

**CONSTRUCTION OF TRUTH AND FORGIVENESS:
HEALING AND HURTING IN THE TRC-EXPERIENCE**

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And Pilate said to Him, “What is Truth?”



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	i
Opsomming	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	6
1.1. Introduction	6
1.2. Philosophical reference points	7
1.2.1. The modernist quest	7
1.2.2. Mentors to the sceptic	9
1.3. Modernist psychology	12
1.3.1. Early efforts	12
1.3.2. Early family therapy	14
1.3.3. Cybernetic thinking in family therapy	16
1.3.4. The structuralist model	17
1.4. Modernist methodology	18
1.5. Postmodern epistemological stirrings	19
1.5.1. Constructivist contributions	20
1.5.2. Social constructionism	22
1.6. Social constructionist research methodology	23
1.7. Conclusion	25
Chapter 2	27
2.1. Introduction	27
2.2. The South African context	27
2.3. Psychology in South Africa - the relevance debate	30
2.3.1. Traditional approaches adopted	30
2.3.2. Systemic conceptualisations	32
2.3.3. Social constructionist thinking within the South African context	33
2.4. Conclusion	34
Chapter 3	35
3.1. Introduction	35
3.2. Transitions – Background to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission	35
3.3. The flaring up of debate	38
3.4. Common memory: rewriting the script of South Africa's past	41
3.5. On the road to reconciliation	44
3.6. Healing and hurting	46
3.5.1. Individual versus collective healing	47
3.5.2. Breaking the silence	49
3.5.3. Opportunity for acknowledgement of previous trauma	50
3.6. Conclusion	52

	Page
Chapter 4	54
Telling the story: truth, forgiveness, healing and hurting in the TRC experience	
4.1.	54
Introduction	
4.2.	55
Setting the scene-background to the interviews	
4.2.1.	55
Aims of the research	
4.2.2.	56
Paradigmatic assumptions	
4.2.3.	59
Context of research	
4.2.4.	60
Position of researcher	
4.2.5.	61
Position of the participants	
4.2.6.	61
Process of inquiry	
4.2.7.	63
Analysis of the recorded conversations	
4.3.	64
Pilot analysis – A first level of reflection	
4.3.1.	64
Introduction	
4.3.2.	66
Thematic field analysis	
4.4.	75
Additional themes from the interviews – A second level of reflection	
4.4.1.	75
Search for truth	
4.4.2.	79
Talking versus silence-the difficulty in speaking about painful experiences	
4.4.3.	81
Non-forgiveness and forgiveness	
4.4.4.	83
Confronting other sides to the story	
4.4.5.	86
New stories	
4.5.	89
Another moment of reflection	
4.6.	90
Conclusion	
Chapter 5	92
Aftermath of truth and reconciliation - Reflections	
References	100



ABSTRACT

The present study explores experiences of loss, disconnection, truth, hurting, healing, non-forgiveness and forgiveness associated with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Using a social constructionist perspective, the concepts of truth and forgiveness are explored through a theoretical background to psychology and subsequently in the stories and reflections of individuals who participated in the Commission.

The issue of truth has been central to debates across the broader intellectual landscape, as well as to the theory and practice of psychology. In the following study, the historical shift from more modernist conceptions of truth to postmodern views is explored through a brief overview of the philosophy of science. These perspectives are explored further in the epistemological shifts underlying therapeutic endeavours and methodology in the field of psychology. Approaches to therapy in South Africa are subsequently reviewed, focusing particularly on positions of truth adopted by the profession in this context. The themes of truth, reconciliation, healing and hurting in the discourse surrounding the Commission are subsequently explored further. This discussion includes some of the literature regarding experiences of people who have been involved with the Commission.

Following this, the narratives from interviews held with a group of mothers who attended the Truth Commission and one of the journalists working with

the Commission are included. These narratives are related to participants' experiences in having attended/been involved with the Truth Commission and their experiences around truth and forgiveness. A qualitative, reflexive approach to the interviews and analysis thereof, is used.

In conclusion, reflections on the process are included. These reflections present a dialectic between the importance of the ongoing nature of the journey in this multi-dimensional context, as well as the author's perspective on the need for the notion of absolute truth in this journeying.



OPSOMMING

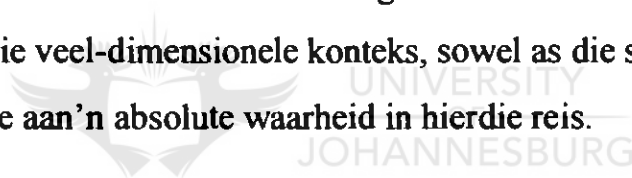
Die huidige studie ondersoek ervaringe van verlies, die breek van bande, die aanhoor van waarhede, pyn, genesing, onvergewensindheid en vergifnis, wat ge-assosieer word met die Suid Afrikaanse Waarheids en Versoeningskommissie. Die konsepte van waarheid en vergifnis word ondersoek in 'n teoretiese sielkunde benadering en daaropvolgend in die verhale en herinneringe van individue wat aan die Kommissie se ondersoek deelgeneem het. Dit word gedoen vanuit 'n sosiale konstruksionisme perspektief.

Waarheid is 'n knelpunt waarom debatte gevoer is beide in die veld van praktiese en teoretiese sielkunde, sowel as in die breër intellektuele agtergrond. In hierdie studie word die historiese verskuiwing van klem vanaf die meer modernistiese beskouing van waarheid tot postmodernistiese siening ondersoek deur 'n kort oorsig te gee van die filosofie van die wetenskap. Hierdie perspektiewe word verder ondersoek in die epistemologiese verskuiwings ondersteunend terapeutiese pogings en metodiek op die gebied van sielkunde. Daaropvolgend word die benaderings tot terapie in Suid Afrika hersien met spesifieke klem op die posisie van die waarheid soos dit deur die professie in die konteks aangeneem is. Verder, word die temas van waarheid, versoening, genesing en pyn in die kommunikasie rondom die Kommissie ondersoek. Hierdie bespreking sluit

van die literatuur in wat die ervaringe van mense wat betrokke was by die Kommissie beskryf.

Hieropvolgend word die transkripsies van onderhoude met 'n groep moeders wat die Kommissie se verhore aangehoor het asook een van die joernaliste wat met die Kommissie saamgewerk het, ingesluit. Hierdie gesprekke is verwant tot die deelnemers se ervaring van die waarheid en vergifnis asook hulle ervarings tydens hulle betrokkenheid met die Kommissie se aktieweiteite. Die benadering tot die onderhoude en die ontleding daarvan is kwalitatief en refleksief.

Ter afsluiting word gedagtes rondom die proses ingesluit. Hierdie refleksies verteenwoordig 'n dialek tussen die belangrikheid van die blywende aard van die reis in hierdie veel-dimensionele konteks, sowel as die skrywer se siening van die behoefte aan 'n absolute waarheid in hierdie reis.



INTRODUCTION

“If this valley were restored, as you are always asking in your prayers, do you think it would hold all the people of this tribe if they all returned?”

- I do not know indeed.
- But I know, umfundisi. We can restore this valley for those who are here, but when the children grow up, there will again be too many. Some will have to go still.

And Khumalo was silent, having no answer. He sighed. You are too clever for me, he said.

- I am sorry, umfundisi.
- You need not be sorry. I see you have a love for truth.
- I was taught that, umfundisi. It was a white man taught me. There is not even good farming, he said, without the truth.
- This man was wise.
- It was he who taught me we do not even work for men, that we work for the land and the people. We do not even work for money, he said.

Khumalo was touched, and he said to the young man, Are there many who think as you do?

- I do not know, umfundisi. I do not know if there are many. But there are some. He grew excited. We work for Africa, he said, not for this man or for that man. Not for a white or a black man, but for Africa.
- Why do you not say South Africa?
- We would if we could, said the young man soberly.

(Alan Paton, Cry the Beloved Country, 1948, p.228)

South Africa is a land of stories. Not only that which is seen to belong to fairy tales, but that which belongs to many, many people at many different levels, in many different places and in many different ways, who have written her history with the life-blood of their experiences. This history includes a legacy of human rights violations such as murders, abductions, forced removals, rapes and tortures. It is also a history that is in the process of being re-written.

In April 1994, approximately one year after South Africa's transition from oppression and resistance to a negotiated democracy, the Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, introduced the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (no. 34 of 1995). In his introductory remarks, as in the post amble to the Interim Constitution (Act 200, 1993), he emphasised the need to deal with the "unfinished business" of Apartheid and to confront the past, in order to ensure future development and democracy in South Africa (Verwoerd, 1997, p. 2):

" I have the privilege and responsibility to introduce today a Bill which provides a pathway, a stepping stone, towards the historic bridge of which the Constitution speaks whereby our society can leave behind the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and commence the journey towards a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South Africans irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex. Its substance is the very essence of the

constitutional commitment to reconciliation and the reconstruction of society. Its purpose is to provide that secure foundation which the constitution enjoins. For the people to transcend the divisions and the strife of the past, which generated gross human rights violations and a legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge” (Hansard, 1995:1339-40, in Verwoerd,1997, p. 1).

The 1993 South African Interim Constitution had set out its hope for all people of South Africa to transcend the strife and divisions of the past and to move towards reconciliation (Asmal et al, 1996). The introduction of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act was a further step to achieving these aims by providing specifically for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Set up to reveal the extent of human rights abuses, committed over the past three decades, the Commission was given the specific task of establishing “as complete a picture as possible” of the “nature, causes and extent” of gross human rights violations during the period 1960-1993 (Act no 34 of 1995). In addition, the task of the Commission was to afford opportunity to victims to relate their own accounts of violations, as well as to facilitate amnesty to those who would give full confessions of politically motivated crimes during this period, and to make recommendations concerning reparation and rehabilitation to Parliament (Verwoerd, 1997, p. 2).

The final report on the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation commission was due to be submitted to parliament by mid December 1997. However in light of opting to follow full legal processes in terms of the amnesty hearings, the submission was delayed (Krog, 1998). This report was

subsequently handed to President Nelson Mandela on 22 October 1998, amidst controversy as to its imperfections. In many aspects the final report can be regarded as far less important than that of the processes involved in the birthing and proceedings of the Commission (Heine, 1998). There are many other processes and conversations that have occurred in and around the Commission which may never be reflected in the writing of its story.

Over the past two years, the processes of the Commission have involved, touched, affected, challenged, distanced, healed, offended, reconciled, many South Africans. Such an endeavour undoubtedly results in ripple effects, both at a societal and individual level. Within and around the events of the Commission, the voices and conversations of many lives have been heard. Lawyers, philosophers, political analysts, therapists, religious leaders, journalists, politicians, soldiers, community leaders, doctors, commissioners have spoken and listened. Mothers, fathers, children, uncles, grandparents, aunts, cousins have expressed their stories and absorbed others. The Commission has involved, drawn criticism from, been discussed by, provided space for and affected many. Whether it has been through the rendering of a personal testimony as a survivor or a perpetrator, through listening to the stories as a Commissioner, through interpreting the stories as a translator, through recording the proceedings as a journalist, grappling with conceptions of truth and justice as a philosopher or through following newspaper or television reports, as one of many inheritants of the history of this country, many have participated. The sharing of traumas and revelation of past

abuses within a certain context has profound implications for people from many walks of life who are either directly or indirectly involved

The following, then, is a story about truth, hurting, forgiveness and healing.



CHAPTER 1

Truth and paradigms of healing in the broader field of psychology

1.1. Introduction

Within the field of psychology, the notion of truth and its relationship to processes of healing has long been a subject of much thought and debate. Epistemological shifts, which have characterised psychotherapeutic endeavours particularly within the field of family therapy, have echoed shifts in thinking across the broader intellectual landscape. Over the past several decades, there has been a move away from modernistic thinking in which the notion of absolute truth is revered to perspectives where truth itself becomes questionable. In many ways, in the latter half of the 20th century, shifts in epistemology have been away from notions of truth to notions of significance or meaning (Rorty, in Howard, 1998). Epistemological positions which emphasise notions of order, the promise of objective knowledge, progress and an elevation of reason, observation, control and prediction are rejected in favour of a kind of “intellectual and moral chaos” (Gergen, 1992a, p.52) where the origin of knowledge is considered to be “socially constructed” (Heverne, 1998) and where there is scepticism as to any theory that claims monopoly on the whole truth.

1.2. Philosophical reference points

1.2.1. The Modernist quest

The world view which characterises modern European and American scientific endeavours and value systems, seems to have developed out of philosophical notions from the Enlightenment period of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries and the Industrial and Scientific revolutions of the 19th century. One of the core features of modernism has been the view that an objective and unitary truth is attainable (Gergen & Kaye, 1993). The following premises have been foundational to the age of the modern:

- (1) One could understand the world through scientific, objective knowledge, which would reveal reality, as it really is.
- (2) The attainment of this knowledge would lead to a future based on universal peace, justice and abundance (Heverne, 1998).

The work of Rene Descartes in particular has influenced modern Western thought. For Descartes, truth was related to an objective reality or world. His methodology was one founded on “radical doubt” (Capra, 1982, p.44) wherein true knowledge began in doubt and distrust, and in beliefs that had been methodically and analytically proven to be true (Shotter, 1993). Derived from his famous dictum “Cogito, ergo sum” (“I think, therefore I exist”), Cartesian dualism asserted that mind and matter were essentially two separate entities and fundamentally different. For Descartes, the world was a

mechanical system, which could be described objectively. This objective description of matter became the ideal of Science and the attainment of “certain knowledge” could be achieved by analytically breaking up problems and thoughts (reductionism) and arranging these logically (Capra, 1982; p.44, Louw, 1993).

Descartes’ view of nature as a perfect machine, governed by exact mathematical laws, provided the foundation for seventeenth century science (Capra, 1982). It was Isaac Newton however, in the field of physics who conceptualised a mathematical formulation of this mechanistic view. Newton presented his empirical methodology in his “Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy”. He argued that one could not reliably theorise without experimental evidence and without systematic interpretation of experiments. It was upon this methodology that science was subsequently built (Capra, 1982).

The development of philosophy in the 18th century was epitomised by a struggle between the British emphasis on sense experience and the Continental allegiance to rational thought. The empiricist position asserted that the source of all our belief is our sense experience (Zacharias, 1994), and focused on the interplay between an external world of nature and the mind. This was an attempt to find the way to true knowledge in the associations between ideas and sensations (Bruner, 1991). The founder of British Empiricism, John Locke was of the view that knowledge was the result of the

outside world “etching a copy of itself onto our initially blank, ‘tabula rasa’ minds” (Rychlak, in Efran et al., 1988, p.28).

The views of Descartes, Locke as well as Hume have been located within what Gergen (1985) terms the exogenic perspective. This view underlies the historical positions of logical empiricism (Gergen, 1985), idealism (Isaac, 1990), metaphysical realism (Von Glaserfeld, 1984) and foundationalism (Penman, 1985 in Louw, 1993). According to Gergen (1988) valid knowledge (the “truth”) in the exogenic perspective, mirrors nature. This view asserts that there is only one complete and true description of “the way the world is”, and is premised on a form of mind-nature dualism (Putnam, in Isaac, 1992, p. 3) where there is an object of knowledge, a knower and bodies of knowledge which are considered the possessions of single individuals (Gergen, 1988).



1.2.2. Mentors to the sceptic

Contrary to the afore-mentioned empiricist position, the 18th century philosopher Immanuel Kant’s view of knowledge (recorded in his “Critique of Pure Reason”) recognised that the outside world is perceived by the senses (the synthetic element). He asserted that this information is inevitably processed by the human mind (a priori element). In so doing the mind makes use of the Forms of Intuition of space and time as well as the use of

Categories or the Pure Concepts of Understanding, such as quality and quantity. The conclusion hereof was that the mind cannot perceive things as they actually are. “While much can be said a priori as regards the form of appearances, nothing whatsoever can be asserted of the thing in itself, which may underlie these appearances” (Brown in Zacharias, 1994, p. 359).

Thus instead of regarding mental images as “representations” of something outside an organism, those who adopt a Kantian perspective assume that mental images are creations of the organism, which are generated as a result of its navigation through life (Efran et al., 1988).

More than half a century prior to the appearance of Kant’s “Critique of Pure Reason”, Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico had rejected Descartes method of systematic doubt arguing that it ignored the role of historical knowledge. Vico posited that Descartes’ famous thesis “cogito, ergo sum” was a reduction of the human condition and that rather the body and mind are inseparable. His dictum “Verum ipsum factum” that is, the truth is the same as the made (Von Glaserfeld, 1984) asserted his position that man can only be sure of the things that he has constructed or invented himself (Gash and Von Glaserfeld, 1978).

Following the work of Kant, a new perspective began to emerge in the work of Hegel (1770-1831). He began to challenge not only the rules in thinking about epistemology (or the theory of knowledge), but the actual method by which truth and knowledge was approached (Schaeffer, 1997). Prior to

Hegel, philosophical questioning had continued along these lines: “Someone had tried to construct a circle which would encompass all of thought and all of life. The next man said that this was not the answer, but that he would provide one. The next man said, ‘you have failed, but I will give you the answer.’ The next man said, ‘Not at all; this is it,’ and the next said, ‘No!’ and so on” (Schaeffer, 1997, p. 232).

The classical logic reflected above is that of antithesis or the logic of the following: “A is A, if you have A it is not non-A” (Schaeffer, 1997, p. 6). Hegel proposed an alternative logic, as a superior means to establish truth. He proposed that instead of thinking in antithesis, one should begin to think in terms of a dialectic between a thesis (an idea) and an antithesis (its opposite), to form a synthesis (or middle ground) (Schaeffer, 1997; Zacharias, 1994).



The philosophical traditions of thinkers like Kant and Vico, and others within the so-called field of phenomenology reflect according to Gergen (1985), an endogenic perspective. The assumption within the endogenic perspective is that knowledge depends on processes innate to man. Thus human beings are thought to possess innate tendencies to categorise or process information which are fundamental to the gathering of knowledge (Louw, 1993).

The proceeding discussion has briefly considered a number of views on truth and the movement in philosophy that has occurred over the last couple of

centuries in this area. It began with a look at perspectives that epitomise modern thinking, wherein, an objective unitary truth is thought to be attainable and the notion of absolute truth is revered. Truth in these perspectives was conceived using the notion of antithesis, and emphasises cause and effect and a linear way of thinking (Schaeffer, 1997). Following this, the view that one does not discover truth about a real world out there, but rather truth is that which man constructs himself, was considered. A change in the method by which truth is approached, was also discussed wherein one no longer thinks in terms of antithesis, but rather in terms of a dialectic between a thesis and an antithesis, where-in the resolution is always synthesis. Within the field of psychology, similar processes in terms of how truth is approached and conceptualised are evident. In the following discussion, modern and post-modern positions on truth adopted within the field are explored.



1.3. Modernist psychology

1.3.1. Early efforts

The work of early pioneers within the domain of psychology, reflected epistemological views which would be consistent with a Newtonian way of thinking, and the field of psychotherapy was in particular a “child of modernism” (Parry, 1991, p. 38). The modernist movement of the twentieth

century was a reaction to the philosophical idealism and moral certainties of the Victorian era. Modernists became enthralled by the “micro” units of lived experience and the changing world of individual consciousness (Doherty, 1991, p. 39). Psychotherapy was used to discover the hidden meanings of the unconscious, to unearth forgotten psychological history and to cure symptoms by exposure to the truth. Although different therapies postulated different theories as to what the meanings behind symptoms were, all of these approaches believed that dealing with these “real things” would result in cure (Omer et al, 1992, p. 253). In many ways, Freud’s work epitomises that of a modernist perspective. He focussed on the microcosmic details of the individual psyche, analysing the small details of dreams and everyday language. Freud’s exclusive focus on mental processes, reflected the Cartesian division between mind and matter (Capra, 1982). The impact of the broader, social context was also disregarded and the “macrocosmic movements of social and political life” were ignored (Doherty, 1991, p.39). Freud’s work reflected a modernist perspective in his adaption of Newtonian concepts. For example, similar to the Newtonian notion of “reactive” and “active” forces, Freud established the notions of instinctual “drives” and “defences” in his description of mental processes (Capra, 1982). His work has also been considered to reflect a more pre-modern or Romantic stance, in that he recognised that which was beyond the rational in, for example, his formulation of the subconscious. Although in theory, Freud adhered to the principle of scientific objectivity, in practice he often transcended the limitations of a Newtonian framework (Capra, 1982).

Modernistic notions were also evident in the behaviourism of the early twentieth century. This perspective reflected a lineal, causal approach, in which one event is seen to cause another in a unidirectional manner (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1996). Early behaviourism also embodied a fragmentation of the whole, through ignoring the emotional and focussing solely on stimulus-response patterns. This reductionism was further evident in early behaviourism's negation of the impact of the social context that surrounded behaviour (Doherty, 1991).

The Humanist model also reflected a modernistic view, that is, that the world is one we can understand with our rational minds, language is able to accurately depict this world, and it is real (Klages, 1998). Thus schools of thought such as Humanism, Behaviourism and Psychoanalysis (at least partly), which would appear to be seemingly divergent, have the same underlying epistemology, that is of a material world with physical objects obeying the laws of force and energy, that is, a Newtonian one (Keeney, 1983).

1.3.2. Early family therapy

Early family therapy and in particular the theory of family systems has also been considered a by-product of the Modernist era (Doherty, 1991). During the 1950s, a new perspective was beginning to emerge on the horizon of

psychotherapy, which signified a shift away from a focus on the individual and intra-psychic mechanisms to a study of larger social units such as couples or families (Joubert, 1992). A perspective that was very influential in this shift was the development of General Systems Theory. A “systems epistemology”, supported particularly by the work of Von Bertalanffy was used to indicate a more holistic view, for example, working with families as opposed to individuals (Keeney, 1982). However, this shift was still reflective of a modernist perspective, as well as a linear, causal view. In addition, this view adhered to the idea of unitary truth, in that there was considered to be one truth about a family, more often embodied in the perspective of the therapist. It was also reductionistic in that in the same way that psychoanalysis divided the mind into conflicting compartments, the work of early family therapists focussed on the microenvironment of family interaction. The influence of broader historical and social forces on the family, as well as on the perspective of the therapist, were largely ignored (Doherty, 1991).

This focus on a specific defined domain reflected thinking in other intellectual disciplines in the 1950s. Literary theory’s “New Criticism” is an example of such thinking which set aside greater historical and cultural questions in order to focus exclusively on a given text’s literary meanings. A “close reading” of a small unit as opposed to more generalised theorising about broader ideas was preferred (Doherty, 1991). A novel or poem was seen to have a hidden meaning structure and only the critic had skill to

analyse it. Aspects such as the political and social beliefs of the author, his/her gender and his/her culture were unimportant in light of the hidden “truth” that was in the text (Hoffman, 1993).

1.3.3. Cybernetic thinking in family therapy

Within the field of family therapy, systemic thinking began to be expanded and the dawn of another epistemological revolution was occurring. Family therapy began to adopt an alternative epistemology being used in other fields, namely that of cybernetics. Historically, the science of cybernetics had its roots in the 1940s and was born in a series of conferences during the war, held in New York City and attended by scientists, engineers, mathematicians and social scientists (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1996). The term cybernetics was coined by Norbert Wiener, a mathematician and referred to the science of information, organisation, pattern, form as opposed to physics which was focussed on the science of matter and energy (Keeney, 1982). It was Gregory Bateson’s early work, however, that saw the application of cybernetic principles to human communication processes, including those of a psychopathological nature. Much of the initial work in family therapy gained its impetus from the study of interpersonal communication with families of schizophrenics (Dell, 1982). Bateson’s latter work contributed to a theory on schizophrenia which emphasised relationship phenomena as

opposed to intrapsychic disorder. His work helped shift the focus of therapeutic intervention away from *why* individual's behaved the way they do, to looking at *what* happens in the exchange of information in families and the processes of relationship between persons (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1996).

Cybernetics provided family therapy with a metaphor and a language, which allowed one to analyse family processes without referring to underlying truths or historical antecedents. In the same way that the literary theorist only focusses on a text, the cybernetic therapist did not need to understand social processes underlying race and gender relations, or biology's role in human functioning. Thus early family therapy tried to bypass particular facets of race, culture, gender and ethnicity and opted for a more universal human view. Although these theorists rejected the content of psychoanalysis (that is, an emphasis on the individual psyche), the same intellectual and cultural form influenced their work, that is, that of a Modernist view (Doherty, 1991).

1.3.4. The structuralist model

Modernist notions were reflected in the work of therapists through to the late 1970s. The work of the French anthropologist Levi-Strauss contributed largely to the development of a theoretical influence particularly evident in the 1970s known as structuralism. Structuralism was part of the latter

modernist attempts to discover universal structures governing and underlying human customs, languages and behaviours regardless of particular contexts. This movement influenced other disciplines such as American Literary Criticism, as well as linguistics and psychology (Doherty, 1991). In structuralism, patterns, structures and systems are opted for over and above the individuality of the text. Within the field of family therapy, structuralism is evidenced particularly in the work of Salvador Minuchin, who was most influential in the mid 1960s through to the 1970s. Salvador Minuchin considered the identified patient's symptoms as rooted in dysfunctional family transactions. It is the family organisation that maintains the symptomatic behaviour in the identified patient (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1996). Structural family therapists emphasise the system over the individual and the present over the past. This position is one which claims objective, expert knowledge and advocated that it was the therapist's responsibility to establish the goals and direction of therapy (Doherty, 1991).

1.4. Modernist methodology

Having been influenced by the logical empiricist/positivistic philosophies of Science, modernist psychology has been committed to the establishment of universal truths using quantitative methods, particularly as is exemplified in the natural science model and the controlled experiment (Gergen, 1992; Van Langenhoven, 1995).

The principles, which have guided quantitative research, have been used to:

- (a) identify cause and effect,
- (b) quantify and measure phenomena,
- (c) operationalize theoretical principles
- (d) formulate general laws (Uwe, 1998).

For example, in order to facilitate representativeness, samples of populations are randomly selected. Observed phenomena are classified according to distribution and frequency. In order to ensure validity and to be able to delineate causal relations, conditions under which study occurs are controlled as far as possible. Research is designed in such a way that the influence of the researcher is excluded (or ignored) as far as possible. The assumption underlying this approach is that the subjective views of the researcher and the individuals being observed are eliminated, thus guaranteeing the objectivity of the research (Uwe, 1998).

1.5. Postmodern epistemological stirrings

In the early 1980s, criticism was directed at the pioneers of family therapy for ignoring issues such as race, gender, and ethnicity as well as the effect of larger political and economic forces (Doherty, 1991). In particular, the

impact of these issues on the role of the therapist was criticised. In contrast to the notion that the therapist has an objective view of a family and is thus in a position to unilaterally manipulate and control the system being observed (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1996), therapists began to recognise the impact of cultural and political factors on their perspectives. In particular, the role of the therapist observer in constructing what is observed began to be acknowledged (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1996).

1.5.1. Constructivist contributions

Whilst there is some debate as to the rise of post-modern thought, Capra (1982) suggests that precursors to its development can be traced back to the beginnings of modern physics, with the development of Relativity theory, constructed by Albert Einstein, and the later evolution of Quantum theory. These developments questioned the concepts of Newtonian mechanics and a Cartesian worldview. The notions of absolute space and time, the fundamental material nature of things, elementary solid particles, the causal nature of physical phenomena, and the objective description of nature were all challenged (Capra, 1982).

A more postmodern way of thinking became particularly evident in an emerging epistemology known as constructivism. It has been argued that the influence of Gregory Bateson, had “woven” constructivist thinking into the

“fabric of family therapy” in early years (Efran, 1988, p. 27). Driven by the work of the Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana and his colleague cognitive scientist Francisco Varela (1980), cybernetician Heinz von Foerster (1981), and linguist Ernst von Glasersfeld (1987), this influence has however been amplified more recently (in Hoffman, 1993). Experiments done by Maturana on the colour vision of the frog, as well as experiments with neural nets by Von Foerster indicated that rather than processing images of the world the way a camera does, the brain computes them like music on compact discs. Thus before the image was processed by the brain it would not be possible to know what it was actually like. For Maturana, all interaction takes place in “informationally closed” nervous systems that only influence each other indirectly (Hoffman, 1993, p. 37). It is within the thinking of constructivism that the preference for a Kantian model of knowledge as opposed to that of a Lockean model is evident in the work of therapists (Efran, 1988). Constructivists assume that mental images are created by people and they speak thus of an invented reality. In the words of Watzlawick (1984), a move from objectivism to constructivism refers to “a growing awareness that any so-called reality in the most immediate and concrete sense, is the construction of those who believe they have discovered and investigated it” (Efran, 1988, p. 28). Whilst objectivists are concerned with the accuracy of their theories, constructivists are more concerned about the utility of their models.

The constructivist perspective has also been influenced by the notion of second-order cybernetics (Golann, 1987). Promoted by family therapist Bradford Keeney, second order cybernetics sees the therapist as an integral part of the system being observed and as one who “co-constructs” with the client the meaning of therapy (Doherty, 1991, p.41).

1.5.2. Social Constructionism

During approximately the same era, a theory often confused with constructivism was also gaining popularity within the field, namely that of social constructionism. In both constructivism and social constructionism the idea of objective truth is banished. However instead of positing that what we know evolves within the individual nervous system, social constructionism advocates the development of knowledge as a social phenomenon and that perception can only evolve within social communication (Hoffman, 1993). Gergen and Gergen (1991) make a distinction between constructivism and constructionism suggesting that the distinction is between a wholly cognitive epistemology on the one hand and a micro-social one on the other.

A social constructionist epistemology attempts to develop a new framework of analysis by transcending the exogenic-endogenic dichotomy and in so doing proposes an alternative theory to the potential and function of scientific knowledge. Constructionism challenges the objectivity of conventional

knowledge, thus differing from empiricism and seeks kinship with the interpretive disciplines which are more concerned with meaning systems (Gergen, 1985). Social constructionism proposes rather that the maintenance of a given form of understanding is not due to its truth value but is dependent on social processes such as rhetoric and negotiation (Gergen, 1985). Thus our knowledge of the world results mainly from human interchanges which are historically located. Understanding is the result of active communication of people in relationship (Gergen, 1985). "Truth" is embodied in joint action rather than iconic representation and the notion of ultimate truth yielded by objective observation is thus challenged.

Instead of searching for "truth" about a family, constructionists propose that each member of a family, has his or her own version of "reality". This view suggests that there is no absolute reality about a family. Rather, there are only subjective constructions held by each member. In addition, although the therapist is an outsider to the family, he or she actually participates in constructing in what is observed in a family (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1996).

1.6. Social constructionist research methodology

Located within the post-modern perspective, social constructionist research favours an acceptance of diverse ways of producing knowledge. In particular

qualitative methods have been advocated. Within the philosophy of science this reflects a conversational turn where there is a shift from a “confrontation with nature” to a “conversation between persons”, from a search for a correspondence with an objective reality to a search for and negotiation of meaning (Kvale, 1992, p.51). In this “new paradigm” of research (p.3), meaning is thus paramount and rather than obtaining a measure of frequency, the aim is to understand the intricacies of these meanings (Smith, 1995).

Within the social constructionist paradigm, the category of “method” is itself problematic. This term originated from a discourse that has been used in quantitative, positivist methodologies such as surveys and experiments. An understanding of this term has involved a distinct set of procedures designed to be carried out systematically and to generate another category known as “the results”. In much traditional work, part of the justification of results is to carry out the procedure and analysis correctly. In the post-modern project, however, the “warranting of claims” is separate from the analytic procedure one may have used to arrive at that view (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 101).

One of the primary approaches to research that has embodied post-modern ideas has been that of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is not considered a single approach but refers to a “constellation of different approaches”. It is concerned with the analysis of texts, where texts are not considered mere reflections or descriptions of reality as it is (Lea, 1996, p. 183) but rather as “complex cultural and psychological products, constructed

in particular ways to make things happen” (Wetherell & Potter, 1987, in Lea, 1996, p.139).

Whilst post-positivist research emphasises diversity in research “methods”, a number of commonalities in these “methods” are evident. These include, recognition of the central role of discourse and language, a concern with persons and individuals rather than statistics, a dynamic interaction between life and research and this research is conducted in the “real world” (Smith et al., 1995,p. 3).

1.7. Conclusion

In chapter one, an overview of perspectives on truth was presented. This discussion included perspectives that reflect a more objective, modern perspective in which absolute truth is given eminence as well as those that question the notion of truth as in more post modern perspectives. The discussion provided a brief philosophical overview of positions on truth and subsequently looked at perspectives within the field of psychology. Shifts in the philosophy of Science were evident both in the epistemological shifts underlying perspectives of therapy as well as the methodology used in psychology.

In chapter two, psychological paradigms embodying different perspectives of truth, adopted by therapists in the South African context are discussed.



CHAPTER 2

Truth and healing in the South African context - A perspective on local psychological paradigms

2.1. Introduction

South Africa's political, historical and social context has offered unique challenges for therapists. A number of factors characteristic of the South African scenario including political changes in South Africa, a climate of growing tension and social upheaval, the transitional state in the country, and its multicultural nature have contributed to the debate concerning the theory and practice of therapy in the country (Oosthuizen, 1991). Because physical and psychological health are associated with living and working conditions of people and these are subsequently related to the power positions that people occupy, the link between Apartheid and mental health was for many therapists, inextricable (Vogelman, 1986).

2.2. The South African context

The following discussion presents a brief overview of the South African context, as a background to subsequent discussions regarding therapeutic endeavours, truth and healing in this country. Whilst this discussion focusses

on a number of pertinent aspects relevant to the history of this country, it has been necessary to limit it in light of the scope of the present thesis.

“The majority of people in South Africa lived and breathed the truths of Apartheid. They suffered the indignities and humiliation of statutory inferiority. They suffered the pain of being forced out of homes and off their land; away from their loved ones. They were imprisoned and detained in thousands” (Asmal et al, 1996, p. 9).

Following the victory of the National Party in the 1948 elections, Apartheid was entrenched by law, although racist policies were already being pursued in the previous colonial years. As early as the founding of the Union of South Africa in 1910, institutionalised racism was evident. The Land Act of 1913 apportioned thirteen percent of the land to seventy-percent of the African population. Even prior to this, the movement of the black population was controlled and restricted by the pass laws.

The 1948 election marked the beginning of the professionalisation of racist systems, which included the Population Registration System. This was established in 1950 and attempted to outline a documentary basis for the classification of races and hence racial discrimination (Asmal et al., 1996).

The Nationalists had won the 1948 elections by a narrow margin and the 1952 Defiance campaign exemplified the strong extra-parliamentary protest. In the 1950s the apartheid executive was consumed largely with civic protest and ongoing battles in court. In 1960, the widely publicised Treason Trial collapsed after four years in the courts when the last of 156 originally accused, including Nelson Mandela were acquitted. The 1950's was a decade in which Apartheid laws were passed quicker than their implementation at ground level and many within the extra-parliamentary opposition still hoped that their demands would be heard. However, in the 1960s the opposition was brutally criminalised rather than listened to and ruthlessly slaughtered as at Sharpville. Thus 1960 was a watershed year in the sense that the regime sought to categorise resisters as outlaws, and the early years of the armed struggle of the anti-apartheid resistance movement began. Over a period of 156 days of emergency regulations in 1960, 11,503 persons were detained without trial. Between the years 1960 to 1990, a total of 100,000 people were detained. This included a period from January 1985 - December 1987, wherein a total of 50,000 people were held without trial (Asmal et al., 1996).

An oppressive legal system, with its resultant forced removals, detention without trial et cetera, were amongst a number of factors which contributed to ongoing political and social upheaval in the country. The following discussion, explores the impact of this context on the field of psychology, and some of the responses adopted by the profession.

2.3. Psychology in South Africa – the relevance debate

The context of a divided society with an increased level of political conflict in the country highlighted difficulties for practising professionals (Berger, 1986). The debate concerning the status and relevance of psychology in this context consisted of a number of widely divergent views (Oosthuizen, 1991). These various perspectives reflect a number of different positions as to what the truth in this country is.

2.3.1. Traditional approaches adopted

Essentially there were two forms of reductionism reflected in the positions adopted by different therapists. In the relationship between professional work and political activity, some supported the view that psychologists should not become overtly involved in or comment on the politics of the country. This mainstream positivistic position held that political involvement on the part of therapists would deprofessionalise the profession and limit traditional psychology (Oosthuizen, 1991). This position saw the truth of an individual's experience as being largely independent of the social and political context.

In a context in which clinical psychology had been largely constructed around white, middle-class, western ideology and values, this perspective of psychology was subsequently criticised for its individualistic, isolated and non-social approach (Perkel, 1988).

Others argued that psychologists should address the effects and symptoms (related to mental health) of political repression. This view saw the “truth” of people’s experience as being mainly attributed to broader contextual issues. It asserted that mental health services were not only inappropriate and inadequate but also served to perpetuate and legitimise the status quo in South Africa, that is, Apartheid (Oosthuizen, 1991). Neutrality in this context was considered a myth and the need for therapists to choose sides was deemed necessary (Perkel, 1988). A “relevant” psychology was one that encouraged the following:

- A political consciousness and understanding of the effects of power structures on therapists work as well as a grasp of the social context.
- Attachment to accessible, credible, established and trusted organisations.
- Use of resources in a collective approach and dissemination of skills, thus preventing the monopolisation of skills by an elite group.
- Support and alignment with the democratic movement and progressive groupings (Berger, 1986).



Thus, whilst in the first view intrapsychic factors were given pre-eminence over and above that of the social, this second view held the danger of making intrapsychic deductions from the social. In this, it reflected a perspective on truth that made one aspect more important than another. Although both these views emphasised different aspects, they were both, essentially reductionistic in their fragmentation of political, social and intrapsychic notions.

2.3.2. Systemic conceptualisations

An approach which has attempted to bridge these two opposing models, has been that of Systems theory, which according to Radford and Rigby (1986) facilitates an examination which transverses the linear, one-way causality of traditional models of positivistic science. These authors argue that this conceptual basis shifts the focus of psychological analysis to include not only the individual but also the context in which the individual finds his/herself (in Berger, 1986). This approach reflects a position of “truth” which moves beyond the hierarchical notion of one part being more important, and embraces the notion of holism. It allows for the possibility of dealing with the mutual “interaction of a complex of elements” and provides a more holistic view of the individual (Berger, 1986, p.65).

A conceptual system, which reflected this basis of understanding, was that of Ecological or ecosystemic therapy. This multi-levelled treatment perspective was founded on the principles of systems theory, cybernetics and human ecology and focussed on the contexts of interaction between individuals and the environment. Although therapeutic intervention may take place at the individual level, the individual is conceptualised from an ecological perspective. This allows appropriate clinical intervention in which the construction of the individual is not divorced from the broader South African reality (Berger, 1986). According to Keeney (1979), an ecosystemic paradigm forms the basis for a pluralistic systemic paradigm. Ecosystemic thinking, however, is in essence an integrationist paradigm including diverse theoretical constructs such as client-centered, interpersonal and cognitive therapy.



2.2.3. Social Constructionist thinking within the South African context

In post-modern thinking, the use of the term “pluralism”, differs subtly from its use in the systemic paradigm. In more post-modern approaches, such as social constructionism, pluralism refers instead to the acceptance of diverse or opposing views where a multiplicity of meaning is recognised (Omer et al., 1992; Louw, 1993). In a context of diverse narratives, South African

psychology has recently begun to be impacted by social constructionism, although some scepticism remains as to the approach (Durrheim, 1997).

2.4. Conclusion

In chapter 2, the South African context was briefly discussed as a background to an overview of various psychological paradigms adopted in this country. Perspectives ranging from more traditional, positivistic approaches, to that of social constructionist thinking were included in the discussion.

In Chapter 3, background to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is included. Subsequent to this, the debate surrounding the Commission as an instrument of truth and healing is discussed.

CHAPTER 3

Constructions of South Africa's Story of Truth and Healing

3.1. Introduction

1996 saw the establishment of a South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This project has been as important as it has been “controversial in the transitional context of the new and unconsolidated South African democracy” (Du Toit, 1996, p. 1). The exact nature of the truth recovery process is one that has been surrounded by much debate. The following discussion provides a brief overview of the processes associated with the setting up of the Commission, as well as some of the controversy that has surrounded its work. A discussion of some of the literature documenting the experiences of those involved with the Commission follows.

3.2. Transitions - Background to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

During the transition to democracy, much negotiation and compromise took place. Within this transitional context the question of how to deal with the

violations of the past was raised (Sarkin, 1996). In countries where a regime has committed gross human rights violations and is subsequently succeeded by an outright military victor, there have been post war trials to deal with the abuses of the past and the offenders are punished often with heavy sentencing or death. The case of Germany's post-World War II Nuremberg trials and more recently that of Ethiopia are such examples (Newham, 1995). In the case of most Latin American countries, the perpetrators of crimes continued to occupy positions of power in the military and used threats of destabilising emerging democracies if prosecutions were sought against them. In the case of Chile, Augusto Pinochet remained in control of the military and thus successfully prevented attempts at any prosecution. In instances like this, the way forward may be limited and usually blanket amnesty is adopted, often resulting in negative consequences. In some countries like Chile, human rights abuses have continued and commissions have been criticised for serving ruling class interests (Newham, 1995).

In the context of South Africa, one of the key elements of compromise during multi-party negotiations was that of the granting of amnesty to perpetrators. Although the granting of amnesty was a compromise on the part of the African National Congress and the National Party refused to continue with Democratic elections unless the interim constitution guaranteed amnesty, it was recognised by all parties that amnesty would promote unity and reconciliation as opposed to prosecutions which may destabilise the country (Newham, 1995). However a general amnesty was viewed, for reasons

alluded to above, as being unaccountable, counter-productive and insensitive (Sarkin, 1996). South Africa, in the birthing of a new democratic order, decided to adopt a unique approach to the situation, opting for the middle road and avoiding the opposing positions of “punish” or “pardon”. The final result was that although amnesty would be granted, it would not be automatic in the sense that it would only be granted with the full disclosure of political crimes committed. Thus the perpetrators were brought directly into the process of reconciliation (Newham, 1995).

In light of the emphasis on provision of amnesty, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was identified as the most appropriate means of coming to terms with the past and the sixth of December 1996, saw the first sitting of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Established under the promotion of the National Unity and Reconciliation Act, the Commission was set up to reveal the extent of human rights abuses, committed over the past three decades.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a specific vehicle established through legislation and was an ongoing pre-requisite for the negotiation process. The implications of its work, however, as well as the process that facilitated its establishment were multi-levelled and have had important effects on many South Africans at different levels (Verwoerd, 1997).

3.3. The flaring up of debate

The exact nature and the effects of the Commission have been the source of much ideological contention. Although many of the terms and procedures utilised in the Commission have come from legal discourse, the Commission has not been a court of law. Although there are many terms and aspects of it which utilise psychotherapeutic discourse, the Commission has not been a group therapy session. And although there has been much religious discourse, the Commission has also not been a religious ceremony (Stibbe & Ross, 1997).

The idea of a “Truth Commission” was unfamiliar to South Africans and was met with resistance and scepticism by some. There were a number of perspectives on the appropriateness of the Truth Commission as an instrument of truth and healing. One view held that it was inappropriate to give the responsibility of establishing the “truth” whether in a general sense or more specifically in terms of a history of political violence. For others it “conjured up an Orwellian spectre of political show trials” in which former political leaders and their henchmen would be prosecuted for political crimes or crimes against humanity on the model of the Nuremberg trials (Du Toit, 1996, p.1).

A number of other contrasting perspectives on the appropriateness of the Truth Commission were evident. These essentially reflected a tension between wanting to loose the pain of the past and the need to find the truth about the past. In the following discussion, a number of these perspectives are considered further.

Some felt that the tension between truth and reconciliation was irreconcilable and that attempts to establish a morally accepted view of our history was in direct conflict with the goals of reconciliation (Asmal et al., 1996) and would aggravate the situation it sought to address. This view was based on the position that the result of burying the past would have no negative consequences, a position that supported the notion of blanket amnesty for offenders. The TRC was seen as a potentially destructive vehicle which would only open old wounds, presently in the process of healing, and contribute to more cycles of revenge, bitterness and anger (Sarkin, 1996).

Others criticised the afore mentioned position as a view that denied the need for healing and one that disregarded the rights of victims. It was also criticised as a cheap process which asserted that forgiveness could occur without a knowledge of whom to forgive and one that would thus prevent recovery from the past. It was emphasised instead that the disclosure of the truth would contribute to a process of “healing” and to national reconciliation. It was argued that ignoring history would lead to collective

amnesia which would not only be unhealthy for the present political settlement, but an unresolved past would inevitably have negative consequences and that this would ultimately lead to anger, resentment and revenge (Sarkin, 1996). Those in favour of the TRC argued that it would give the opportunity to heal the wounds of the past and that only by publicly and collectively acknowledging “the horror of the past human rights violations” would it be possible for South Africa to establish a culture of human rights and a rule of law (Sarkin, 1996, p. 620). In the words of Robert Canas of El Salvador “unless a society exposes itself to the truth it can harbour no possibility of reconciliation, reunification and trust. For a peace settlement to be solid and durable it must be based on the truth” (in Boraine, 1997, p.4). With reference to the Chilean Truth and Reconciliation Commission, human rights lawyer Pape Zalaquett puts it as follows, “the truth was considered an absolute unrenouncable value for many reasons. In order to provide for measures of reparation and prevention, it must be clearly known what it is that ought to be repaired and prevented. Further, society cannot simply black out a chapter of its history, however differently the facts may be interpreted the unity of a nation depends on a shared identity which in turn depends largely on shared memory” (in Boraine, 1997, p.4).

Various constructions of truth have contributed to different facets of this debate. In the words of Du Toit (1996) in reference to the Commission, “‘Truth’ is a big word, often used loosely if not metaphorically” (p.1). In many ways the term has been used in the sense of establishing the truth

through ascertaining as comprehensively and accurately the facts of the cases being investigated (Du Toit, 1996). In this sense, the Commission was given the mandate, as objective a body as possible, of investigating the country's past. Thus the process of "regular factual investigations, compatible with the standard criteria of objective factual knowledge" was considered the basis for the Commission's findings (Du Toit, 1996, p.12). Some scepticism, as noted above, as to whether such a body could be given the responsibility of this mandate has however been expressed. Another way of viewing the truth process is that truth is that which is generated in the process of joint action. This more post-modern view of truth, suggests that there is not one unitary truth about the country's past. In a country in which there are multiple narratives, this perspective suggests that one needs to recognise these multiple perspectives, in an attempt to achieve synthesis. Thus the flaring up of debate is a vital aspect of the truth journey, and the establishment of truth is an ongoing, circular process involving controversy, debate, et cetera. The following discussion looks at some of this process in more depth.

3.4. Common memory: rewriting the script of South Africa's past

Hauerwas and Jones (1989) suggest that to forget the narratives of family, community and self is an act of inhumanity because then the history of our suffering is gone. Thus our traditions, rituals and stories of community life

need to be remembered and not extinguished (in Webb-Mitchell, 1995). It is at the place of silencing and forgetting the stories, as noted by Wiesel writing about the Holocaust, that despotic rulers like Hitler, will have won (in Webb-Mitchell, 1995).

Within the South African scenario, the need to create a common memory of what has occurred has been emphasised. Asmal and others (1996) assert that the establishing of common memory is not the creation of a new fatherland, or a post-apartheid volk or a restricted “homogenous nationhood” (p.9). These authors distinguish shared memory from merely being the national equivalent of the individual cognitive ability to remember facts, et cetera, suggesting that such analogies between individual and collective memory are unhelpful. Rather, the creation of a common memory is a process of historical accountability. It is the breaking with the past of a half-truth society in which lies and deceit were propagated ensuring that oppression and exclusivity were re-enforced (Boraine, 1997). To invite the process of establishing a shared memory is essentially to fuel public debate and to create an atmosphere where the supposedly unimportant memories of the past become public and are fully acknowledged. It is the process of a “flaring up of debate” that involves academic controversy, media revelations, political debate, processes of proof and disproof (Asmal et al., 1996, p.10).

One construction around reconciliation is that it involves a “painless forgetting” in which South Africans, much like the physically abused wife

who carries blame for her husband's violence, would be required to swallow their pain and refer once more to a false history (Asmal et al., 1996, p. 46). Contrary to this notion the development of common memory allows for an acknowledgement of previous crimes. For the first time supposedly private reminiscence and neglected or forgotten private thoughts achieve public currency and worth (Asmal et al., 1996). It is a process of sacrificing previously upheld truths about the past and confronting unpleasant realities about history (Kaliski, 1997 in Winslow, 1997).

It has been suggested that where there is no common memory and people do not share the same past, there can be no real community and unity is compromised. The distance from each other and our groups in our nations can be noted by the divergence, separateness and "lack of sympathy" in our social memories (Niebuhr, in Boraine, 1997, p.5). The forging of a common memory is thus the moving from an isolationist past, where because of the threat to the "superiority myth", anyone inside or outside the country was prevented from declaring that the "emperor has no clothes". It is the breaking away from the pretence of being comfortable and secure in our isolation (Boraine, 1997, p.4). "However costly the search for truth and knowing the truth might be, it is of fundamental importance to base peace and unity on truth. An irreducible minimum requirement for lasting reconciliation is the quest for truth" (Boraine, 1997, p. 3).

3.5. On the Road to Reconciliation

Although reconciliation was considered a macro-theme of the Commission's work, there was no structure specifically set up to achieve reconciliation in the same way that there was a separate committee to uncover the truth, or to consider amnesty for perpetrators. The belief is that the process of uncovering the truth about human rights abuses, as in the process of psychoanalysis, the knowledge of the past will generate a chain reaction along the road to reconciliation (Winslow, 1997).

Asmal and others (1996) have highlighted the meaning of reconciliation. They note that according to the Oxford Paperback Dictionary, to reconcile means to:



- (1) restore friendship between (people) after an estrangement or quarrel
- (2) induce (a person or oneself) to accept an unwelcome fact or situation; this reconciled him to living far away from home.
- (3) bring (fact or statements etc.) into harmony or compatibility when they appear to conflict.


Drawing from this definition, these authors note that reconciliation is not an avoidance of debate and accountability or a fleeing of the facts. Rather it is

“a facing of unwelcome truths in order to harmonise incommensurable worldviews so that inevitable and continuing conflicts and differences stand at least within a single universe of comprehensibility” (p.46). This is consistent with the postmodern notion of recognising a multiplicity of truth, and at the same time standing the discomfort of seemingly contradictory, antithetical positions, such that a new level of togetherness becomes possible. It is what the Chileans call *reconvivencia*, “a period of getting used to living with each other again” (p.46). Thus in the political context, reconciliation is seen as a painful, shared ethical voyage from wrong to right, a settling of political and moral indebtedness (Asmal et al., 1996). Reconciliation in this sense involves a “rupturing with the skewed ethics of Apartheid” and thus prevents the possibility of continuing on a previous immoral course (Asmal et al., 1996, p.48). The majority of people in South Africa suffered indignity and humiliation because of the Apartheid system that enforced laws defining certain people as inferior. The process of recovering the truth is instrumental in breaking the culture of silence that propaganda and misinformation by a repressive government generated. What is required over and above revelations, however, is an acknowledgement and a collective renunciation by perpetrators, beneficiaries and society as a whole of Apartheid’s acts, beliefs and system (Asmal et al., 1996).

In this way, it was argued that the revelation of truth allows for social catharsis, a Greek word whose meaning suggests notions of spiritual renewal and purification (Asmal et al., 1996). The Truth and Reconciliation

Commission should, through the formal acknowledgement of a previously silent past, facilitate a cleansing effect on society (Hayner, 1994). It should be a final “cathartic dam-burst” releasing waves of reconstruction (Asmal et al., 1996, p.208). The metaphor suggested is a paradoxical one, for in the discomfort and pain of the process of acknowledging the past, healing is facilitated. It is the paradox of the “constructive flood”, wherein old ways get washed aside and the South African family becomes re-united (Asmal et al., 1996, p.208). In addition, a standard of human rights values for the future is established (Sarkin, 1996) and re-occurrence of the deeds of the past is prevented.

3.6. Healing and Hurting

The logo of the University of Johannesburg, featuring two stylized birds facing each other with a sunburst above them, and the text 'UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG' to the right.

One of the assumptions underlying the work of the TRC in the last two years has been that truth, amnesty and reparations will result in “healing” for the nation and for individuals. In the words of Archbishop Tutu, “ Our nation needs healing. Victims and survivors need healing. Perpetrators are, in their own way, victims of the Apartheid system and they, too, need healing” (in Winslow, 1997, p.1). The assumption that the TRC has provided an opportunity for cathartic release of emotions which lays the foundations for psychological healing at a national and individual level (De Ridder, 1997), has been questioned however. For some, the TRC has been an instrument of

much pain as opposed to healing. There thus exists a tension or dialectic between that which is healing and hurting, as well as between public and private healing. At a collective level, many agree that the impact of the TRC particularly in terms of national reconciliation cannot be underestimated. With the help of the media, South Africa has begun to experience what Winslow (1997) terms a “cognitive process on a national scale” (p.2). In this, the nation is undergoing a restructuring of its cognitive processes and adapting to new realities and norms about its history. The TRC has facilitated a return to the brutal days of apartheid, has partially contributed to the re-writing of a collective history for South Africans, has opened the eyes of many and has allowed many to evolve new meanings for their suffering (Hamber, 1997b).



3.5.1. Individual versus collective healing

One of the questions that has been raised is whether individual processes of forgiveness and reconciliation necessarily intersect with the collective process occurring at present (Hamber, 1997b). That is, whether there is a distinction and whether it is possible to heal both individuals and a nation at the same time and through the same process (Winslow, 1997). The TRC, as the result of political compromise in pre-election negotiations, was designed particularly to restore the moral order at a national level and to tackle national

problems. It was the needs of the nation as opposed to those of individuals that were prioritised. In the interests of the nation, amnesty was offered to perpetrators who opted to fully disclose their activities, civil claims against perpetrators were precluded and the state's limited funds prevented large sums of compensation for victims (Winslow, 1997).

The need to recognise individual healing as a personalised process has been emphasised (Hamber, 1996). It has been cautioned that the presence of a lot of emotion during the testimony is not necessarily an indication of an individual coming to terms with his or her past. The amount of healing experienced by the individual depends a lot on how much support he or she received during and after the hearing (De Ridder, 1997). In addition, the amount that the survivor feels heard or not in this process is important, and anger and other emotional responses need to be acknowledged (Hamber, 1996). Although the TRC has provided many important opportunities for individuals to begin to experience the healing process, there are limitations as to what the commission can achieve in this area. Although the psychological treatment of trauma usually starts with a telling and re-telling of the incident; as well as an exploration of the meaning attributed to the event, it is vital that the environment in which this takes place is considered by the survivor as "safe" and contained. This usually also occurs over a continuous period of time (De Ridder, 1997). The TRC has been cognisant of the need for sensitivity around the writing of statements and the giving of testimonies and has appointed individuals with training in briefing and debriefing deponents.

However, De Ridder (1997) notes that there have been some incidents where individuals have been reluctant to give testimony and have been pressurised into doing so.

3.5.2. Breaking the silence

De Ridder (1997) notes that there may be a number of reasons why individuals may not have “broken their silence” prior to this:

Firstly, the former political repression prevented activists, soldiers or others from speaking about their torture, incarceration, or combat experiences in supportive environments where their emotional responses could be acknowledged. In addition, many cut off their personal emotions in light of the struggle and also chose not to speak about psychological damage inflicted by the apartheid system, in the event that it may be perceived as a sign of weakness or vulnerability, and an opening for breaking down the opposition.

Secondly, some survivors have not told their stories because of guilt or shame associated with having divulged information under torture and having “betrayed” comrades. Others who experienced torture by members of the liberation movement or intimidated by “comrades” were fearful about speaking of their experience.

Thirdly, the personal experiences of many were also generalised in their communities and thus these violations and their psychological impact were often interpreted as collective phenomena.

3.5.3. Opportunity for acknowledgement of previous trauma

The TRC has allowed an opportunity for acknowledgement of a previously silent past (Hayner, 1994). People who have nurtured their subjugated stories in the confines of their hearts and hearths - offstage-have been given an opportunity to articulate and own their stories on stage. What was hidden is now becoming public (West, 1996). It has allowed individuals a space to have their experiences in hidden torture situations publicly acknowledged. It has allowed people a chance to speak the truth of what happened to them in detention camps in exile. It has allowed the unspeakable to be spoken and acknowledged in public. It has created for others the opportunity to speak about their individual experiences in a way that is not clouded by that of the collective. It has allowed many the opportunity to begin an individual process of healing and recovery (De Ridder, 1997).

In addition, the TRC has facilitated the normalisation of symptoms of trauma and experiences of violations. It has also contributed to making it socially acceptable to talk about pain in public, to seek help to overcome trauma from

the past and to display emotion while mourning the loss of loved ones. It has helped to remove the stigma of psychological trauma and to increase public awareness of the consequences of trauma. In so doing it has contributed to assisting survivors in dealing with their pain. The TRC has, through the amnesty hearings, also facilitated an opportunity for survivors to experience the humanity of their perpetrators. It has been suggested that during these hearings the relationship of power is shifted in favour of the victims and survivors have an opportunity to see their former tormentors not as objects of fear but as human beings who are now subject to law. Within a changed context this equalisation of power has the potential to be healing. Through emphasising the prevention of human rights abuses, the TRC has further contributed to healing. This has also given an opportunity for survivors to find greater meaning in their own suffering by helping to contribute, through, for example, participation in amnesty hearings, to the prevention of future violations (Winslow, 1997).

People who have given public testimony, written statements or have applied for amnesty, whether they are the survivors of gross human rights violations or whether they have committed such acts, have inevitably experienced very traumatic events (De Ridder, 1997). Individually, many of those who have given testimony have found the telling of their story healing. For many, the giving of a testimony, et cetera, has allowed them to speak for the first time about the psychological impact of their experience.

The story-telling however, is only a brief glimpse of the depth of pain that many individuals have had to work through in themselves (Hamber, 1996). In addition, the once-off experience of rendering a testimony is often just the tip of the ice-berg of the processes, conversations and journeys that individuals have made in their own communities around, for example, even the decision to make a testimony. Past traumas also do not disappear over time, and trauma needs to be revisited if it is to be dealt with adequately (Hamber, 1996). For many, the rendering of a testimony was only the beginning of telling the story.

3.6. Conclusion

In Chapter 3, a number of constructions of South Africa's story of Truth and Reconciliation were discussed. An overview of the controversy surrounding the establishment of the Commission was presented. Subsequent to this, aspects of the process were discussed further. These included, individual and collective healing, the establishing of a common memory of South Africa's past, and the opportunity for acknowledgement of previous trauma. In addition some of the experiences documented concerning hurting and healing associated with the Commission were discussed.

In the following chapter, narratives of some mothers who attended the commission as well as one of the journalists involved with the Commission

are presented. The purpose of the presentation of these narratives and the subsequent discussion is to show different ways of approaching truth about experience.



CHAPTER 4

Telling the story: truth, forgiveness, healing and hurting in the TRC experience

“And it wipes us out like a fire. Or a flood. Tears are not what we call it water covers the cheeks and we cannot type. Or think.”

Antjie Krog, 1996

4.1. Introduction

In the following chapter, narratives emerging from conversations that the interviewer had with a group of mothers who participated in the TRC hearings, as well as excerpts from an interview with one of the journalists involved with the Commission are presented and reflected upon. The aim of this was to explore participants’ experiences of the process of going to the Commission as well as their experience subsequent to this. The following discussion aims to highlight different ways of walking this journey of hurting and healing, reflected in these experiences.

The exploration of these narratives was facilitated through a qualitative approach to the material. Prior to presenting the narratives, the research process is outlined.

4.2. Setting the scene - background to the interviews

4.2.1. Aims of the research

Although much of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was completed with the submission of its report, for most, involvement in the Commission was one aspect of a long journey. The aim of the present study was to explore the experiences of individuals around their involvement with the Truth Commission. The study aims to explore what the process of going to the Truth Commission was like, participants' experience subsequent to this, as well as their constructions of truth and forgiveness. The researcher's own reflections are not seen as independent to this and are included.

In Chapter 1, reference was made to more traditional, modern approaches to research, that emphasise the establishment of universal truths through the use of quantitative methods. Reference was also made to qualitative, post-modern approaches where the notion of ultimate truth yielded by objective observation is questioned. In the following discussion, the contrast between the process of inquiry in these two perspectives is highlighted further, and the approach adopted in the present study, is outlined.

4.2.2. Paradigmatic assumptions

The process of inquiry in traditional research has invariably been one that is linear. It has used theoretical knowledge (taken from the literature or previous empirical findings) as its starting point. Subsequently, hypotheses are generated and tested against strictly controlled empirical conditions (Uwe, 1998). An attempt is made to ensure that the representativeness of the findings is guaranteed across random samples. In addition, the aim is to break down complex notions into distinct variables, allowing the researcher to assess their effects more accurately (Uwe, 1998). As noted in Chapter 1, the assumption is that the research is objective, since an attempt is made to exclude the subjective views of the researcher and participants.

In contrast to this position, the 'new paradigm' (Smith 1995, p. 3) encountered in qualitative research does not attempt to apply some predetermined theory. Rather, the research process is understood as part of an open-ended, flexible process (Uwe, 1998) in which there is continuous reflection on evolving new meanings. Whilst in traditional research, the process is linear (theory, hypotheses, operationalisation, sampling, collecting data, interpreting data, validation) the idea of process in the present instance is more circular. This circularity is expressed particularly in the notion of reflexivity, wherein the researcher's own reflections on the process of research are a permanent aspect of the approach (Uwe, 1995).

A number of principles underlying this new process of inquiry are outlined by Smith et al (1995). These were introduced in Chapter 1, and are subsequently elaborated upon in the following discussion:

1. “Life and research are perceived as processual or as a set of dynamic interactions” (p.3).

A more qualitative, post-modern view sees research as representing another form of social interaction. As such, research is not separate to everyday social practices. Methodologies are not based on laboratory experiences, but are conducted in the ‘real world’ (Smith et al, 1995, p. 3). Research is located in the here and now of everyday life (Jorgensen, 1989, in Uwe, 1998).

2. There is recognition of the central role of discourse and language.

Within the qualitative paradigm, human meaning and interaction as opposed to the search for a correspondence with an objective reality, is emphasised. This focus is particularly from the perspective of people who are members of a particular situation or setting (Jorgensen, 1989, in Uwe, 1998). An attempt is made to understand the ‘conceptions of participants’ (Smith et al, 1995, p. 4). The focus of research is verbal material, whether in the form of narratives from interviews, newspaper articles, et cetera (Smith et al, 1995). In particular there is a focus on conversation, including conversations by the

participants, researcher and research supervisor. The conversations incorporated are only one possible selection or punctuation of many possible conversations. The number of potential conversations that could be included in the research design is infinite. Reflections by the researcher, the participants and the research supervisor on the conversations which form the main focus of the research are not understood to be meta to the conversations, but are considered part of the conversational process itself.

3. There is a focus on persons as opposed to statistics and variables.

In contrast to a more quantitative approach, qualitative analysis attempts to capture the richness of themes emerging from a respondent's talk instead of reducing these responses to quantitative categories (Uwe, 1998).

4. In accordance with a social constructionist understanding, attention is paid to broader contextual issues.

In order to analyse and understand statements, it is important to take into account the context in which they occur. Rather than reducing complexity by breaking it down into component variables, the aim in qualitative research is to increase complexity by including context (Uwe, 1998).

4.2.3. Context of the research

The present study takes place within a number of contexts. Whilst, for the sake of clarity, these contexts are discussed independently of each other, it should be noted that they overlap and impact upon each other.

Firstly, the research is located within the context of the university. This is essentially an academic environment, where-in the written form is given precedence over the oral. In addition, academic aspects are emphasised over and above that of the personal.

Secondly, the study is located within the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Each of the participants participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in some capacity. The mothers who were interviewed, went to the Commission, as part of a process of trying to find out what happened to their children, who disappeared in June 1986. The journalist interviewed testified at the Commission following the assassination of her father. She was also involved in the Commission as a member of the journalist team covering the proceedings.

Thirdly, the study takes place within the context of Mamelodi. The children of the mothers interviewed disappeared from Mamelodi, twelve years ago. The mothers were also interviewed in Mamelodi East.

4.2.4. Position of the researcher

The position which the researcher adopted in approaching the field of research was essentially that described by Anderson & Goolishian (1993) as “not knowing”. This does not mean that the researcher approaches the field with no ideas (Hoffman, 1993), but rather that the researcher is an active participant in the research. In contrast to quantitative research, a qualitative approach sees the researcher’s thoughts, feelings, et cetera as an explicit part of the construction of knowledge instead of excluding it as an intervening variable (Uwe, 1998). The position of the researcher in the present study has thus been one of participant-observation. Denzin (1989) describes this involvement as that of interviewing of participants, document analysis, direct observation and participation, as well as introspection (in Uwe, 1998).

The researcher was drawn to this particular field of study, because of her own interest in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as the controversy surrounding the Commission. This included for the researcher an interest in the processes surrounding the Commission particularly in terms of truth and healing.

4.2.5. Position of the participants

In the reflexive, qualitative approach, the term “participants” refers to persons who are being interviewed or observed. Participants are selected in terms of their relevance to the topic as opposed to their representativeness (Uwe, 1998). The choice of the word “participant” as opposed to “subject” defines the role of those being interviewed as being involved along with the researcher in co-constructing meaning.

The participants in the present study were a group of mothers from Mamelodi. These mothers went to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in connection with the disappearance of their sons, who were drugged and subsequently blown up in a minibus by SADF Special forces in June 1986. A sister of one of the youths as well as one other family member also participated. In addition, an interview was held with one of the journalists covering the Commission, who also testified at the Commission in connection with her father, who was assassinated in 1978 by an unknown gunman.

4.2.6. Process of inquiry

The researcher held one interview with the group of mothers and one with the journalist. Although the mothers first learnt that their children had been

killed in March 1995, it was only during the process of going to the Commission, that they heard the full details of what happened to their sons, ten years previously. Subsequent to testifying at the Commission, the mothers became involved with a support group for survivors of gross human rights abuses called Khulumani, affiliated to the Centre for the Study of Violence.

The interviewer made contact with the mothers through Agape healing community in Mamelodi, after they visited Agape with a field worker from Khulumani. The interviewer subsequently contacted the mothers through this field worker and an interview was held at Agape in August 1998.


The mothers were interviewed with the help of another therapist to translate language differences. They were asked about how they became involved with the Truth Commission, what their experience of going to the Truth Commission was like, what they found useful and what was not useful for them. Other questions included what they would have preferred to have happened, whether they felt that the truth came out or not, what do they feel about forgiveness and/or reconciliation in the light of their experiences and how it has been for them since the Commission.

A separate interview was held with one of the journalists involved in the Commission in Johannesburg. "Jessica" testified at the Commission as a family member, in connection with the death of her father in 1978. She has

also been involved professionally, as a journalist covering the work of the Commission.

Each of the above mentioned interviews lasted between an hour and, an hour and a half. The interviews were tape-recorded in order to facilitate later transcription of the material and to allow more freedom in conducting the interviews. A more semi-structured approach to both the interviews was adopted. Thus, whilst the above mentioned questions guided the interviews, the facilitation of the interviews was less structured, taking direction from the interviewees (Smith, 1995).

4.2.7. Analysis of recorded conversations



Uwe (1998) comments that the interpretation of data in qualitative research, receives particular focus. Whilst attention is paid to the methods by which this data is collected, these methods receive less of a central focus. Decisions on findings to be integrated and the methods employed are based rather on the theory that develops, after the data in hand has been analysed (Uwe, 1998). Thus the theoretical structuring of the issue being researched is suspended, until a structuring of the issue by the persons being studied, emerges (Hoffman-Riem in Uwe, 1998).

Within the broad framework of qualitative research, the discourses collected for the present study have been approached and analysed in two different, interrelated ways. One of the “procedures” that the interviewer had in mind, prior to initiating the research, was that of thematic field analysis (Rosenthal, 1993). The first part of the discussion, therefore, focuses on a pilot analysis carried out in this genre. Subsequent, to this discussion, some of the themes arising from the interviews are explored further. Where necessary, pseudonyms have been used for participants and/or members of their families. Reflections by the therapist are also incorporated throughout. These reflections include comments on the analytic process as well as reflections on the researcher’s own feelings. In these reflections, the researcher has opted to use both the terms researcher and therapist, as it was felt that although these aspects are essentially inseparable, they were both present in approaching the interviews and the analysis of the material. In conclusion, the entire process of research is reflected upon.

4.3. Pilot analysis – a first level of reflection

4.3.1. Introduction

According to Rosenthal and others (1993), the aim of a thematic field analysis is to classify the subject’s interpretation of their lives, their system of knowledge and their own classification of experiences into thematic fields.

The objective is to reconstruct the structure and form of the narrated life story as it is thematically and temporally organised in the interview. The interview text is first analysed in terms of change of speaker, thematic shifts and textual sorts. The type of textual sorts, which may occur include:

- (a) narrations, that is that which refers to former experiences
- (b) argumentations, that is, “abstracted elements occurring outside the story - telling sequence”. Argumentation refers also to theorising and reflects the biographers general orientation at the time
- (c) descriptions, that which represents static structures.

(Rosenthal et al., 1993, p. 89)

Subsequent to this, hypotheses are developed along a number of guidelines:

- (1) In which thematic field is the specific sequence embedded?
- (2) Why is the biographer using this specific textual sort to present the experience?
- (3) What topics have been addressed and what topics have been left out?
- (4) How much is the biographer orientated to the relevance system of the interviewer, and how much to his or her own?
- (5) What details has the biographer chosen to present the specific experience with and why?

(6) In the story-telling, is the biographer “being carried along by a narrative flow” or generating a narrative?

(Rosenthal et al., 1993, p. 70)

In the following discussion, the first part of each of the interview has been analysed within the above framework.

4.3.2. Thematic Field Analysis

The mothers’ story

In response to an initial question as to how the mothers became involved with the Commission, one of the mothers related a narrative about their journey to the Truth Commission, connected with the disappearance of their children in 1986.

“We met the TRC about our children who got lost in 1986, 26 of June. The children were ten in number. And we looked for them and we didn’t find them. As time went on, and having looked everywhere, we didn’t know where to turn to. We didn’t know where to go from there. As the years went by, in 1995. Around March in 1995, we met with a private investigator called De Jong. He told us what happened. He told us that our children were ten, were taken from Mamelodi in a combi, mini-bus, were all dead. They

were burnt to ashes. We met with the investigator De Jong at the community as Mamelodi, a community hall. After then as time went by, we were called to make statements at the TRC. We went to the Mamelodi East community hall, in a church.”

At this point, another speaker interrupted the narrative and indicated that this was Saint Peter Catholic church.

The first speaker subsequently continued with the narrative (7 lines) about their journey to Johannesburg, Unisa and Minotoria, to attend TRC sessions. She then narrated the story of what happened to their sons, which they were told at the TRC hearings (16 lines).

In these initial narratives, the therapist was struck by the matter-of -fact manner in which a story, whose content spoke of much pain, was told. The therapist considered the following hypotheses about this:

- (1) That this was an initial meeting and this manner was adopted because the mother was talking to strangers and because the context was new.
- (2) This mother subsequently refers to the narrative as “our story”. It is possible that the mothers have told their story a number of times and in much telling, something of the fuller story gets lost.

- (3) She also spoke of being called to make statements at the TRC. It is possible that the previous telling of the story has been within this context, which would explain the use of more of a “statement” manner. This may also have been how the relationship with the therapist was defined, in the initial stages of the interview. The initial question to the mothers with its reference to the Truth Commission may have also influenced the definition of the context for this mother.
- (4) It is also possible that the emotions experienced for this mother are still too strong, and that she chooses to use this manner of speaking in order to avoid this pain. Thus what is not said in her narrative, is actually being spoken very slowly because of the depth of pain experienced.

The predominant textual sort used by the speaker in these passages is that of narration, in which she tells of their journey to the Commission, and of what they learned there about the disappearance of their sons.

This narrative flow was punctuated with some statements referring to present perspective, and possibly included by the speaker as references back to the initial question, and to orientate the interviewer:

“That’s where we made our statements and that’s where we met the TRC”

“That’s where they told us what happened to our children”

“That’s how they got lost in 1986, June 26”

One other reference was made to present perspective (argumentation)

“Sometimes he would take them to go and play soccer. And while they were playing. [I’m not sure what they were talking about maybe the children were the ones who wanted to go to Lusaka or “John” is the one who influenced them to go to Lusaka (present perspective)].”

The following hypothesis was made about this statement:

- (5) It appears in this statement that this mother is expressing uncertainty about the process that occurred between the children and “John”. The use of the word “maybe” seems at a content level to show an active, present, in-the-moment grappling with unanswered questions. Such moments suggest that the telling of the story is more than just talking the content of a story, but that something active is also occurring in the process.

Jessica’s story

In the following discussion, the initial part of the interview with Jessica has been analysed:

In response to the opening question as to how she became involved in the Commission, Jessica responded, not with a narrative but with a question:

“Well obviously through my Dad’s story. Do you want me to tell you that or can you read about it?”

One can put forward the following hypotheses about Jessica’s question:

- (1) It is possible that Jessica chose to give the interviewer the option of reading her father’s story because she does not want to talk about her father’s death as the telling of the story is associated with painful memories and feelings.
- (2) It is possible that Jessica chose not to speak about her father’s death at this point in the interview because of the newness of the context, and of the relationship with the interviewer.
- (3) It is possible that Jessica was unsure at this point as to what specifically is required of her.




Support for the first hypothesis follows, in that after clarification by the interviewer, Jessica continued with 4 lines of argumentation:

“Well, um, I don’t really want to talk about that in depth. I can give you material, but, think about that stuff. It’s just going through it all is always quite tiring and so I don’t want to go in-depth.”

After this, Jessica entered a narrative flow about a seventeen year period after her father's death, during which she lived in England and America. She introduced this flow with the following argument:

“Obviously, because my father was killed, by people that are still unknown, and obviously because of this politically, for years that we lived in England, which was just a few months after his death in 199, well really England and America, 1989, we lived in that sort of weird limbo, that the relatives of victims do live in, where you don't have any sort of acknowledgement, except from a close group of friends and family, that something terrible has happened to you.”

A number of hypotheses were considered:

- 
- The logo of the University of Iowa, featuring two stylized birds facing each other with a sunburst above them, and the text 'UNIVERSITY OF IOWA' and 'JOHANNESBURG' below.
- (4) that Jessica attributed the silence around the murder of her father and the lack of acknowledgment associated with this, to the political context at the time.
 - (5) that this silence around his murder and the feeling of uncertainty associated with this time was also associated with the fact that her father's killers have not been identified as yet.
 - (6) that Jessica chose to speak in the details of the political context because of the pain and confusion associated in speaking more directly about that period of the loss of her father, relating back to her earlier discomfort which she expressed in talking about the death of her father.

Subsequent to this, Jessica continues with a four line argumentation in which she elaborates on the political context at the time:

“Because in South Africa, obviously even the way it was reported in the press at the time, it was an opponent of the government had been killed. It was a “bad guy”, in the language of that time, or as the cops and some of the killers that I have met have said, he was a “communist terrorist”. He wasn’t really human.”

She follows this with a three line argumentation:

“You live in a sort of, it’s hard to remember that time when he died. All I know is that it wasn’t for really seventeen years that I kind of came to terms with his death. It was for that length of time.”

Jessica begins this argument with the phrase “you live in a sort of” referring back to the period of uncertainty she spoke of previously. She interrupts this statement however with a more direct referral to this period “it’s hard to remember that time when he died” and chooses to speak more personally about this period.

The textual sort within the narrative from the interview with Jessica reflected a combination of narration (that is previous experience) and statement about

present perspective (argumentation). The narration tended to have more of a narrative flow than that of focussing on the detail of a specific story. In addition there were some references to past perspective.

Reflection on this first level of reflection

The thematic field analysis included above has introduced some of the themes from the interviews, as well as considered a number of hypotheses about the form and choice of texts used to present these themes. The analysis has in many ways not been done by the book. However in choosing to analyse the above texts in this manner, another aspect of the interviews begins to emerge. What becomes more explicit in this analysis is that there appears to be a difference in the type of textual sort used in each interview. In the interview with Jessica there appeared to be a greater emphasis on content as well as present and past perspective. In this interview Jessica appeared to theorise more with less of an emphasis on narrative. In contrast to this, in the interview with the mothers there appears to be a greater use of narration, with relatively little argumentation included. This use of narrative became more pronounced, later in the interviews with the mothers.

Subsequent to this initial narrative, this mother as well as a number of other mothers related the stories of their sons' disappearance. Within these narratives there was less of a feeling of statement, but rather the simple telling of the stories:

“Tell David’s parents not to look for him because David has left. He has left the country. He has gone to Lusaka. And the person on the phone hanged up. We didn’t believe it. As the days were, went past we started searching for David. And the whole week ended. We searched everywhere but we couldn’t find him. His father. We were all searching for our sons. Three of them. We searched at Kwandebele. At Bronkhorspruit. But we couldn’t find anything. At the mortuaries in Bronkhorspruit. We didn’t find them. I still couldn’t believe it. As the days went by we searched until his father, my husband, died. And that’s how. Then I gave up. I just told myself that, that my child was killed by the Boers. Because the way he was so fed up of the Boers. It was just too much. He didn’t want to hear anything from the Boers. I also consoled myself, telling myself that I’ve heard that when they’ve skipped the country, they sometimes write to their families. By why is it that David is not writing. And I also told myself, maybe he’s dead. Because the one from Mrs M. didn’t come back. And the other one’s not also coming back. Maybe this also meant that they were killed.”

The use of the thematic field analysis was one attempt at understanding or finding the truth of the participants’ experience. There were however also limitations for the researcher in terms of what this analysis yielded. Although the analysis yielded some information about the participants’ experience, it was felt that aspects of the essence of this experience became lost in the analytical nature of the reflections. For the researcher these reflections

tended at times to be quite clinical or to state the obvious. Thus, in addition to this approach, another level of reflection has been included in the following discussion.

4.4. Additional themes from the interviews – a second level of reflection

A number of additional themes from the conversations were noted.

4.4.1. Search for truth

One of the themes evident in the narratives was that of looking for answers/searching for truth.

Jessica speaks about looking for answers after the murder of her father:

“I knew that I would want to come and testify. I really wanted to do that and wanted to do the process and I gave the Truth Commissioners all my documents. But what I wanted was one thing and that was truth.”

“I wanted to know who that person was. Cause that person could give me the answer that was always, to the question that was there, from the moment that he was killed. Why? Why him? Why that moment? Why did this happen to him and why did this happen to us? And, I suppose specifically for

me, why did this happen to me? First and foremost, why did this have to happen to him but also why did this have to happen to me because it's that experience. I mean like anybody, who loses a parent or a child, or some-one they love. It's a moment that splits your life in half. It's before and after. And after you have to deal with stuff that's going to be there for the rest of your life."

"And so I started to investigate his murder. And that was a very important thing. Yuh, it was doing something."

" But anyway I started to work on it. I was living in New York. I wasn't very near to be able to do hard investigations. But, '93, I came here and I made this film called "Need to know". Which is about, trying to find my father's killer."



In the interview with Jessica, the theme of looking for answers/the truth was expressed more directly in the content of the narrative around the murder of her father. In the interview with the mothers this theme appeared to be more evident at a process level, for example, in the descriptions of their journey prior to going to the Commission, as well as subsequent to the hearings. The following extract describes some of their journey, prior to the proceedings:

"He said to me there were children who got burnt in Bophutatswana. But he wasn't sure whether it was our children. He said, I have already found five

woman who were parents who also lost their children. So I'm still looking for another five. Because those children got burnt inside the combi. They said the combi was from Mamelodi. If I can find ten women, we will take these ten woman and we will go and look in Bophutatswana, if the children who were found there are not their children. Then I said to him, what will happen if we don't find them, because it's been a very long time now since they disappeared. Then he said, the government must know what happened to these children, because you haven't found them while you were looking for them. He also took a photo of David. He also said that he would keep on looking. Then he left with the photo. After that other people came. They were with Vincent. And Vincent said, I've brought these people. And I told them to enter the house. Okay, uh, uh. They didn't enter the house, I went to them out there. And they told me that they are looking for people who had lost their children. And I said I'm one of them. They said well the truth is starting to emerge."

In the following extract, one of the mothers describes their journey subsequent to attending the hearings, to Niedverdient, the place where their children were killed:

"On the tenth of April this year, 1998. We went with the police from Bophutatswana. Where they said they were going to show us where our children were killed. But when we arrived there. The story they told us in the TRC. And what we saw are not the same. They told us that they took the

combi and they pushed it into a pit. They gave our children the beer to drink. Those who were smoking were given cigarettes. After that. They were injected. There were also soldiers there. They were the only ones who know where they got hold of those soldiers. Because they told us there were soldiers there when they were injecting these children. Maybe when the children passed out. That is when they were put inside the combi. And also explosives were put into the combi. And that is when the combi was pushed into the pit. But when we arrived there. Where we were told we are going to see the place where our children died. There was not a pit or a hole. There was just a veld and there was just a fence.”

Therapist’s reflection on self

The discussion thus far has incorporated a thematic field analysis of some of the material, as well as a discussion of the theme of searching for truth that emerged from the interviews. For the therapist in listening to the stories, there were other thoughts and feelings that came. After listening to the stories spoken by the mothers, for a while I was unable to write about them. I felt immobilised. I was unsure of how to respond.

4.4.2. 'To talk or not to talk'- the difficulty in speaking about painful experiences

Another theme evident in the interviews was the difficulty in speaking about loss of loved ones/experiences around the Commission.

One of the mothers related her experience as follows:

“It was painful. I wanted to know about the Truth Commission. The date where the killers come and tell us how they killed our children.”

“I also don't like speaking about my children. It's very painful. Because even now we are still following this trail. They still can't show us where the ashes are buried. Where they put our children.”

“I've been talking about this so much and I will end up being confused and not telling the truth.”

Jessica expressed the following: “And so, I think that for a long time there was a sort of silence around his murder which came from the fact that it was too painful to deal with.”

Jessica also spoke about the anger that she experienced:

“and there’s all sorts of emotions that come up like I remember at that time a certain kind of anger even at the Truth Commission people.”

“And that anger is a weird thing that comes up. You know, that they can’t know and that they are trying and everything else but at the same time you’re like you know.”

“There’s a kind of resistance still to the process, cause there’s always an ambivalence between the desire to deal with it and the desire to really shut it down, to literally close that.”

Therapist’s reflection



There appeared to be a number of different responses of anger, pain, silence, et cetera, adopted around talking about painful experiences. In these responses, another aspect became more evident. Essentially, these different responses reflected a tension between talking about the experience and the need to avoid the pain associated with this talking, and to achieve some form of closure.

4.4.3. Non-forgiveness and forgiveness

There appeared also to be a number of different perspectives expressed around forgiveness.

Two of the mothers expressed the following:

“How can you forgive a person who’s killed your child like that. How can he feel if you can kill his child the way he has killed your own child? Even if he can come in front of me, because of all the lies, they’ve told us and the way they’ve killed my child, I will never forgive them.”

“I feel that, you can’t just forgive a person, who’s never come in front of you to beg for forgiveness. They never came in front of us. At the TRC hearings they telling us to forgive them. Whereas they’ve told us lies. We can’t forgive them.”

Another mother made the following comment:

“I feel that we need to forgive as long as the person comes and confesses in front of me and maybe say that I was possessed by evil, so will you please forgive me. Because I was jealous that your child is going to be Mandela’s

soldier. But now they can hardly come in front of us. The only time we saw them was when they went to the Commission.”

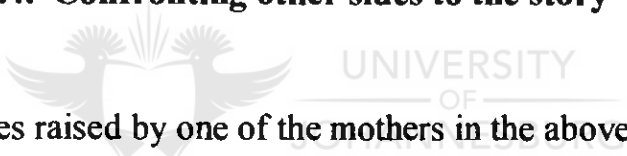
In relation to forgiveness, Jessica expressed the following:

“So at a personal level when I was talking to people like Alex Borraïne and others, I had a very deep problem with the forgiveness emphasis. And I was talking to a woman yesterday, who I think was a holocaust survivor. She put it beautifully actually. She put beautifully what made me, what was my main criticism of the Commission. And so I remember having a long conversation with people who were involved in setting up the Commission and the conversations which made me very, in which I was very angry. Because I didn't quite know how to express what it was that I was feeling where I just felt furious about this emphasis on forgiveness and I would say things like 'I can't, I can never forgive. Murder is unforgivable.' Which I still believe, but I was much more angry then with the perpetrators and with the system I suppose. And I was very angry with people who expected me to be able to forgive and absolve murderers of their sins. To tell them that they did what they did with impunity. Now, I know that what I was trying to say was I can never forgive, but I know that I can learn to accept it.”

Therapist's reflection

A number of the mothers expressed that they felt they couldn't forgive particularly because they felt that the truth had not been told. There appeared to be some difference as to whether meeting with the perpetrators and confession, would help or not. There also appeared to be a difference in the way anger was talked about/expressed in the interviews. These differences seemed between speaking about anger, as a reflection on the process of having been angry as opposed to the expression of angry statements in the moment such as "I will/can never forgive them".

4.4.4. Confronting other sides to the story



One of the themes raised by one of the mothers in the above narrative was that of talking to the perpetrators. This theme is further highlighted in the following extract, in which she continues to speak of the need to meet with the perpetrators in order to find out the truth.

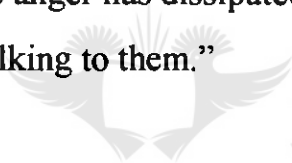
"If maybe they can come in front of us and tell us. For me maybe to take, take your child. He was shown to me maybe by so and so. Maybe that would make us feel better."

Another mother expressed the following:

“But now they can hardly come in front of us. The only time we saw them was when they went to. And they even have our addresses. In the books that. They know our names. It’s not even hard for them to write to one person to collect us and for them to come and meet us. Only when the person has confessed his sin can I be able to talk to them.”

Jessica speaks of her conversations with the perpetrators in the following extract:

“Now that’s led me to another place now, which is I suppose an indication of the fact that the anger has dissipated now, I’ve spent a lot of time with, the perpetrators, talking to them.”



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“And, I didn’t really come to understand why I was crying for a while, but I was really, I was terribly, upset, because I hadn’t met a monster, who I could dismiss as a monster. I had met a person, a person to whom I felt, very uncomfortably, intimately related to, by violence he had done and violence I had experienced. We had this thing in common and I found that very strange, I think at the time I described it as we were two sides of a coin, and that intimacy was very shocking. It’s very peculiar and I don’t really know how to unpick it.”

“But we began to talk about what haunts him and he can only talk about it in a very specific way, about how he doesn’t sleep a lot and he often wakes up. Can’t sleep anymore because of the dreams he’s having. And I was struck by that. And the meeting went on and I left. And we shook hands. And, I remember he stood and waved at me and, it was so weird. I felt this, at the beginning of something that I think is the process I’m working through now. Which is, which is reconciliation and it’s the reconciliation that I never believed is possible and that’s with, with the perpetrator. And I think it’s very new. It’s a very uncomfortable thing to express.”

“I think I’ve begun to observe him, enter a process which actually reflects my own.”

“All of this, I mean, requires a willingness to actually give yourself to it without knowing what’s going to happen on the other side.”

“But in the big picture, I think that we are really only at the beginning. So many of the people who’ve come and told their stories are telling it for the first time. For the very first time they were breaking their own silence and breaking through the conspiracy of silence around rape by police-men, the murder of their entire families. It’s still very raw, for so many people.”

Therapist's reflection

These narratives highlighted for the therapist a number of aspects around truth and reconciliation. In the narratives of the mothers, the need for answers, and to hear the truth directly from the perpetrators was strongly expressed. The narratives also highlighted the ongoing nature of the experience around journeys of truth and reconciliation. Although much of the work of the Commission has come to an end, in many cases as noted by Jessica above the experience is still “very raw, for so many people”. Going to the Commission, has only been the first step in breaking the silence around the death or torture of a family member. Jessica also speaks of the uncomfortableness of meeting with the perpetrators and yet also experiencing a commonality in terms of an emotional process – “watching the perpetrator enter a process that reflects my own.”



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4.4.5. New stories

One of the themes noted in the interviews, more at the level of process, was that of something being different or something new being experienced in the difficulty of the journey.

Jessica spoke about how in the place of not finding answers, something else happened:

“Well what I did for seventeen years was whenever I thought of my father I thought of him dying. And that made me angry and sad. And, and I don’t know why I did that to myself. But that was always how he came to me. If I remembered him it was him dying. Smell, sight, that, just that horror always came back. And when I came to make the film, I talked, I was listened to, I listened, and I investigated. I went everywhere. I contacted everybody. I didn’t find out who’d killed him, but in the process I did find him. And I did also let go. It’s very odd. I, I don’t know how one does that other than forcing yourself to really, really walk through the most sore and painful stuff. It’s literally a matter of deciding, okay I’m going to face what happened and I’m going to re-live it all. I don’t know what it was, in a sense maybe it was reliving it. It was going back to that moment when he died. And really facing it, in all sorts of ways. Including going to the house. And I’ll, I’ll. I don’t know if you saw the Mail and Guardian article, I wrote last October? I’ll give you that, because, there, in that, it, I mean I basically had an experience, which I also don’t want to tell you all about now. But I wrote about it. You can read it. It was a kind of vision in his house and it was very intense, very multi-dimensional. It wasn’t a dream like thing. It was real. I was in it. I wasn’t just imagining it. And it was a moment when I literally felt, him, um, we let go of each other. And it was, it was literally in a sense. And I, I say of that moment that my father pushed me back into the world.

Pushed me back into the present. In that moment, in his house, late one night. I was alone and I stood on the place where he died and I had this sense of, of, incredible sense of peace. Incredible sense of loss. But that, that moment, was a culmination or a result in a sense of doing this hard thing. Of going and finding everybody, sitting with them.”

One of the mothers spoke about her difficulty in believing that her child was dead and about her journey to the place where her child was killed, and what occurred for her in this process.

“As we went to Bophutatswana to see where they killed our children. I still feel hurt because I saw the place where they were killed. That day that we went there, I really believed and accepted that my child was really dead. Because I always thought that he would come back, I didn’t believe that he was dead. But now, I believe that. That is why even now when we speak about this issue, uh, uh, it’s painful. As if we can’t stop talking about it, because what has happened, has happened. But they still can’t show us where the ash is.”

Therapist’s reflection

In some way, in the journey to the place of her son’s death, something different for this mother, around the search for her son was evident. In the

hardness of the journey, a new level of acceptance was experienced, juxtaposed to the ongoing lack of answers.

Jessica also speaks of the search to find her father's killers, and how paradoxically, although she did not find the answers she wanted, she re-experienced connection with her father. That in allowing herself to ask the difficult questions, to experience the uncomfortable emotions of loss, anger et cetera raised by painful memories and conversations, to confront and re-live the pain, a new sense of connection was experienced.

Similarly, in going to the Commission to find out what happened to their sons who disappeared, as well as in for example, newspaper articles about the incidents, the mothers were continuously referred to as mothers. In taking the journey around the loss of their children, something of their motherhood also gets confirmed.

4.5. Another moment of reflection

Coming to the end of this chapter of many words and much meta-thought, I am conscious of the other story in me. I struggled to put down on paper the above, to write in a meta-position about very human, present emotions, and very painful situations. I found myself caught between writing and not writing. Between words and silence. I could see themes and processes in the

narratives discussed and not discussed, I wanted to speak about them, but I was afraid that I too was perpetrating. That I was completing my thesis at the expense of some-one else's pain. Sometimes it was easier to become analytical, when I wanted to cry, at the places of no words. One of the mothers during the telling of the stories didn't speak, but she held herself and wept. I didn't know whether her tears were of anger, or of deep pain, or of both. I wanted to reach out my hand to her, but I was afraid that she wouldn't see me. That my hand would be too white, or too distant, or too inappropriate.

4.6. Conclusion

The proceeding discussion has been approached from a number of different angles. The initial part of this chapter started with a thematic field analysis on the narratives, as one approach to the truth of participants' experiences. Other approaches to truth were incorporated subsequent to this, including a discussion of some other themes that emerged from the interviews. In addition reflections by the therapist on these themes as well as herself in the process, were included. Aspects of the discussion were meta, and parts of it weren't. The struggle in taking a meta position or a more distant view as can happen in analysis, or even writing, and simply speaking in the rawness of the moment was also highlighted. In this and in something that seemed to be occurring at a process level in different parts of the narratives was the

difference between talking about things as opposed to the simple telling of a story in the moment, allowing something different to happen. Each of these approaches thus yielded something different and essentially reflected a dialectic between understanding about something and experiencing with some-one.



CHAPTER 5

Aftermath of truth and reconciliation – Reflections

As I reflect on the work of the Truth Commission, the experiences of those whose conversations have been recorded here, other conversations around the Commission, shifts in thinking in the fields of philosophy and psychology, my own journey, I am conscious of a number of thoughts.

This thesis started with an academic discussion about the shifts in thinking that have occurred in the epistemological basis for therapy. Shifts in thinking were traced from a more modern approach in which the notions of objective and absolute truth are revered to post modern perspectives where the notion of truth itself is questioned. Gergen (1992) writes of the post-modern world that “we may lose the safe and sure claims to truth, objectivity and authority... Yet we gain something we have scarcely know in the Western culture, the reality, the centrality and the fundamental necessity of relatedness” (p.57).

With the same tension that it seems Gergen holds in this statement, there are a number of responses that the writer seeks to voice. There is for the writer, an attractiveness in social constructionism of which Gergen speaks. For the writer, it allows the space for many voices to be heard, and at the level of process, it allows talking to continue, where other approaches may silence

these voices. I too, however, like Gergen, am unable to silence the voice of truth. In the so-called loss of sure claims to truth et cetera, there is still truth that emerges in that of relatedness. For me to solely locate myself within the social constructionist perspective would be a lie.

In this, my academic ear hears other voices. I hear a response to the echo of Kant's agnosticism on ultimate reality. "It is not possible to posit anything about reality, unless one knows something about ultimate reality. To say, as Kant did, that one cannot cross the line of appearances is to cross the line in order to say it. In other words, it is not possible to know the difference between the appearance and reality unless one knows enough about both to distinguish between them" (Zacharias, 1994, p.361).

I hear Robert Bellah's (1992) argument:

"There are realities that neither derive from ideological orthodoxies nor can be described in any old way we want. All the redescription in the world will not make the greenhouse effect go away; nor will it enable the earth to go on supporting a population that doubles every 5, 12 or 20 years. The proliferation of nuclear weapons in the third world is not a "construction" of reality, nor is the enormous disparity in wealth between the richest and the poorest nations, nor is the devastation in our own inner cities.

Postmodernism, when it goes beyond reminding us to maintain a healthy

skepticism about anybody's claim to know anything, sinks into moral and cognitive nihilism, a position that characterises the darkest social and political movements of the 20th century" (p.53).

I hear Pocock's (1998) distinction between two definitions of reality, that is constructed reality and external reality. He writes, "when we say we know something, or when we say that something is true we are always operating, I suggest, in the domain of constructed reality. Either on our own or with others we have created a view (or story) of our world. All knowledge-including scientific knowledge – is constructed. However, let me quickly add the suggestion that external reality is ever present as context to this process of construction or story-making". Pocock continues his line of argument with the following illustration about a man who walks home every night from work through a dark forest. In his head this man has a rough map of the path. Every time this internal map or construction (since he has made it or borrowed it from others through language) does not fit, he loses his way and walks into a tree. This external reality is experienced, not objectively, but as context to his map, "one that acts as a painful constraint" (p.5).

Subsequently this man will probably re-adjust his map because of its failure at this point, and after a number of nights (and many bruises) he may eventually be able to make the journey home without any accidents. He will however, know nothing objectively about the trees (these are only distressing points of failure on his map) much less the forest. "External reality is that which always lies beyond our constructed reality. Any statement about our

world always falls short of this reality because language has inherent limitations for capturing external reality” (p.5).

I hear the caution that the presence of multiple perspectives, does not necessarily mean, multiple reality. That perhaps in the case of Maturana's newt, what gets overlooked is the wonder that it is orientated to food and light, and that something within it searches. That perhaps there is a reality that proceeds *through* multiple perspectives to our ultimate belonging in the universe.

I hear the voices of two kinds of logic, that of the either/or and that of Hegel's dialectic, the both/and. I hear in postmodernism that truth is to be sought in synthesis (Schaeffer, 1997). One either uses the both/and position or nothing else. And for me somehow, the either/or still emerges, the place of antithesis. And the upside down question that is there for me is “if both/and is all that it is made to be, why can't I use both/and and either/or? Why just one of them?” (Zacharias, 1994, p.242).

And the therapist in me hears Minuchin's (1991) caution:

“ how could it be good therapy to tell a Salvadorean mother whose eldest son has been “disappeared” by a right-wing death squad that the members of her family were self-determining, co-creators of their own narrative” (p.49).

And I can also hear the voice of the Judge in me, saying that the work done here is not enough - not good enough, not clear enough, not strong enough. I know the voice of fear, of what others might think.

I hear other voices within myself. I hear the voice of the preacher. Heretical and contradictory often to the academic and many times to the judge. That in the struggle that is forgiveness, I too have been forgiven much. In the Word that I believe has been spoken, I find my healing - At the place where my humanity can no longer go the extra mile.

I know the voice of protecting and respect, that which is mine, and respect for that which is yours, where silence is appropriate. I know the voice of tears. I know the voice of freedom, where I speak and laugh unhindered. I know the good student, who wants to give a neatly wrapped up conclusion, and well presented argument. I hear the voice of shame, the voice that wants to hide from truth, from inadequacy. I know the naughty student, who wants to plagiarize and finish this as soon as possible. I know the thief, who takes at others expense. I know the voice of respect and of the healer, who doesn't take at others expense and brings restoration where something has been stolen. I know the voice of grace and forgiveness. And I know the voice of silence.

In conclusion, I started this reflection, with a reflection on the academic positions discussed. In some disjointed way, I tried to tell you where I stand.

The wonderful freedom to choose a position. And also the defending of that position. Also, what can get lost in the defending of the position we choose, in our questions, and arguments. In the struggle that is modernism versus post-modernism, the struggle that speaks of birth pangs, there is also the voice of something that speaks of our humanity. It is in essence that which echoes with the cry of the mothers.

Something within our humanity that cries out for truth, and balks at its silencing.

In the clinical analysis of texts, the academic debate about truth, the writing and distribution of the Commission's report and the tale end of its proceedings, let us not forget that it is about humans, who mourn, and search.

In this we cannot escape the multisidedness of the journey. This journey of creating a shared memory, this journey of truth, this journey of reconciliation, this journey of searching, this journey through hurting, this journey towards healing. This journey in which there are many stories and many voices.

The voice of pain that is public, and the voice of pain that is private. Voices that are heard and voices that are silent. The voice of courage to share one's story and feelings in public, for the sake of the country's healing. The voice of courage in being stoic under torture for the sake of the struggle. The voice of wanting to find the truth and the voice of wanting to lose the pain. The

voice of avoidance, and the voice of confrontation. The voice of blaming and the voice of forgiveness. The voice of silence and the voice of confession. The voice of loss and the voice of re-connection. The voice of hurting and the voice of healing.

As part of my journey, there is however also for me the place where something happens between humans, within humans, that speaks of something bigger than humans. As grandly narrative as this may sound, as heretical in the post-modern, and even the modern world, whilst we are given the freedom to construct truth, there is a place for me that Truth constructs us, and calls us to journey. The place of antithesis, where there is Truth greater than yours and mine, which is not only present to the context of our construction, but speaks into it. The place for me where all our ands become either/or such that we might find a greater “and”. Where our talking with the ever “changing of a name” (Tolkien, 1964, p.100) ceases and our multiplicity becomes silent. The place where the “what” of the question becomes “who”. The place where I am fully known, and my pain has been entered into in its deepest.

Asmal and others (1996) make the following comment: “In an atrocious system like Apartheid, truth and morality itself were under debated concepts; we were supposed to believe that only the received wisdom of officialdom was necessary. But in fact, inexorably, ‘there is a battle for truth. The political question is truth itself’” (p.213).

For me, this question is not only one of this country's, but in all our journeys. To take the hand of Truth is to surrender to One who sees all our sides, our richness and our poverty, our tears and our laughter, our lies and our truths. One who lets us walk away and yet will not let us go. It is to know in the season of our winter, in the fierceness of our pain, we will not be abandoned. It is in the midst of many voices to yield to the scalpel of One, who refuses to let us remain less than that which we were meant to be.

What is written here is part of a conversation, and there will be other conversations. If it doesn't make total sense it's because some of it was written at four in the morning. I can hear the birds starting to sing outside, and I know the dawn is coming.

“For it is the dawn that has come for a thousand centuries never failing, but when that dawn will come, of our emancipation, from the fear of bondage and the bondage of fear, why, that is a secret” (Alan Paton, 1946, *Cry the Beloved Country*, p.236).

In the aftermath of this thesis, in the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in the aftermath of the postmodern revolution:

Come Truth and complete your surgery

Come Truth and open the graves that need to be re-opened

Come Truth and pour out your balm

Come Truth and wash us with your tears

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