of apartheid that need reconstruction and new life. The demand for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation of whites and blacks that underlies the play actually simulates the negotiations that were taking place in the country at that time, which eventually led to the establishment of the aforementioned Commission. While the amusement park, as a metaphor for collective amnesia, is seen in the background with bright lights and loud music, the foreground of the stage presents the night watchman's camp, as a space where the protagonists face each other in order to confront their individual amnesias. A broken car, which surely originates from one of the attractions, is placed at the front stage as an allusion to the broken psyches of the protagonists that need to be healed.

The play combines realistic details (such as the famous amusement park or the real war in which Gideon participated) and abstract confrontations in the context of the absurdity of modern existence, which can be found in Beckett's symbiotic duos, such as Didi and Gogo (*Waiting for Godot*) or Ham and Clow (*Endgame*), who cannot do without each other, but have no compassion for one another. Also, the accidental encounter and conflict between Gideon and Martinus encourages Wertheim (2000: 189) and Shelley (2009: 241) to see a parallel between *Playland* and Albee's *Zoo story* where a similar unplanned encounter between Peter and Jerry leads to both a physical and a psychological climax in which the protagonists face their insignificant and enslaved position in modern society, which has turned the civilization it formed against itself. A re-examination of the possibility of freedom in such a distorted world, alluded to at the very beginning of *Playland* through the metaphor of caged pigeons, leads Wertheim to conclude that this play is "not just a symbolic image of South Africa on the brink of dismantling apartheid", but a universal metaphor for every nation recovering from serious racial, political or ethnic divisions: "Characters are men with realistic histories yet with extra-realistic existences, and whose language falls somewhere between natural and artificial" (Wertheim 2000: 192). While space and time are clearly defined, allusions to abstract and allegorical representations, such as doomsday or fire from hell, are abundant. Moreover, despite the specific location, Gideon and Martinus, in a way, meet in a vacuum, on "no man's land" (Ibid), since there is a huge interpersonal and dialogical gap between them, as Wertheim further suggests.

This gap between the characters, which, however, contrary to Wertheim's opinion, is in every sense both a consequence and a personification of the segregation of races in apartheid, is evident in the drama from the very beginning. Gideon's relaxed and nonchalant entry onto the stage is an indicator of the facade of the white man's self-confidence

behind which he hides his fears and worries. Martinus, on the other hand, enters the stage talking to himself, completely unaware of Gideon. His introductory monologue contains images of the Judgment Day, Hell, and Deadly Sins, which he is to remain preoccupied with throughout the whole play: "I'll see all of you down there in Hell. That's right. All of you. In Hell. And when you wake up and see the big fires and start crying and saying you sorry and asking forgiveness, then it's me who is laughing" (Fugard 1998: 253). These sentences reveal that Martinus himself, for some reason, deserves a place in hell. Unlike Gideon, who seems eager to talk and who tries in every way to establish contact with a black man, Martinus, even when he finally becomes aware of Gideon's presence, remains at a distance. As a result, their dialogue is rather a series of monologues in which meaningful interaction is missing. In one of his first speeches, Gideon reveals that he is paralyzed in the present: "Hell, this year now really went slowly, hey? I thought we'd never get here. Some days at work it was so bad I use to think my watch had stopped. I check the time and I see it's ten o'clock. Two hours later I check it again and it's only half past ten" (256). Since he failed to get himself going all year round, his New Year's resolutions are a hint of the new life he (and the whole nation) desperately yearns for – to forget the past and move into the future: "No bloody miseries next year! I don't care how I do it, but 1990 is going to be different. Even if it kills me, I'm going to get things going again" (258). Martinus, on the contrary, is not interested in New Year's resolutions, he does not drink or smoke, there is no vice that he should give up. In the scenes that follow, it will be revealed that he is trapped in time just as much as Gideon, but that he has no desire whatsoever to change that.

MEMORIES AS A HINDERANCE TO ESCAPISM

Wertheim (2000: 192) quite rightly notices that the first connection between them takes place in their joint reaction to an event that has nothing to do with the socio-political reality of South Africa, but with the majestic nature of this country, which is obvious from Fugard's stage directions: "*Both men stare at the horizon where a Karoo sunset is flaring to a dramatic climax*" (Fugard 1998: 259).[4] However, for Gideon and Martinus, this beautiful scene of the last sunset in the year that is about to end, instead of hope for a new day and future, has associations with eschatological and apocalyptic performances, which indicate an impending conflict. The colours red and black remind Martinus of "the Day of Judgment" (259) and

4 In his 'Recent Notebook Entries' (1993) Fugard also talks about his personal love of sunsets and nature of his country: "My favourite moment of the day comes at sunset. Just before it drops behind the hills in the west, the sun floods the garden with golden light and the trees […] stand out in sharp glowing relief against the background of distant grey hills. It only lasts a few moments and then the day is done. […] I have grown *to love this Land*" (Fugard 1993: 536) [my italic].

"the fires of Eternal Damnation" (260); for Gideon, the dust and colours in the evening sky are an association to a mushroom-shaped cloud after a nuclear explosion and to real fires, smoke and gunfire in war when it was really doomsday for some soldiers. Holloway believes that by establishing a parallel between New Year's hopes and gloomy memories "Fugard intends to set up a tension between collective amnesia and overwhelming guilt" (1993: 40) in South Africa.

There is a similar contrast in the second memory that Gideon presents. He talks about the pigeons he used to keep with his father: "All come together and fly around before settling into the hok for the night. Hell that was a beautiful sight, man. Aerial maneuvers of the Karoo squadron we use to call it" (Fugard 1983: 257). The image of freedom, however, is suddenly replaced by a bizarre sight of dead pigeons that were torn apart by a wild cat one night, which again reminds Gideon of fallen soldiers: "Half of them were lying around in pieces, man - dead as fucking freedom fighters" (257). Martinus also alludes to murder by mentioning the sixth commandment – "Thoy shalt not kill" (263), to which Gideon, who is not religious, suddenly changes his tone – he becomes upset and harshly tries to justify murder: "Everybody knows there's times when you got to do it. [...] What about self-defense? [...] Or protecting women and children? [...] What about Defending Your Country Against Communism?" (263). His impatience for the amusement park to start working is growing, but Martinus tells him that this is not always possible, since failures sometimes happen.[5] Playland is an amusement park for superior whites, those who kept apartheid alive, but is maintained by blacks like Martinus. The insurmountable racial barrier between them is also pointed out by Martinus, who, when the lights are finally switched on, sends Gideon to have fun with the other whites: "Go forget your troubles white man. Playland is open and waiting for you" (267). Addressing him as a white man, and not by his name, Martinus reduces Gideon to a racial Other, assigning him a collective identity. In a similar way, Gideon addresses Martinus during the play as SWAPO[6] – for Gideon, the black man is also a racial other, without a personal name, a representative of all blacks, that is, all black soldiers against whom he fought in the war. The fact, however, that the Other (as a colonizer) and the other (a colonized)[7] are slowly changing places in apartheid and that

5 According to Wertheim (2000: 193) the amusement park is synonymous with the apartheid regime that insists on showing its well-being despite bloodshed, violence and racism. In fact, not everything is so nice in the amusement park and not everything works so well – the generator doesn't work, they didn't even manage to fix it last month. For Wertheim, this failure has a symbolic value for the sustainability of an increasingly weak system.

6 SWAPO stands for *The South West African People's Organisation* in Namibia, whose gerrilla units opposed the South African army during the so-called Border War.

7 In postcolonial theory, the term 'other' refers to the colonized, and 'Other' to the colonizer, who, acting like Lacan's parent, creates a frame of reference in which the colonial subject is formed, as dependent and inferior. 'Other' is metaphorically both mother (in terms of mother country) and father (in terms of Lacan's father – who introduces the child (colony) to society, that is, to "civilization") (see Ashcroft et al. 2000: 170).

their potentially fatal conflict is becoming inevitable is reflected in the constant change of verbal dominance between the two during the play, but also in the image of the amusement park, alluded to by Wertheim (see Footnote 5).

When the voice of 'Barking Barney', which is heard from the loudspeakers, announces the opening of Playland and a special programme for New Year's Eve, the stage is filled with loud pop music, interspersed with various announcements referring to lost property, free meals and giveaways. Gideon finds himself in the middle of "*the squeals and shrieks of laughter and terror from people on the rides*" (Fugard 1998: 268). He is out of rhythm, "*trying too hard to have a good time*" (269). He makes jokes and tries to sing along to music, but all he achieves is "*an image of forced and discordant gaiety*" (269). In 'Recent Notebook Entries' Fugard states that this scene functions to present "Gideon's relationship to society – his desperate sense of alienation, of being an outsider. He *wants* to belong, he wants to be happy and laughing like everybody else, but it eludes him" (Fugard 1993: 535). Moreover, he claims to have achieved what he came for:

> I've forgotten all my troubles. How about that! My sick ma, my stupid job, the stupid bloody foreman at my stupid bloody job, my stupid bloody car that I already know won't start when I want to go home – you've got to give me a push, O.K. – I've forgotten them all. And I'm not finished. I'm going back for more. I want to go round and round and up and down until I even forget who the bloody hell I am! (Fugard 1998: 271)

It is clear, however, that Gideon is looking to obliterate from his mind something more than a tedious, repetitive job, an overbearing boss or a broken car, since, already drunk, he returns to Martinus. His desperate desire to establish a relationship with a black man is intensified this time, not only because of the drink, but also because, despite what he claims, the amusement park did not provide him with the desired satisfaction or alleviate his as yet unidentified pain. Parts of the song "Save the Last Dance for Me" that Gideon sings as he approaches Martinus are another indication that their confrontation is inevitable.

When he discovers that Martinus's "secret", like his own has something to do with the sixth commandment, that is, murder from the past, Gideon becomes excited, recognizing it as a connection between the two of them. He sets himself up as a therapist: "I'm only trying to help. All I want is to help you deal with your problems" (277). It is true, however, that he himself needs therapy and that mutual testimony will be necessary for their broken psyches to heal. Martinus does not fall prey to Gideon's provocations and sends him to celebrate the New Year with "his people", again underlining the barrier between their two worlds and thus shutting the door between Self and O/other.

TESTIMONY, SELF AND OTHER

The arrival of the New Year, which the voice from the loudspeakers optimistically announces as a launch into the "Orbit of Happiness" (Fugard 1998: 280), brings neither happiness nor relief to Gideon. The euphoric singing of a New Year's song turns into a cry, into a "*wild, wordless animal sound*" (281) and ends with a manic repetition of his military mantra: "Easy Gid... you're alive!... easy does it... you're alive... it's over... it's all over and you're alive..." (Ibid). Gideon's constant allusions to the war, as well as the fact that he introduces himself as "Corporal Gideon le Roux" (270), unequivocally indicate that the trauma he needs to forget has something to do with his military experience. The Border war was a long war between the Republic of South Africa (whose powerful army was largely made up of Afrikaners) and blacks from Namibia and Angola, the war that was so atrocious that it was known as South Africa's Vietnam. While the apartheid government presented this war as a successful fight against Soviet expansionism and communist ideas, for Gideon the murders he had done as a robot were rather "the Law of the Jungle!" [...] Kill or be killed" (278). Gideon, in a way, experiences a conflict of individual and political/ national memory (see Assmann 2011: 68), since what was the triumph of the Republic of South Africa in the war against Namibia, for Gideon is a shameful, painful and traumatic memory of the crime. Finally refusing to identify with other whites, he admits that the war was nothing but hell for him:

> While that crowd of fat arses were having joyrides in Playland we were in Hell. Ja! For your information you don't have to wait for Judgment Day to find out what that word means [...] It's called Operational Area [...] It's everlasting mud and piss and shit and sweat and dust. And if you want to see the devil, I can show you him as well. He wears a khaki uniform, he's got an AK-47 in his hands. (Fugard 1998: 278)

That hell is a far cry from the illusory biblical hell that Martinus alludes to, it is so tangible and realistic that it does not leave Gideon even now that it has long ended.

According to Caruth, this is actually the fundamental and distinctive characteristic of a traumatized soldier, who figures as a central image in the theory of trauma in the 20th century: "The experience of the soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in repeated nightmares" (Caruth 1996: 11). This image also provides an indication of the historical origin of trauma, given that Freud "discovered" compulsive repetition soon after the First World War, which produced crowds of soldiers who suffered from so-called shell shock (Buse 2001: 174). Unable to face what they saw and experienced at the front, soldiers like Gideon found themselves in a situation where the horrors of war returned to them long after the

actual battle was over. Traumatic events that were not assimilated when they happened, but were relocated from the conscious to the unconscious, could only be experienced in their reappearance. Encouraged by New Year's noise and fireworks, Gideon finds himself on the battlefield again. He refuses to admit that the Playland has closed and remains to finally face Martinus, who for him is no longer the night watchman, but a generalized representative of all the blacks he killed in the war – just a number without a name: "Name? What the fuck are you talking about? You haven't got a name. You're just a number. Number one, or number two, number three... One day I counted you twenty-seven fucking times. I bury you every night in my sleep" (Fugard 1998: 284).

Gideon's confession to the murder of a racial other finally leads Martinus to recognize the parallel between the two and to admit the murder he perpetrated himself, and which, the same way as Gideon, he relives every night. The ghost that stalks Martinus is the ghost of a white man he killed because he raped his girlfriend. He finally tells his story about the murder, his lack of remorse after that, about the court that did not believe his story just because he was black, about serving a prison sentence and how he never saw his girlfriend again. Gideon's reaction to Martinus's story, however, is not coloured by compassion, but by racial prejudice, like the described judiciary. He exposes a typical image of colonial sexual relations, where the rape of black women was common and always went unpunished:

> You killed a poor bugger just for that? Just for screwing your women? (*laughter*) You people are too funny. Listen my friend, if screwing your woman is such a big crime, then you and your brothers are going to have to put your knives into one hell of a lot of white men... starting with me! [...] That's how little white boys learn to do it. On your women!" (288)

Making fun of Martinus for killing "only" one white man, Gideon, in a bizarre comparison of counting dead enemies with cabbages he counted in the garden as a boy when he learned to count, triumphantly recalls how number twenty-seven is his personal record. At this point, the play reaches its climax in terms of an almost palpable physical conflict between the two – Gideon's brutality, racism and provocations lead Martinus to transform him into the figure of a white man he killed. This moment, however, at the same time becomes a turning point in the sense that Martinus (though unconvincingly) overcomes his exasperation and for the first time in the play addresses Gideon by name: "Gideon le Roux! I say your name" (285). This, to some extent, removes "racial generalizations and opens the door for a man-to-man relationship across the barriers of race and individual racially inflected histories" (Wertheim 2000: 197). In this way, Martinus opens himself to testimony and becomes the 'other' not as an opposition (as a colonial other) but as a necessary listener for Gideon, who finally manages to transform his traumatized memory into a meaningful narrative,

which, according to Laub, is the only way to get snatched from the jaws of trauma (see Felman and Laub 1992: 69).

After the fight, Gideon and another soldier were delegated to dispense with the bodies of dead blacks by interring them in a mass grave. As they were throwing them into the hole, like cabbages, not people, the old woman was watching from the bushes, without saying a word. As he shouted at the old woman to move, he suddenly recalled an equally traumatic childhood event for him when, while he had been fishing with his father, he had caught a gravid fish and ripped open its entrails with a knife. Then, as he was watching the dead baby fish fall out of its mother's womb, he knew he had done something wrong: "What I had done was a sin. You can't do that to a mother and her babies. I don't care what it is, a fish or a dog or another person, it's wrong!" (Fugard 1998: 295). It was only when he remembered killing the fish that he realized that killing in war was an equal sin and that he had probably killed the son of the old woman who was watching him. The moment of acknowledging the humanity of his enemy and his sin is the moment in which his self completely disintegrated and ever since remained in a nightmarish madness, neither there nor here:

> Something just went inside me and it was snot and tears into that face mask like I never cried in my whole life, not even when I was small. I tore off the mask and gloves and got off the lorry and went over to where the old woman had been standing, but she was gone. I ran into the bush to try and find her, I looked and called, but she was gone. That's where they found me the next day. They said I was walking around in a dwaal[8]. (295)

The next day he was looking for the old woman to apologize to her and to repent, to tell her that the boy on the beach that day knew the difference between good and evil and that he did not want to become a man who shoves people into a hole like rotten cabbages. Unable to find her, he is now looking for Martinus, as the old woman's surrogate, as someone to whom he will justify himself. His confrontation with Martinus is actually a confrontation with himself, in an attempt to regain his traumatized self which can be done only if there is a possibility of addressing another. Assmann (2011: 118) believes that the trauma of the perpetrators occurs precisely when the triumphalist fantasy of omnipotence directly hits its limits. At that moment, a turn in consciousness occurs and a sudden and shocking confrontation with individual responsibility and conscience ensues. The trauma of shame brings with it a breakdown of identity, the destruction of self-image. Gideon does not know who he is and what his purpose is – from that moment his life is reduced to a meaningless ritual, a daily banal rehearsal of putting on a mask in front of others:

> I try to make it look as if I'm getting on with things like everybody else: I wake up, go to work, joke with the other ous, argue with the foreman, go

8 Dwaal (Afrikaans) = a dreamy, dazed, or absent-minded state.

> home, eat supper, watch TV with my ma... but it's all a lie, man. Inside me I'm still in that hole outside Oshakati. That's where I go every bloody night in my dreams – looking for that old woman in the bush... and never finding her. (Fugard 1998: 297)

Although he manically repeats: "You're alive, Gid!" (298), he realizes that it means nothing: "What a bloody joke. I'm as dead as the men I buried and I'm also spooking the place where I did it" (298). The only thing left for him in such a state is that, like Albee's Jerry, he wishes that figurative death in which he exists to become real. However, unable to kill himself, he seeks a black man to end his guilt-ridden life for all the black men he has killed. If Martinus killed him, it would in a way be a just revenge – that is why, at the end of his confession, he presents Martinus with a stark choice: "Forgive me or kill me" (296).

For Martinus, however, this choice is by no means simple – forgiving Gideon would mean forgiving a white man that he himself killed in the past, and if he did, then he would have nothing left: "I sit here with nothing" (296). Martinus fully identifies with his sin; without it – he would be nothing, nothingness. Yet he, like Gideon, admits that he did not want to become a spy waiting every night for his enemy to kill him again. They have both become something they did not want to be when they were children – apartheid made them killers. Instead of an element of personal will, the play suggests that both men are victims of the system, their identities are constructed by forces of power: Martinus killed out of passion and protection, while Gideon is presented as someone who killed because otherwise he would be killed.

THE HAPPY ENDING?

The ending of the play, however, does not leave the characters trapped in a vacuum of nothingness. The dawn of a new day, which is at the same time the beginning of the New Year, suggests liberation from the existential limbo and the beginning of a new life, both for the two of them, and for all people from South Africa. Expressing hope for the restoration of Gideon's self through his return to a childhood hobby (pigeon breeding), Martinus also acknowledges his own healing:

> I also want to see them. Those pigeon-birds. Flying round up there like you say. I also want to see that. [...] when Playland comes back here next time – Christmas and New Year – I want to do it like you said... look up in the sky, watch the pigeon birds flying and drink my tea and laugh! [...] To hell with spooking! You are alive. So go home and do it. Get some planks, find some nails and a hammer and fix that hok. Start again with the pigeon-birds. (*Pause.*) Do you hear what I am saying, Gideon le Roux? (Fugard 1998: 299)

Addressing each other by names, and not by "a white man" and "SWAPO", they both acknowledge the identity of the other, thus acknowledging that they are individuals who have their own names, instead of beings marked by the traumas imposed on them by the system. Their mutual testimony of the traumas made way for the creation of their new subjectivities and new lives for both of them. In 'Recent Notebook Entries' Fugard states that the resolution of conflict at the end of the play should be symbolically expressed in the sentence: "Let us live now" (Fugard 1993: 536). Also symbolically, as an allusion to the possible coexistence of blacks and whites in the new Africa, Gideon and Martinus leave the stage together to start Gideon's car: "And to prove that you are alive and not a spook come give me a push, man. I know that bloody tjorrie[9] of mine is not going to start again. Been giving me trouble all bloody week. I don't know what is wrong with it. Been into the garage two times already this month" (Fugard 1998: 299).

Nevertheless, this final forgiveness and repentance gives the impression of imposed optimism instead of the real psychological catharsis that liberation from trauma would bring. Holloway (1993) even thinks that the end is not really optimistic, considering that Martinus's forgiveness to Gideon is not explicitly stated. Instead, the intense moment of conflict and confession disappears with the dawn of a new day, and the mere confession of guilt is equated with purification and liberation from trauma. Colleran (1995: 393, 402) reproaches Fugard for creating a utopian image of racial relations at the end of the play, whereby subjugated blacks do not receive compensation, but oppressors force them to take on the role of their therapists and forgive them. According to Holloway, the play's ending does not allow for the possibility of any explicit change in the socio-political situation, which is constantly alluded to, given that in the end Gideon still occupies a dominant position and Martinus is the one who will help him (to push his car):

> The message, however unintentional, seems to be that the white man will continue to occupy his position of privilege, while the black will loyally remain the good and faithful servant. Mutual co-operation aside, the scene symbolically precludes any reversal of role or condition of equality. Gideon, having rid himself (in my opinion) too easily of white guilt, slips comfortably and without any sense of irony back into the unchanged conditions of his former innocence. (Holloway 1993: 41)

9 Tjorrie (Afrikaans) = a dilapidated motor car or other vehicle

CONCLUSION

In *Playland*, through the portrayal of the psychological scars of Martinus and Gideon, Fugard manages to portray how apartheid destroys everyone involved in the system, regardless of their skin colour. The traumas that haunt the protagonists can be articulated on the stage only in the process of mutual witnessing, during which they play out each other's therapists. It is only in presenting (and repeating) their traumatic memories to one another that they can integrate their disintegrated selves and establish new identity positions of both I and the other. The healing of the protagonists and the reconciliation between them at the end of the play represents Fugard's own optimism. The author claims that the end of the 20th century was "South Africa's famous political miracle, I saw it coming and I knew that the extraordinary opportunity to build a just and decent society would depend on our capacity for Thruth and Forgiveness. *Playland* is my recognition of that" (Fugard 1998: viii). However, such ending has often been reviled by critics for being unconvincing, in the same way as the promises imposed by political leaders at the time in the years after Nelson Mandela's release from prison, which were marked by constant unrest across the country. The hope that the move towards a new regime would obliterate all guilt from the past stood, in fact, side by side with a haunting fear that tensions and violence, present for so long due to racial division, would reappear. These tensions are palpable on the stage of *Playland* where Gideon and Martinus constantly stand on the verge of actual physical conflict. The impression that the play undoubtedly leaves is that the wounds inflicted by apartheid will not be able to heal easily, and that it will take decades for reparative scar tissue to form, as evidenced in Fugard's subsequent plays (most notably in *The Train Driver* (2010)), in which the protagonists also bring out both individual and collective traumas. The act of testimony or bearing witness is acted out on Fugard's stage, but moreover, the plays themselves (as witnesses of a period in history) address us, as readers and viewers, and we become witnesses to the witness, that "other" (see Felman and Laub 1992) necessary for the traumatized self to be reborn, and for the memory of trauma to become possible and public, in a similar way that was attempted by TRC.

References

Ashcroft et al. 2000: B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, London: Routledge.

Assmann 2011: A. Asman, *Duga senka prošlosti, kultura sećanja i politika povesti*, Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.

Barbera 1993: J. Barbera, Introduction: Fugard, Women, and Politics, *Twentieth Century Literature,* 39 (4), v-xix. JSTOR. 5 May 2021.

Buse 2001: P. Buse, *Drama + Theory: Critical Approaches to Modern British Drama*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Caruth 1996: C. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience, Trauma, Narrative and History*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Colleran 1995: J. Colleran, Athol Fugard and the Problematics of the Liberal Critique, *Modern Drama* 38 (3), Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 389–407.

Cohen 1977: D. Cohen, A South African Drama: Athol Fugard's "The Blood Knot", *Modern Language Studies*, 7 (1), 74–81. JSTOR. 27 Jan. 2021.

Dubrach 1989: E. Dubrach, Surviving in Xanadu: Athol Fugard's 'A Lesson from Aloes', *Ariel* 20, 252–264. JSTOR. 30. Jan. 2021.

Felman and Laub 1992: S. Felman and D. Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, New York and London: Routledge.

Fugard 1983: A. Fugard, *Notebooks 1960–1977*, London and Boston: Faber and Faber.

Fugard 1992: A. Fugard, In-depth Interview with Athol Fugard, Tekweni TV Productions, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtkbPMd6Mks&t=994s&ab_channel=Tekweni. Accessed 5 May 2021.

Fugard 1993: A. Fugard, Recent Notebook Entries, *Twentieth Century Literature*, 39 (4), Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 526–536. JSTOR. 1. May 2021.

Fugard 1997: A. Fugard, *Cousins: A Memoir*, New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc.

Fugard 1998: A. Fugard, *Plays One*, London: Faber and Faber.

Holloway 1993: M. Holloway, *Playland*: Fugard's Liberalism, *UNISA English Studies* 31, 36-42.

Hutchion 2004: *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, New York: Routledge.

Kumar and Clark [5]1999: P. Kumar and M. Clark, *Clinical Medicine*, London: Harcourt Publishers Limited

LaCapra 1999: D. LaCapra, Trauma, Absence, Loss, *Critical Inquiry* 25 (4), Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 696–727.

Levine 2006: M. G. Levine, *The Belated Witness: Literature, Testimony, and the Question of Holocaust Survival*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Shelley 2009: A. Shelley, *Athol Fugard: His Plays, People and Politics*, London: Oberon Books

Smith 2014: D. Smith, Athol Fugard: 'Prejudice and racism are still alive and well in South Africa', The Guardian, 12. Aug. 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/12/athol-fugard-prejudice-racism-south-africa. Accessed 5 May 2021.

Walder 2004: D. Walder, Introduction, in *Port Elizabeth Play*s by Athol Fugard, Oxford: Oxford University Press, ix-xxx.

Wertheim 2000: A. Wertheim, *The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Лена Тица / ТРАУМА И СВЕДОЧЕЊЕ У ДРАМИ *ЛУНА ПАРК* АТОЛА ФУГАРДА

Резиме: Драме Атола Фугарда, једног од најзначајнијих савремених јужноафричких драмских писаца, фокусирају се на ексцентричне и маргиналне ликове који покушавају да успоставе иоле смислене идентитете упркос бесмислу који им је наметао систем апартхејда унутар кога су се налазили. Упркос томе што је апартхејд, као својеврсни тип колонијализма, белце и црнце нужно дефинисао као надређене Друге (колонизаторе) и подређене друге (колонизоване), Фугард у својим драмама настоји да покаже да је овај систем остављао подједнако лоше последице по све учеснике без обзира на њихову боју коже. У овом раду анализира се Фугардова драма *Луна ӣарк*, написана пар година пре слома апартхејда, у којој је нарочито истакнут сукоб белца и црнца, кроз ликове Гидеона ле Руа, бившег војника белца који долази у забавни парк из наслова у нади да ће заборавити убиства из рата, и Мартинуса Зулуа, црног чувара луна парка, који сваке ноћи изнова проживљава убиство белца које је починио у младости. Ослањајући се на теоријске концепте студија трауме које су дефинисали Фелман, Лауб, Карут и Лакапра, настојаћемо да покажемо како је концепција сопства и црног и белог протагонисте увелико везана за ове трауматичне доживљаје из њихове прошлости. Циљ рада јесте да покажемо како конфронтација Мартинуса и Гидеона на сцени доводи до обостраног сведочења, које је, према теорији трауме, једини начин да се траума екстернализује и да се, уз интеррелацију са другошћу, изнова изгради трауматизовано сопство као дијалошка конструкција. У том чину и Мартинус и Гидеон прелазе из колонизацијских позиција Д/другог у позицију неопходног ‘другог’ као слушаоца и терапеута. И поред наметнутог хепиенда, заборав који би донео коначно залечење протагониста остављен је под знаком питања, што алудира на дуготрајне последице које је апартхејд оставио и у годинама након укидања, а које су овековечене у раду Комисије за истину и помирење.

Кључне речи: траума, сведочење, сопство и другост, апартхејд, сећање, идентитет

Примљен: 17. маја 2021.
Прихваћен за шӣамӣу: јуна 2021.