[WLG]
WIENER LINGUISTISCHE GAZETTE

Chronotopes of Apartheid

Transmitted memory as positioning practice among the born-free generation of South Africa

Julia Sonnleitner

Special print from: *Wiener Linguistische Gazette* (WLG) 83 (2018): 28–47

University of Vienna · Department of Linguistics · 2018

Owner, editor and publisher:
University of Vienna, Department of Linguistics
Sensengasse 3a
1090 Vienna
Austria

Editorial board: Christian Bendl, Mi-Cha Flubacher (Applied Linguistics),
Stefan Schumacher (General and Historical Linguistics)
Contact: wlg@univie.ac.at
Homepage: *http://wlg.univie.ac.at*

ISSN: 2224-1876
NBN: BI,078,1063

The WLG journal is published in loose sequence and in open access format.
All issues as of 72 (2005) are available online.

Chronotopes of Apartheid

Transmitted memory as positioning practice among the born-free generation of South Africa

Julia Sonnleitner [*]

Wiener Linguistische Gazette (WLG)
Department of Linguistics
University of Vienna
Issue 83 (2018): 28–47

Abstract

After decades of spatial segregation, it is not surprising that space features prominently in the way apartheid is remembered in South Africa. More than 20 years after the first democratic elections, a new generation, referred to as the *born-frees*, has grown up. I focus on how representatives of this generation make sense of the past for which I conducted interviews in six schools in different areas of Cape Town which used to be *black*, *coloured* and *white* Group Areas respectively. The chronotope by Mikhail Bakhtin provided me with a nuanced analysis of how subjects construe the past in spatial-temporal terms. I work out two aspects of the chronotope which are particularly salient in my data: the chronotope as a model of agency and as a participation framework.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, chronotopes, South Africa, memory, inter-generational transmission

[*] Julia Sonnleitner, University of Vienna, julia-sonnleitner@gmx.at.

1 Introduction

The democratic transition in South Africa between 1990 and 1994 caused a shift in political power, institutional change and a reinterpretation of history. Measures for coming to terms with the past were initiated – one of the most prominent among them being the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These measures generated new public discourses about South Africa's history that are expressed in popular genres as well as in academia and history textbooks. More than 20 years after the first democratic elections, a new generation has grown up with a revised history curriculum, new memorials, and democratic institutions. They are referred to as *born-frees* and increasingly come into focus of public and academic attention. This generation knows about apartheid only from transmitted memory, that is, socially selected discourses about the past. Previous research on social memory in South Africa has concentrated on the production of memory and autobiographic memory. So far, little attention has been paid to transmitted memory. This study enquires how changes in knowledge production and discourse in the new South Africa impact on the interpretation of the past of representatives of the *born-free* generation.[1] In the following, I will focus in particular on situations of inter-generational transmission of memory and how the interview partners relate to these. To this end, the concept of the chronotope will be combined with stance in discourse.

[1] The findings of this article are based on a wider study (Sonnleitner 2016) for which I carried out field research in Cape Town, South Africa. The data for analysis are 45 semi-structured, narrative interviews with 16-19-year old students of heterogeneous backgrounds from six different schools in Cape Town and its surroundings. My choice of these schools was based on the expectation that research in historically segregated districts would provide me with the greatest range of heterogeneity in standpoints about the past. I do not assume, however, that – because of the legacy of apartheid – race forms a kind of community of memory. My research design was purposely chosen in a way that my interview partners were not addressed as representatives of a certain racial category.

Studies on social memory have tended to explain the way the past is interpreted and transmitted with theoretical frameworks of tradition and social coherence (cf. Antze & Lambek 1996; Berliner 2005; Hodgkin & Radstone 2003; Kansteiner 2002). In German academic discourse, notions like *Erinnerungsgemeinschaft* ('community of memory') or *Erinnerungskultur* ('memory culture') which culturalise or ethnicise memory have been prominent in the discussion and a static notion of identity has prevailed as an explanation for the way the past is interpreted and transmitted. The relation between memory and identity seems to be evident beforehand: people remember the way they do because they are members of a certain culture or group. By contrast, Michel Foucault's notion of the *archive* offers a different approach to theorise memory (Foucault 2001/1968). The archive, historically specific and socially embedded in power relations, delineates the conditions of the reactivation of a body of knowledge in a certain epoch. This concept highlights the questions of which repositories of memory are obtainable, which ones are being pursued, and which ones make it into public discourses of memory. If we furthermore agree with Foucault that power constellations produce certain forms of knowledge and discourses, the question emerges if and how the political transformation in the democratic South Africa has facilitated new discourses on memory.

2 The centrality of apartheid's spatial politics

Idiosyncratic to the apartheid regime was its effort to establish a congruence between territories, specifically defined subjects and times (the relative closeness or distance to modernity). This peculiarity, that is, the politics of space, is worth a moment of consideration regarding the transmission of memory. The perception of racially and ethnically defined territories, imagined as containers, congruent with cultures on different stages of modernity, was, as Mahmood Mamdani (1996) illustrated, a product of late colonialism. Prominent features of apartheid's rule, like the difference between the rural and the urban, ethnicised vs. racialised subjects, between direct and indirect rule and the linking of specifically defined subjects with

territories and times (i.e. stages of development) had been part of colonialism and therefore already existed at the time when apartheid was established. The Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act (both 1950) legalised the spatial segregation of people according to race and divided the population into the three main categories of *black*, *white*, and *coloured*.[2] Emblematic for the eviction of the population classified as *black* and *coloured* is the former District Six in Cape Town. This part of town had always been a mixed working-class district and it was precisely for this reason that the apartheid regime decided to raze this neighbourhood. District Six was declared a *white* Group Area in 1966. In the following 15 years between 55.000 and 65.000 people were forcibly removed and their homes destroyed with bulldozers (Geschier 2007: 38). Former residents were 'compensated' with houses in newly developing areas such as Mitchell's Plain (in the case of *coloureds*) and *black* townships like Langa. These areas were far away from the city centre, they were built on low quality, sandy land and had an insufficient infrastructure. With regard to social ties, old neighbourhoods and support systems were ripped. These often traumatic experiences of loss and the destruction of former places of living have been documented in oral-history projects and activist projects like the foundation of the District Six Museum (Field 2001; Geschier 2007; Jeppie & Soudien 1990; Rassool & Prosalendis 2001; Trotter 2009). The destruction of District Six was experienced by the generation of some of my interview partners' grandparents.

[2] According to the logic of apartheid racial classifications, *white* and *black* are imagined as 'pure' races whereas *coloured* is construed as a 'mixed' category. I use these terms as quotations of the apartheid classifications, e.g. in case I know how the parents or grandparents of the students were classified or the Group Areas they lived in but refuse to categorise my interview partners according to race, unless they explicitly refer to these categories themselves.

3 The chronotope as model of agency and participation framework

As apartheid's spatial politics was such a defining feature of governance, the analysis of the data must be methodologically sensitive to the spatial dimension in the accounts of the past. A concept which provides a useful point of departure for an "interpretive balance" (Soja 1989: 23) between time, space, and subject is the *chronotope* by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981). It enables us to reflect on representations of time and space in discourse which, according to Bakhtin, are not linear, separated entities but have to be imagined as interdependent. A chronotopic arrangement is the fundamental condition of personhood, it creates possibilities of action for the protagonists. However, Bakhtin's essay does not offer a stringent definition of the chronotope. It can only be carefully reconstructed from the way Bakhtin applied it to the analysis of literary genres. For the ends of this analysis, I adapted Bakhtin's concept to the specificity of my research context, as it has the benefit of linking the dimensions of time, space, and subject (Sonnleitner 2016).

Two aspects of the chronotope are of particular significance to this study: the creation of agency and the chronotope as a framework of participation. In his analysis of literary genres across centuries, Bakhtin works out how a certain image of humanity of an epoch is reflected in its literature. This image is determined by the conditions of time and space in which subjects live and move. Conversely, time and space in discourse can only be expressed by means of the subject. In discourse, this is achieved 1) by the actual movement of bodies in space or 2) by relating different spaces by means of the senses, such as sight and audition, or by any means of communication. Only by corporal and sensory references can time and space of a chronotope be communicated. The chronotopic arrangement of a narration is the condition for the ability of subjects to act. The Greek Novel, to illustrate one of Bakhtin's examples, is characterised by a profound lack of the protagonists' ability to change the course of what happens and to take action. The storyline progresses mainly by accidents and coincidences ("all of a sudden", "it so

happened") which makes the protagonists' radius of action very limited as they can only re-act to what happens to them. Moreover, the recipients' expectation of the genre is that the protagonists pass the trials and are re-united at the end of the story with the same characteristics of purity, beauty, youth etc. as they had started at the beginning. The central aspect, therefore, is the radius of action that subjects have in the time-space which is set out: can they change the course of what happens or are they bound to react to what happens to them? Do time and space which the protagonists go through leave their mark on them and change their course of life or is time irrelevant and space abstract (as in the Greek Novel)? If we consider that these arrangements of space and time in discourse fundamentally determine subjects' actions, chronotopes are models of agency.

A second feature of the chronotope that I would like to highlight here is its understanding as a participation framework, as Agha (2007) identified. He refers to the latter part of the essay where Bakhtin suggests that "the world of the author" and "the world of the listeners and readers" are "chronotopic as well" (Bakhtin 1981: 252). This perspective draws our attention to the situation of the communication act in which the respective chronotopes are being enacted. Speakers create certain chronotopes (as possibilities of agency) in which the protagonists of a story are placed, that is, the speaker him/herself and/or others. The audience can align with these chronotopes and the radius of action that the speaker creates or they distance themselves from these frames of action, contesting the chronotopic version of the past, the kind of agency it creates, and its underlying ideology. As Agha writes with regard to mass-mediated spacetime,

> Encounters with chronotopes are encounters with characterological figures (or 'voices') embedded within spatiotemporalized (if not always determinately 'sociohistorical') locales, whether real or imagined, with which speech participants establish forms of alignment, and thus acquire (or lose) delegated forms of positionality (particular or generic) in the spatiotemporal world they inhabit. (Agha 2007: 331)

Thus, alignment with certain chronotopes is an act of positioning which links the account of the past and its chronotopic configuration to the positionality of the speaker in the present of the communication act.

This way, the concept of the chronotope can be linked to stance in discourse (cf. Englebretson 2007; Jaffe 2009a) which allows a nuanced analysis of the ways subjects relate to transmitted memory. It investigates speakers' various positioning in relation to discourses and the social groups they index (Eckert 2008; Silverstein 2003; Spitzmüller 2013). By positioning themselves in relation to chronotopes, subjects can align with or distance themselves from ideological stances about the past. For the analysis of my interviews, I employ the stance triangle by Du Bois (2007). According to this model, positioning is a relational process between two subjects (subject 1, subject 2) and an object. The process can be split into three interrelated steps: a) a speaker evaluates an object (evaluation), b) she thus positions herself within a discourse about this object (positioning), c) by positioning herself, she aligns with other speakers, present or imagined (alignment). In short, "I evaluate something, and thereby position myself, and thereby align with you" (Du Bois 2007: 163).

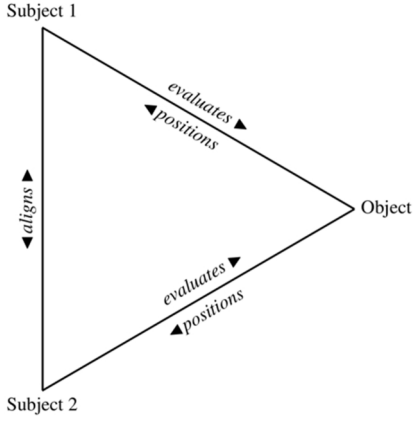

Figure 1: The stance triangle by Du Bois (2007: 163)

This model of stance in discourse understands positioning as a relational act. Thus, speakers' standpoints in relation to chronotopic versions of the

past can be approached as situated alignments rather than the expression of cultural, traditional, ethnic or racial manifestations. The benefit of stance in discourse for the analysis of social memory is that:

- it methodologically privileges situated action, therefore the question of *who remembers what in which situation* becomes an empirical question rather than a presupposition,
- it links individual performance and social meaning, therefore the division between individual and collective memory can be overcome,
- it puts focus on alignments and identifications, therefore social reproduction *and* change can be differentiated in a nuanced way,
- stances may express multiple or ambiguous meanings, for example by irony, therefore "[...] complex ways in which speakers manage multiple identities (or multiple aspects of identity)" (Jaffe 2009b: 4) can be comprised.

4 Apartheid distant and close: the abstract and concrete chronotope

Since apartheid meant the spatial and institutional segregation of citizens according to a racialised scale that had its antecedents in the colonial regime of direct and indirect rule, it is not surprising that space plays such a significant role in the way young people construe the past. What was salient in all accounts were the peculiar landscapes of apartheid that my interview partners created. What I found striking about my material was the fact that in some interviews, families seem to have lived in a space *outside* of apartheid. When asked if they could tell me how members of their families had experienced the time of apartheid, some interview partners would explain that their parents never witnessed it. In these interviews, the area which is inhabited by the family (I call it the enclave) stands in contrast to the rest of the country where apartheid actually happened. In other interviews, however, a specific place fundamentally determines people's lives. Here, racial classification regulates people's radius of action, their possible movements and

their social relations in racially restricted spaces. My analysis of the students' narratives has resulted in the distinction of two different modes in their accounts of the past: the *abstract* and the *concrete* chronotope.

In the following section, I will illustrate the *abstract* and the *concrete* chronotope by means of two examples. I conducted these interviews in a school in Mitchell's Plain. This school is attended both by students from Mitchell's Plain and by students who travel to school from township[3] areas, such as Khayelitsha or Gugulethu. The two interviews I have chosen were conducted with a female student of 18 years, CK, whose family was classified *coloured* during apartheid and a male student, WH, also 18 years old, whose family was classified *Indian*. I have chosen these examples because the two interview partners have a similar background concerning the historical experience of their families, as members in both families from the generation of the students' grandparents were evicted from other parts of Cape Town.

4.1 An impossible transmission

The first example is from a passage in the interview with CK where I ask her about family stories during the time of apartheid. CK lives with her family in the vicinity of the school which lies in the middle of Mitchell's Plain. The following two interview segments are about stories of apartheid which are passed on in CK's family.

[3] During Apartheid, townships were designated urban residential areas for people classified *black* who were either evicted from inner city districts now reserved for *Whites* or *Coloureds* or who had migrated from rural parts of South Africa to the city. Because of apartheid's restrictive and exclusive planning regime called influx control, it was tried to keep the population classified *black* outside of the space of the city as rigidly as possible. After the suspension of influx control, these areas experienced a massive population growth and are in the new South Africa also increasingly inhabited by migrants and refugees from other African countries.

Excerpt 1:

> [My] mother always / my mother told me that • because um • • where they were living, her parents never exposed her • to • the • ah • • / < ((faster)) they wouldn't / they / she / my mother told me she was never exposed to apartheid because > • ((inhaling)) < ((rising intonation)) my grandfather > // S: Mhm //, her < father ((falling intonation)) > // S: Mhm //, like / < ((smiling)) he was / always wanted to stand on the right side of the law. So if there was a sign that, • No Coloureds, then they didn't go there.> // S: < ((rising intonation)) Okay > // So my mother told me that she was never actually exposed to apartheid. (CK: 19)
>
> They were like • • far away from • the trouble, where it was happening, they always kept their distance from it. So, it doesn't make sense for me to ask her about it. Or / because what she will tell me is probably what she saw on TV at that time. // S: Aha. // And that will be probably what I'm learning in school also. So I won't, • I won't ask her. (CK 20-21)

In this example, apartheid seems to be unevenly distributed: there were places of apartheid ("the trouble, where it was happening") and other places that were not touched by it ("where they were living"). This sequence is an example of what I have called the *abstract chronotope* (in contrast to the *concrete chronotope* that I will discuss later). Its characteristic is the distinction between two spaces: one is the time-space of apartheid and the other one the time-space of the enclave. At the beginning of this segment, CK introduces a place, "where they were living" and goes on to describe the qualities of this space: it is set apart from the rest of apartheid's time-space and its conditions. These two time-spaces are divided by a border that is expressed in the *No-Coloureds signs* ("if there was a sign that, No Coloureds, then they didn't go there"). The apartheid law is the dividing line between the sheltered, inner space of the enclave and the alien, outer space of apartheid. The grandfather protects the family from apartheid as he ensures that the members stay within the confinement of its borders ("he always wanted to stand on the right side of the law"). In this account, apartheid is depicted as avoidable and the family's staying away from it is seen as an effort or achievement ("they always kept their distance from it"). However, the two time-spaces are related by the sense of vision. The family is able to look into the apartheid zone through a

window, i.e. the television. This is their only source of knowledge about the apartheid regime and its effects.

If the past is construed in a way that there are spaces which are affected by apartheid and others that are not, the question arises what apartheid actually is in the logic of this account. Apartheid is imagined as a time-space outside of the life-world of the family. It *happens* at the same time ("the trouble, where it was happening") but in a quasi-distant land ("They were like far away from the trouble, where it was happening, they always kept their distance to it"). As became manifest from this and other interviews (cf. Sonnleitner 2016), apartheid is most manifest in certain places (the cities, and in particular *black* townships) and at certain times (the anti-apartheid struggles and the counter-insurgency of the Apartheid Security Forces) which are imagined as events rather than a *longue durée* (Braudel 2001 [1949]). In this account, the two time-spaces of the enclave and apartheid are described as distant (far away, kept their distance) and also time has a different quality: the apartheid time-space is governed by event-history and from today's perspective clearly situated in the past whereas time in the enclave is not significantly different to the present. It correlates with what Bakhtin has termed "idyllic time":

> This little spatial world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world. [...] The unity of the life of generations (in general, the life of men) in an idyll is in most instances primarily defined by the unity of place, by the age-old rooting of the life of generations to a single place, from which this life, in all its events, is inseparable. This unity of place in the life of generations weakens and renders less distinct all the temporal boundaries between individual lives and between various phases of one and the same life. (Bakhtin 1981: 225)

This way, the life-time of the family and the time in the apartheid time-space go their separate ways, they are decidedly set apart and are only related by the gaze of the family through a window into the apartheid zone, the television.

It is remarkable that the family's place of living, situated in the middle of Mitchell's Plain, a *coloured* Group Area that was historically one of the centres

of anti-Apartheid actions, in this account becomes a distant enclave that was not touched by apartheid. Throughout the interview, CK vehemently denies that her mother experienced apartheid and that she cannot ask her family members about their experiences because they were not exposed to it. They knew about apartheid only from TV as if they were living in a distant land. If a chronotope is seen as a model of agency, as I suggested earlier, CK's family members do have agency in this account. They are not depicted as victims of the apartheid regime but as subjects who actively create the difference and distance between the two time-spaces of the enclave (where they live) and apartheid. In this account, they become active agents in shaping the world they decide to live in, which is a world that is sheltered from apartheid, a space and a time that have distinctive qualities and characteristics. CK begins the sequence with "my mother my always / my mother told me that", which suggests that this chronotope of the past has been recurrently told in her family and secondly, that CK, at least in this interview, does not challenge this chronotopic version of the past. This sequence is not only about her family's experience of apartheid but also deals with the transmission of memory. The subsequent chronotope is construed as an argument of why it does not make sense to her to ask her mother about the time of apartheid. The logic of the *abstract chronotope* makes a transmission of memory of apartheid impossible because the families did not experience it although they were living at the same (parallel) time. Their staying away from apartheid is depicted as an achievement which makes it unnecessary for CK to ask them about apartheid and as a consequence, as she concludes, she prefers to learn at school about it: "so it doesn't make sense for me to ask her about it. Or / because what she will tell me is probably what she saw on TV at that time. // S: Aha. // And that will be probably what I'm learning in school also. So I won't, • I won't ask her".

4.2 The *concrete chronotope*

The second example is taken from the interview with WH, a student at the same school, who I asked about family stories of the time of apartheid. Here,

he talks about the eviction of his family from District Six which his grandmother told him about who was classified Indian at the time of apartheid.

Excerpt 2:

> So she used to like say they came • with a / with the • um • the machines // S: Mhm. // and stuff and they came down and people had to • / were for-cib-ly removed from their houses, their valuables and everything was just thrown around • and • was just removed like roughly and then they pulled out the stuff, they had to move to places like • ah • they came to Mitchell's Plain and they came to • • ah, • what's the other place, • they were all moved to Heideveld and all that places. // S: Ah. // They were all spread out. // S: Mh. // To be in different • sectors. (WH: 23)

This is an example of what I have termed the *concrete chronotope.* Here, apartheid is not imagined as a time-space outside of people's lives but a fundamental condition of their lives and possibilities. Within this chronotope, people cannot escape apartheid but it is the all-pervasive condition for action and being acted upon. Within this chronotope, places are not arbitrary spaces but they are concrete in the sense that as designated Group Areas, they always have an effect on the lives of the people moving within them and entering them. This sequence is about the exclusion of a family classified as Indian from the inner-city area of Cape Town that was declared a *Whites*-only area. In this narrative, apartheid is an authority that forces people out of their previous, closely knit neighbourhoods into distant and alien surroundings. The violence of the removal is depicted in all clarity. Movements in this chronotope are almost always forced by the violence of the apartheid executive. In the accounts, this is achieved by the use of passive voice ("people were forcibly removed", "their valuables and everything was just thrown around", "they were spread out"), and in other interviews, by the object case (e.g., "they put them into race", cf. Sonnleitner 2016: 127) and auxiliary verbs (e.g., "they had to move to places like Mitchell's Plain", cf. Sonnleitner 2016: 127). These forced movements always lead out of zones declared for *Whites* and into other places according to people's racial classification. The effect of these forced movements is an alienation of the

social relations people had: they are ripped out of their previous neighbourhoods and are divided from friends, neighbours and family which meant far distances between members of previous social networks, far distances to workplaces and a poorly developed infrastructure. WH phrases this fragmentation of social relationships as "they were all spread out". In the *concrete chronotope*, the past is not divided into different time-spaces with apartheid on the one and the enclave on the other hand. There is no escape from the apartheid laws and their execution. The dividing line in the *concrete chronotope* is the time of apartheid and the time of South Africa after the democratic transition. In the *abstract chronotope*, the main division runs through the line between the enclave and the apartheid zone. Seen from the perspective of the present, the apartheid time-space qualifies as past whereas in the time-space of the enclave, past and present are not distinguished but are imagined as a continuum.

4.3 Contesting chronotopic versions of the past

If the first two examples illustrated the chronotope as a model of agency, the last part will tackle the chronotope as a participation framework. I will explore this by example of an interview with AR, a student at a school in a former *white* Group Area whose parents were classified as *white* during the time of apartheid. Here we shall see that chronotopes, in the sense of spatio-temporal scenarios of the past, are not uncontested and that speakers show different degrees of alignment as they wish to position themselves.

Excerpt 3:

S: (Interviewer): […] are there any stories they tell about apartheid, <((quieter)) for example? Your parents.>
AR: You actually have to probe them. // S: Ya. // You have to ask them to talk about apartheid. Mh, it, it's • because I'm from a white side, it's probably / they feel like • • [inhaling] they were • [exhaling] in the wrong, I suppose. They didn't do anything. My mom always talks about <((higher pitch, softer tone)) But we didn't know any better. Couldn't do anything.> // S: Ya. // Mh, both of my parents, my aunts, everybody say, they couldn't do anything, they didn't know better. (AR: 20)

In this segment, AR speaks about the transmission of memory of the time of apartheid in his family and refers to situations in the past (as repeated situations) when the topic of apartheid comes up. The position about the past of members of AR's family are embedded as an alien voice in his own speech: "But we didn't know any better. Couldn't do anything." This alludes to a scenario of the apartheid past that I have called the *abstract chronotope* with its division between the apartheid time-space and the time-space of the enclave. Subjects living in the enclave can neither see or hear what is going on in the outside, the other world of the apartheid zone. Nor can they transgress the border of their enclave and step into the apartheid zone by any form of mobility. Subjects living in the enclave are always surrounded by their enclave, imagined as an apartheid-free zone. Therefore, they are not able to see, hear and in due course know what is going on in the apartheid zone. AR alludes to this chronotope as the interpretation of the past which his family refers to whenever they speak about the time of apartheid. He does so by enacting the voice of his mother which is brought forward in a different tonal quality ("<((higher pitch, softer tone))"). In order to contrast it with his own voice, AR displays her speech which has a comic effect and creates an ironic distance to her position. As Jaffe observes, a high level of displayed orientations indicates distance (Jaffe 2009: 11).

If we recall the stance triangle of Du Bois and the three steps in the process of positioning, AR evaluates an object – in this case a certain interpretation of the past. By means of irony, he distances himself from a certain discourse position and a social group which is indexed by a racial and generational definition of the other: by saying "because I'm from a white side" the speaker connects the stance to a certain racial category which he aligns with and from which he distances himself at the same time. In doing so, AR connects these stances to a broader social framework. Furthermore, this stance is linked to a generational category – it is the older generation AR wishes to represent. In this dialogical sense, AR gives another ideological standpoint about the past a stage in his own speech, he is "ideologically informed" (Silverstein 2003: 227). By distancing himself from this standpoint

by means of irony, AR reveals something of his own stance without committing himself too much to a certain interpretation of the past. The act of ironic speech has the advantage of keeping one's own opinion open and at the same time to disassociate oneself from a certain stance. Throughout the interviews I conducted, the indexing of race occurred only in cases when interview partners wished to distance themselves from representatives of the older generation. At no point did interview partners index a standpoint as that of another race in their accounts.

5 Conclusion

In this article, I have demonstrated that space features prominently in the accounts of the past of representatives of the *born-free* generation. The historical specificity of the South African context requires a methodology which comprises the spatial dimension in its analysis of historical discourses. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope was employed to identify two modes in the way the past is construed: the first one I have called the *abstract*, the other one the *concrete chronotope*. The main criterion of distinction between the two is to what extent the apartheid regime impacts on the life of the protagonists. As I have shown, apartheid is an ever-pervasive condition of life in the *concrete* and a distant and inconceivable time-space in the case of the *abstract chronotope*. These two chronotopic scenarios of the past were fleshed out by highlighting the concept of the chronotope as a model of agency. Seen through this lens, the configuration of time and space in a chronotope enables not only a specific kind of personhood and plot of an account but also delimits possibilities of action (movements, deeds, communication), of perception (hearing, seeing) and of cognisance. Drawing on the aspect of the chronotope as a participation framework (Agha 2007) allows the connection of this concept to stance in discourse. This perspective shifts our attention to situations when chronotopes are enacted in communication, i.e. when speakers draw on specific time-space-constellations and the form of personhood and agency they create. To recall Agha's quote, "Encounters with chronotopes are encounters with characterological figures (or 'voices')

embedded within spatiotemporalized (if not always determinately 'sociohistorical') locales [...]" (Agha 2007: 331). In the example of AR, I highlighted how such a characterological figure is embedded into speech by double-voicing, creating an ironic distance and thus challenging the chronotopic version of the past of his family. If further combined with stance in discourse, it is evident that enacting voices of characterological figures (which are created by chronotopic constellations) is a way of stance-taking and connecting stances to a broader social framework (Silverstein 2003).

Employing the concept of the chronotope and positioning practices helped me recede from approaches that take culture, race, ethnicity or class as an explanation of why people remember the way they do. A large number of studies on social memory in South Africa centres around the idea that a shared experience, like the forced removals, created a shared memory of apartheid. As people were forced by the apartheid regime to live in communities that were racially defined, narratives could from then on only circulate within racially defined local groups. According to this argument, discourses about the past are most similar within a racially defined area and most divergent between two differently racially defined areas. My findings however suggest that this causal connection has to be revised. A view on the social memory of a group defined as *Coloureds*, for example, does not take into account that a totalitarian regime like apartheid does not only cause narratives of resistance but also silences because of trauma and the perpetuation of colonial discourses. I have shown that students with a similar historical background of their families, like CK and WH, position their families in quite different scenarios of apartheid: the *abstract* and the *concrete chronotope*. The example of AR furthermore shows how complex alignments and dis-alignments with racially indexed stances can be. Employing stance in discourse equipped me with a means to explore my interview partners' chronotopic construction of the past and their alignments with chronotopes that are ideologically and socially indexed when they present the voice of others in their speech. Thus it was possible to explore the young people's orientations towards transmitted memory and towards situations of transmission. My analysis of the students' accounts has demonstrated the fluid

character of what is past and what is present and how subjects position themselves and their family members within these entities. By combining the concepts of the chronotope and of stance in discourse, I could work out some prominent features of how representatives of the *born-free* generation interpret the past and how this is linked to the social dynamics of positioning.

Transcription

•	short turn-internal pause, hesitance
••	longer turn-internal pause
•••	long turn-internal pause
(( ))	comments on the modulation within the sequence designated by <>
/	change of the syntax
//	activities of affirmation or attention from the interviewer that do not indicate a turn
No	stressing of a word or syllable

References

Agha, Asif. 2007. Recombinant selves in mass mediated spacetime. *Language and Communication* 27. 320–335.

Antze, Paul & Michael Lambek (eds.). 1996. *Tense past. Essays in culture and memory.* New York: Routledge.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. *The dialogic imagination. Four essays.* Edited by Michel Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Berliner, David. 2005. The abuses of memory. Reflexions on the memory boom in anthropology. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78(1). 197–211.

Braudel, Fernand. 2001 [1949]. *Das Mittelmeer und die mediterrane Welt der Epoche Philipps II.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Du Bois, John. 2007. The stance triangle. In Robert Englebretson (ed.), *Stancetaking in discourse. Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction,* 139–182. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Eckert, Penelope. 2008. Variation and the indexical field. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12(4). 453–476.

Englebretson, Robert (ed.). 2007. *Stancetaking in discourse. Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Field, Sean (ed.). 2001. *Lost communities, living memories. Remembering forced removals in Cape Town.* Claremont: David Philip Publishers.

Field, Sean, Renate Meyer & Felicity Swanson (eds.). 2007. *Imagining the city. Memories and cultures in Cape Town.* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2001 [1968]. Antwort auf eine Frage. In Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits.* Edited by Daniel Defert & Francois Ewald. Tome I (1954-1969), 859–886.
Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Hodgkin, Katharine & Susannah Radstone (eds.). 2003. *Contested pasts. The politics of memory.* London: Routlege.

Jaffe, Alexandra (ed.). 2009a. *Stance. Sociolinguistic perspectives.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jaffe, Alexandra. 2009b. Introduction. The sociolinguistics of stance. In Alexandra Jaffe (ed.). *Stance. Sociolinguistic perspectives,* 3–28. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jeppie, Shamil & Crain Soudien (eds.). 1990. *The struggle for District Six. Past and present.* Cape Town: Buchu Books.

Kansteiner, Wulf. 2002. Finding meaning in memory. A methodological critique of collective memory studies. *History and Theory* 41(2). 179–197.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and subject. Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rassool, Ciraj & Sandra Prosalendis (eds.). 2001. *Recalling community in Cape Town. Creating and curating the District Six Museum.* Cape Town: District Six Museum.

Silverstein, Michael. 2003. Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language and Communication* (23). 193–229.

Soja, Edward. 1989. *Postmodern geographies. The reassertion of space in critical social theory.* London: Verso.

Sonnleitner, Julia. 2016. *Erinnerung aus zweiter Hand. Die born-free Generation in Südafrika und ihre Interpretation der Apartheid und des demokratischen Übergangs.* Vienna: University of Vienna dissertation.

Spitzmüller, Jürgen. 2013. Metapragmatik, Indexikalität, soziale Registrierung. Zur diskursiven Konstruktion sprachideologischer Positionen. *Zeitschrift für Diskursforschung* (3). 263–287.

Trotter, Henry. 2006. Trauma and memory. The impact of Apartheid-era forced removals on coloured identity in Cape Town. Paper delivered at the University of the Western Cape History Department Seminar Series, on 8 August 2006. Also published in Mohamed Adhikari (ed.). 2009. *Burdened by race. Coloured identities in Southern Africa*, 49–78. Cape Town: UCT Press.